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EXPLORING NONVERBAL CUES IN SPOUSAL COMMUNICATION

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EXPLORING NONVERBAL CUES IN SPOUSAL COMMUNICATION

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **Sandra Pokuaa Mensah**, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: …………………………………

DATE: ………………………………………………

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: PROF. CHRISTIANA HAMMOND

SIGNATURE: ……………………………………………………

DATE: …………………………………………………………

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Mr. Daniel Okyere Mensah and Ms. Anastacia Adutwumwaa Mensah

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ABSTRACT

Nonverbal communication is inevitable in human interactions and takes 70 – 93% of human communication. Nonverbal communication is enacted through cues or behaviours. Nonverbal cues help interlocutors to make meaning out of what is being expressed. This study explores nonverbal cues employed in spousal communication and their communicative functions. It also examines the motivations for using the various forms of nonverbal communication cues. The study is grounded in the theory of Nonverbal Communication and the McClelland Motivational theory of Needs. Data for the study were qualitatively gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions from purposively selected thirty-three (33) married graduate students from the School of Communication and Media Studies (University of Education, Winneba). The data were thematically analysed. The findings indicate that the participants employ various forms of nonverbal communication, categorised under body codes, sensory and contact codes, and spatiotemporal codes, and their respective cues in spousal communication. The study further reveals that the participants use the forms to communicate negative emotions and positive emotions. The study also reveals that the participants are motivated to employ the various forms of nonverbal communication cues in communication because of the desire to control, to form association, and the desire to succeed. The study concludes that nonverbal communication cues help to communicate different emotions by married graduate students through diverse forms. The study, thus, recommends that couples should take cognizance of nonverbal communication forms of their partners because nonverbal communication is context-specific.
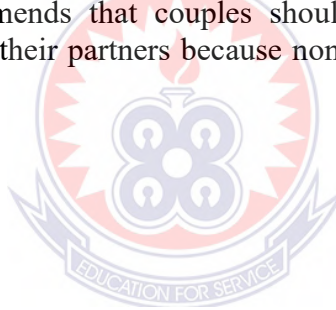
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Communication is an essential aspect of human life and individuals interact with one another through diverse forms of communication. Evans (2021) postulates that communication involves exchanging information between individuals with a common goal. Matthew (2015) also adds that communication involves processes by which a person receives meaning from another person or group. In essence, communication is the exchange of meaning between individuals. It is through communication that individuals are able to share their feelings, thoughts and ideas either verbally or nonverbally (Andersen, 2008).

The concept of nonverbal communication has been defined as the use of signs, symbols or behaviours to express ideas, beliefs or thoughts (Burgoon et. al., 2022). Nordquist (2020) posits that nonverbal communication is the process of sending and receiving meaning without using words. In similar vein, Evans (2021) avers that nonverbal communication involves spoken words and written messages transmitted with either intensions or by default. Awoji and Onwukwe (2019) assert that body gestures, eye motion, skin and touch sensations, space (standing, sitting, near or far apart) and smell are all kinds of nonverbal communication as a way of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts or feelings. In effect, nonverbal communication is simply the transmission of messages through a nonverbal means such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and body language, among others. The nonverbal aspect of communication is considered essential and omnipresent in all aspects of human life (Poret, 2017). This means that nonverbal communication cues pervade virtually every communicative act whether face-to-face interactions, text-only communication, phone calls, online classes,

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the physical surroundings, appearance, among others all have a part in creating messages, with or without anything being said. Information or message is transmitted in proportion of eighty-two percent (82%) by body and voice, and eighteen percent (18%) by verbal language (Spence, 2020). In effect, nonverbal communication is prevalent in verbal language and the significance of its roles cannot be overemphasised. Spence (2020) asserts that verbal communication however is transmitted on the medium of nonverbal communication cues like voice or tone.

In every communication, whether virtual or in-person or text messages, some form of nonverbal communication cues are used. Poret (2017) adds that in written communication, nonverbal communication cues are marked by the use of punctuations including pauses, commas, question marks, and periods, among others. This shows the essential roles of nonverbal communication in every aspect of human communication including eye movement, head movement, facial expressions, hairstyle, clothing, posture, smell, touch and gait. Riggio and Riggio (2012) further add that, some forms of nonverbal cues are auditory such as, voice tone, pitch, and speech rate. Burgoon et al. (2022) emphasise that nonverbal communication cues complement oral communication. Thus, in oral communication, cues such as body, face, voice, appearance, touch, distancing, timing and the physical surroundings, are useful for the creation of meaning.

As already indicated, nonverbal communication cues are implicit even in written discourses and are represented in the form of punctuations, fonts, colours, capitalisation, among others. Luangrath et al. (2017) argue that the term nonverbal communication is a textual paralanguage where textual paralanguage refers to the manifestation of nonverbal audible, tactile, and visual elements that are expressed in

words, symbols, images, punctuation marks, and font size, among others. In effect, nonverbal communication cues are noticed in both oral and written communications.

Frank and Solbu (2020) contend that the use of nonverbal communication cues is central to human lives because they are considered the first human form of communication in the history of "species and in the lifespan of every individual" (p. 9). Their study reveals that humans are predisposed to the use of nonverbal communication cues. For instance, infants use nonverbal communication cues to communicate long before they learn to use verbal forms or words. Human beings therefore rely heavily on nonverbal communication cues to aid comprehension. Fundamentally, nonverbal communication cues are the first form of human communication in the lifespan of every individual.

Nonverbal communication consists of the method of encoding and decoding just like verbal communication (Sharma, 2011). Encoding is the act of producing information using gestures, facial expressions, postures, among others, whereas decoding is the process of receiving the information and how the individual processes that information based on their previous experiences (Sharma, 2011). This means that nonverbal communication is a communication process on its own. It can be used to channel information to a receiver without words, and the receiver could communicate the expected response to the sender through the use of nonverbal communication cues. Therefore, in nonverbal communication, the communicators use a combination of visual, vocal, and other invisible codes of communication to systematically encode and decode symbols and signs in order to share consensual sense in a particular setting of communication.

Burgoon et al. (2022) attest to the fact that nonverbal communication is less 'faked' and emphasise that it reflects accuracy of who an individual is; what he/she believes in; and how he/she feels at a particular time. Falling on the aforementioned scholars, it can be observed that nonverbal communication is less 'faked' and trusted more than verbal communication since it is considered an accurate expression of thoughts, emotions, beliefs or ideas. This is emphasised by the fact that although nonverbal communication can be intentional and conscious, about 82% of its use is usually unconscious and unplanned (Spence, 2020).

Ben-Nun (2017) states that nonverbal communication is used to communicate emotions, and is prevalent in romantic relationships in which members are interdependent on each other. Thus, couples communicate most often through nonverbal communication cues because nonverbal communication cues express emotions and feelings that are used to create intimacy. Prisen and Punyanunt-Carter (2009) espouse that, couples tend to use more nonverbal communication than verbal to show intimacy and emotions because it is claimed that nonverbal communication expresses the true feelings and emotions of people better than verbal communication. Therefore, the nonverbal communication cues of spousal communication should be a central focus of researchers to help develop effective interventions and to prevent distress (Patterson et al., 2022).

Grebelsky-Lichtman (2017) argues that there is a prevailing faith in the authenticity and truthfulness of nonverbal cues as compared to what others say. This means that, nonverbal communication involves an honest expression of an individual's opinions, thoughts, emotions and feelings because it is mostly subconscious or involuntary and is difficult to feign. Nonverbal communication cues are not easy to control like verbal

communication which is intentional and easier to manipulate (Grebelsky-Lichtman, 2017). As a result, people believe in the use of nonverbal communication better than what is actually said verbally. For instance, if a person says one thing, but sends a contradicting message nonverbally, the receiver is more likely to trust the nonverbal signal. This assertion by Grebelsky-Lichtman (2017) is affirmed by Vincent et al. (1979) cited in Rush (2020), Vincent et al. (1979) is noted to have observed 40 American middle-class volunteer 'distressed' and 'non-distressed' couples' behaviour in expressing happiness. The researchers realised that nonverbal communication provided the only basis for distinguishing between 'real' and 'faked' happiness between these categorised distressed and non-distressed couples. The study argued that the couples resorted to the use of nonverbal communication behaviours to decipher real and faked happiness because nonverbal communication behaviours are mostly subconscious and could express the true feelings or emotions of an individual.

The use of nonverbal communication cues is "trusted in intimacy relationships as it is seen as the window to the soul and cannot be manipulated or faked" (Burgoon et al., 2022, p. 10). It is the "window to the soul" because it reflects the fears, emotions, thoughts, and the deepest emotive shades of the user. Thus, when an individual is furious or excited, he/she would unconsciously depict a behaviour that could communicate his/her true state without their knowledge. As a result, couples believe that the nonverbal communication cues of their partners are the true reflections of their feelings and emotions. Burgoon et al. (2022) again emphasise that nonverbal communication is very important in spousal communication because it is spontaneously driven by emotional attachment of a person over another. Couples are therefore noted to use nonverbal communication often to convey their true feelings, emotions and

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thoughts, and to strengthen their emotional attachment and the relationship satisfaction (Burgoon et al., 2022).

Ledermann et al. (2019) describe spousal communication as the exchange of messages or information between spouses, whether through phone calls, letters, speeches, body languages or facial expressions. Awojo and Onwukwe (2019) further add that spousal communication is the exchange of perception, feelings, or ideas be it negative or positive with the aim of ensuring understanding. Thus, through spousal communication, disagreements are resolved, and understandings are established between partners and intimacy is heightened. Adewale (2016) emphasises that communication in marriage be it verbal or nonverbal is vital for marital success and should be encouraged at all times. This means that effective communication in marriages brings about satisfaction since each partner is able to express his or her happiness, sadness and dissatisfaction verbally or nonverbally to keep the marriage intact.

Esere (2006) suggests that communication is requisite wherever there is cohabitation and could be considered as the backbone of all relationships, most importantly, marriages. Therefore, there is congeniality in marriages where couples consciously or unconsciously discuss issues, share ideas or feelings and even jokes (Poret, 2017). Highlighting on the need for effective spousal communication, Jafari et al. (2021) posit that several marriages have been nullified due to poor spousal communication often referred to as episodes of "cold wars" in marriages. They further add that, the sharing of distorted information, and the miscalculation and misinterpretation of information are examples of "cold wars" in marriage. Jafari et al. (2021) revelation affirms Idowu and Esere's (2007) assertion that more than half of failed relationships are due to poor communication between couples and the perpetuating of cold wars. This revelation is

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an indication of the relationship between communication and marital satisfaction, either through verbal or nonverbal forms of communication for purposes of intimacy in relationships.

Advancing on the aforementioned studies, especially Patterson et al.'s (2022) postulation that scholarly attention should be given to the use of the nonverbal communication cues in spousal communication for purposes of relevance and to ensure effective spousal communication practices, this current study seeks to explore forms of nonverbal communication cues employed in spousal communication, their context-specific communicative functions, and the motivations behind the use of nonverbal communication cues, specifically by using graduate students in the School of Communication and Media Studies – University of Education, Winneba for purposes of ease of access to the sample and data.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The motivation for this study stems from the relevance of nonverbal communication in spousal communication against the literature on lack of proper communication as one of the factors for the fall-out of partners in marriages (Jafari et al., 2021; Poret, 2017). Through an informal sustained observation of some selected married couples, it was realised that the use of gestures, eye movements, and signs, among others communicate their ideas and feelings through diverse forms of further informal discussions with some couples revealed that nonverbal is context – specific and ensures a certain level of belonging. After extensively reviewing the literature on spousal communication, it was observed that, much attention had not been given to the communicative use of nonverbal cues, the forms of nonverbal communication cues, and the motivation for their use in routine communication. I therefore decided to familiarise myself

extensively with the literature on nonverbal communication in spousal communication and then occupy the established gap in literature of minimal studies.

Extant studies exist on nonverbal communication cues in relationships from different perspectives (Smith et al., 2011; Kotlyar & Ariely, 2013; Kanth & Tripathi, 2019: Gyasi & Bangmarigu, 2022). For instance, Smith et al. (2011) examined the power of touch as nonverbal communication employed by sixty-seven (67) Caucasians married dyads at Midwestern University, Arizona – USA because the researchers wanted to affirm or disaffirm DiBiase and Gunnoe's (2004) assertion that men engaged in tactile communication than women. The sample comprised husbands with an average age of thirty-eight (38) years and wives with an average age of thirty-seven (37) years. The researchers issued questionnaires to each partner after which, the couples were asked to discuss any topic of their choice with their partners. The study revealed that women engaged in touch more than men, especially when they were engaged in discussions on selected topics for attention such as getting their partners to side with what they are discussing. The research however was focused solely on touch within married dyads and so generalisation to other populations could not be made. The study, therefore recommended future researches to replicate their study or use a different sample from a different cultural background to examine other forms of nonverbal communication with the view to determine their context-specific meanings.

In a similar vein, Kotlyar and Ariely (2013) in a quantitative study examined the effects of nonverbal cues on relationship formation with a focus on exploring whether the lack of nonverbal cues which are not inherent in text-based communication tools such as dating sites affects communication and relationship building or not. The researchers created a Static Avatar Chat to solicit information through text chats where emojis of

nonverbal communication could be selected or used. The findings revealed that, the nonverbal communication tools or emojis provided greater variety of forms of nonverbal cues which were associated with better perceptions of information disclosure, resulting in a higher level of interests were developed in such online relationships. The study also indicated that the type of chats did not impact participants' confidence in the accuracy of their responses but that, the use of avatars can help improve online communication and strengthen relationship - formation before the relationship is moved offline. The study recommended that future researchers should consider how culture impacted self-presentation through the use of avatar chats and nonverbal behaviours. Although this current study is not focused on the use of avatar chats in online intimate communication, the similarity lies with the fact that the current study is on spousal communication which also involves an expression of intimacy as expressed in the avatar chats on the online dating sites. The point of departure is the setting of the current study which is offline and involves in-person interactions between some selected couples at the graduate school of a university in Ghana, Africa.

Kanth and Tripathi (2019) in a quantitative study examined the relationship between nonverbal behaviour, relationship satisfaction and duration of marriage using a sample of two hundred (200) graduate couples comprising of one hundred (100) males and one hundred (100) females. Questionnaire and a likert scale to solicit information and to measure the relationship between nonverbal behaviour, relationship satisfaction and duration of marriage. The study revealed a positive correlation between nonverbal behaviour, relationship satisfaction and duration of marriage among married couples. Also, the findings showed that an increase in duration of marriage was often accompanied by an increased use of nonverbal behaviour which translated into

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relationship satisfaction. Simply put, when the duration in relationship increases, there is significant increase in the usage of nonverbal behaviour in the relationship. Again, when the duration in marriage increases, there is a significant increase in the relationship satisfaction amongst couples because as the duration increases, the couples get to know and understand each other better, and that leads to satisfaction and nonverbal cues are key to this success. The study concluded that communication is associated with relationship satisfaction and nonverbal cues are key to this success. Kanth and Tripathi (2019) however, recommended that their study can be replicated in the same area but with a different population to help increase the understanding of the variables measured in their study. Basically, Kanth and Tripathi's (2019) study is different from the current study in terms of data collection processes. Thus, whereas Kanth and Tripathi (2019) used questionnaires to access data by virtue of the large amounts of information they were seeking from a sizeable sample, and to measure behaviour, this current study used interviews to better understand and explore the phenomenon from the participants' natural environment. The current study also focused on the forms of nonverbal cues in spousal communication, and not necessarily the relationship between nonverbal cues, marital satisfaction and the duration of marriage.

Comparably, Gyasi and Bangmarigu (2022) explored forms of nonverbal cues employed by couples in expressing anger and dissatisfaction in a Ghanaian nuclear family setting. The study investigated the challenges associated with the use of forms of nonverbal communication cues, and examined the extent couples appreciate the nonverbal forms used by their partners in expressing anger and dissatisfaction. The Expectancy Violation Theory (Burgoon, 1993) underpinned the study and the researchers purposively selected thirty (30) participants from the Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Coast. The participants were made up of sixteen (16) females and

fourteen (14) males. The researchers used face-to-face interviews to gather the needed data. The study revealed that couples use proxemics, oculesics, chronemics, kinesics, and nonverbal behavioural cues to express anger and dissatisfaction. The participants indicated that they exhibited the nonverbal forms of communication cues such as eye contact, refusal to sleep in the bedroom, nodding and shaking the head, and frowning, among others. The study also revealed that sometimes the couples encountered difficulties such as misinterpretation of the cues or inability to interpret the cues as required. Gyasi and Bangmarigu's (2022) study is similar to this current study in terms of data collection method. Thus, both studies employed interviews in collecting data. However, the current study extends the focus of Gyasi and Bangmarigu's (2022) by identifying different use of forms of nonverbal communication cues by couples including the expression of emotions, thoughts, among others and not only in expressing anger and dissatisfaction. Also, the current study furthers that of Gyasi and Bangmarigu (2022) by exploring the motivations behind the use of different forms of nonverbal cues in spousal communication. In furtherance, the current study is underpinned by the Theory of nonverbal communication (Bonaccio et al., 2016) and McClelland Theory of Needs (McClelland, 1961), and not the Expectancy Violation Theory (Burgoon, 1993) which underpinned Gyasi and Bangmarigu's (2022) study.

Based on the foregoing reviewed studies, there seems to be a paucity of studies on forms of nonverbal communication cues employed by couples, the communicative functions of the cues and the motivations for using such forms. Hence, the need to fill this gap in literature by conducting a qualitative case study with a focus on forms of nonverbal communication cues employed in spousal communication of graduate students from the School of Communication and Media Studies – University of Education, Winneba.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is guided by the following objectives;

1. To identify the forms of nonverbal communication cues employed in spousal communication by graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies (SCMS).

2. To examine the context-specific communicative functions of the identified nonverbal forms employed in spousal communication by graduate students of SCMS.

3. To explore the motivations for using the identified nonverbal forms employed in spousal communication by the graduate students of the SCMS.

1.4 Research Questions

This research is guided by the following research questions;

1. What forms of nonverbal communication cues are employed in spousal communication by graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies (SCMS)?

2. What are the context-specific communicative functions of the identified forms of nonverbal cues employed in spousal communication by graduate students of the SCMS?

3. What are the motivations behind the use of the identified nonverbal cues employed in spousal communication by graduate students of the SCMS**?**

1.5 Significance of the Study

Nonverbal communication is a universal language often used to show intimacy by couples (Burgoon et al., 2022) and should be accorded scholarly attention from different perspectives. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing literature on

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spousal communication as a knowledge bank where students and researchers could further inquire into the phenomenon of nonverbal communication cues in spousal communication from diverse perspectives with the view to either extend the study, affirm the findings or reject the findings of this current study. Researcher interested in the phenomenon can also replicate the study in different settings and to determine if the findings would be different or similar as well as examine the extent of the implications of the study.

This study has unearthed forms of nonverbal communication cues employed by married graduate students at the School of Communication and Media Studies (SCMS) and the context-specific communicative functions shed light on the intricacies of spousal communication. The findings as such serve as a guide to improve the use of nonverbal communication as context-specific and should be appreciated differently in different contexts. Thus, the interpretation of nonverbal communication would not be the same for every couple and each couple should appreciate and understand their own nonverbal communication cues contextually.

Also, this study has unearthed the motivations behind the use of nonverbal communication cues in spousal communication of married graduate students at SCMS. This would help in understanding the psychological, emotional, and relational motivations that influence nonverbal communication behaviours in spousal relationships.

1.6 Delimitation

This study focused on exploring nonverbal communication cues in spousal communication and the sample is limited to only married graduate students at the School of Communication and Media Studies – University of Education, Winneba.

Although spousal communication could be studied from diverse perspectives, this study is limited to exploring the forms of nonverbal communication cues used in spousal communication, examine their content-specific communicative functions, as well as explore the motivations for using such nonverbal communication cues. The study is thus limited to only thirty-three (33) married graduate students who consented to participate in the study. These thirty-three (33) participants consented to participate in the study through a recruitment and consent form which was distributed.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

The study is structured into five interrelated chapters. Chapter one presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, and organisation of the study. Chapter two is dedicated to the review of the literature relevant to the current study and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. Chapter three presents the research methods and procedures used for collection of data for the study. The chapter also includes the research approach, research design, sampling technique and sample size, data collection methods, data collection procedures and the methods of analysing the data. Chapter four discusses the analysis and discussions of the results obtained from the data for the study. The chapter five presents the summary of the findings, and the conclusions drawn from the recommendations of the study. The limitations and recommendations for further studies are also presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This study sought to explore forms of nonverbal communication cues employed by couples, identify their context-specific communicative functions, and examine the motivation for using the identified nonverbal communication forms. The chapter comprises a review of the relevant literature related to the study where the review is categorised under sub themes; namely, the concept of nonverbal communication, nonverbal communication cues, spousal communication, nonverbal cues in spousal communication, communicative functions of nonverbal communication cues, and motivation for employing nonverbal forms in spousal communication. Additionally, the chapter discusses the theories (Theory of Nonverbal Communication & McClelland's Human Motivation Theory) underpinning the study as well as the relevance to the study.
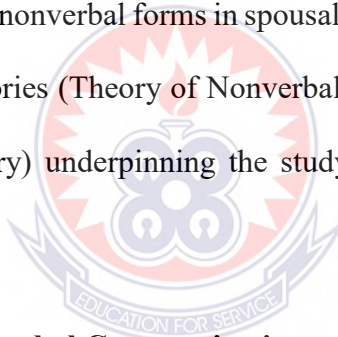
2.1 The Concept of Nonverbal Communication

The nonverbal aspect of communication involves the use of all kinds of communication without the use of words or language (Wisankosol, 2018). Nonverbal communication is considered vital and omnipresent in all aspects of human communication (Burgoon et al., 2022). Nonverbal communication is considered an integral part of daily human communication since it is unconsciously or consciously produced (Etman & Elkareh, 2021). That is to say, nonverbal communication is inevitable because it is an integral part of human existence whether consciously or unconsciously.

The study of nonverbal communication can be traced back to the early 1872 when Charles Darwin published his book *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and*

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Animals. In Charles Darwin's book, he studied the communication of animals like lions, tigers, dogs, and others and realised that animals communicate through gestures and expressions which constitute nonverbal communication. Darwin (1872) argued that, animals could only express themselves nonverbally, and because humans are descendants of animals, they also communicate nonverbally.

After the publication of Charles Darwin's book, the scientific study of nonverbal communication no longer became a grey area and many scholars began studying nonverbal behaviours across various fields (McCornack, 2019). For instance, Albert Mehrabian became one of the first scholars to study the nonverbal communication patterns of human beings in 1967. He conducted two experiments with two different scholars on nonverbal communication by comparing facial and vocal components to decipher a person's attitude. Both studies dealt with the manner within which individuals communicate emotions (negative or positive) as expressed and displayed in single emotional-bearing words. Mehrabian believed that, when there are inconsistencies between attitudes communicated verbally and nonverbally, the nonverbal component should dominate in determining the total attitude that is inferred.

In the first experiment, Mehrabian and Wiener (1967) investigated the impact of spoken words and intonation, and the effect of spoken words on a listener when the spoken words are inconsistent with the tone of voice. Thirty (30) participants were divided into three (3) groups and were asked to listen to the recordings of two (2) women who read nine (9) different words (three positives- 'dear', 'thanks' and 'honey'; three neutral – 'maybe', 'oh', and 'really'; and three negatives – 'brute', 'don't' and 'terrible'). It was realised that the women spoke in three (3) different tones which were; positive, negative and neutral. The participants were thus instructed to rate the degree of the positive

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attitude of the women, subject to the following instructions; (1) paying attention only to content, (2) paying attention only to the tone of the voice, and (3) paying attention to all available information surrounding the communication event. The result of the experiment indicated that participants were better in detecting emotions in tone than in spoken words.

In the second experiment, Mehrabian and Ferris (1967) also investigated these factors; tone of voice and facial expression, had a greater impact on the listener. The participants of the study listened to recordings of three women repeating the single word 'maybe' in three different tones (i.e.; like, neutral, and dislike). Later, the participants were presented with facial photos of the females expressing the same three (3) emotions, and were asked to guess the emotions in the recorded voices, in the photos and both in the recorded voices and photos. The experiment revealed that the participants were better at detecting the emotions in the photo than that in the recordings.

Based on the findings of the two (2) experiments, Mehrabian devised a formula to describe how the mind determines meaning known as the "7 -38 – 55 rule" (Mehrabian, 1967). He concluded that, the interpretation of a message is seven percent (7%) verbal, thirty-eight percent (38%) vocal and fifty-five percent (55%) visual. Mehrabian then concluded that, ninety-three percent (93%) of communication is nonverbal in nature. However, Mehrabian's experiment received a lot of criticisms where some critics argued that the situations used in the study were artificial, the participants were aware of the experimental scope, and the experiments' structure, and that, there was a limited amount of talking (Burgoon et al., 2022). Some scholars like (Belludi, 2008; Raymond, 2016; Keutchafo et al., 2020 etc.) in spite of the criticisms, still ascribe to the '7-38-55 rule'.

Additionally, Spence (2020), hinging on Mehrabian's formula of '7-38-55 rule', emphasised that nonverbal communication cues carry approximately eighty percent (82%) of a message's communicative value. This shows that nonverbal communication does not only complement communication but takes the majority aspect of the communication. In effect, these multiple revelations among scholars provide a significant direction to the point that nonverbal communication is an important aspect of human interaction and should be given the needed scholarly attention from diverse perspectives since it takes majority aspect of communication.

The nonverbal aspect of communication is considered essential and more interesting to be studied than verbal communication due to the fact that, experts of communication science have established that majority of the humans' communication is done nonverbally (Raymond, 2016). As established by Raymond (2016), pitch, tone of voice, speed, rhythm of a spoken word, and the pauses between words are all forms of nonverbal communication or paralanguage or vocalics. Humans rely heavily on nonverbal forms of communication than on verbal communication (Frank & Solbu, 2020). This is because nonverbal communication complements and solidifies meaning. Netelenbos et al. (2018) argue that since humans are innately predisposed to nonverbal communication, even before birth, the fetus in the uterus develops awareness of its mother's presence through the sense of touch and hearing. Then after birth, the infant's awakening shows that communication is done through signs and sounds constituting words. In essence, nonverbal communication cues can be considered as the innate and unlearned aspects of human communication.

Based on the ongoing discussions, a number of studies (Keutchafo et al., 2020; Akoja et al., 2019; Ananda et al., 2020; Malnab & Humaerah's, 2021; Khan and Zeb, 2021) have been conducted on nonverbal communication in different contexts including the classroom, work place, and hospital, among. For instance, Akoja et al. (2019), examined how caregivers use nonverbal communication cues to enhance patients' well-being and satisfaction. The study adopted the quantitative approach of a survey to analyse nonverbal communication of caregivers (doctors and nurses) working in Ikene Local Government (IKLG) using two (2) healthcare facilities; Babcock University Teaching Hospital and the only General Hospital in IKLG. Data was gathered through a questionnaire and results presented using simple percentages and tables. The study was underpinned by two theories; interactional adaptation theory and Peplau's theory. The Interactional Adaptation theory helped the researchers to establish the interaction between the caregiver and the patient, thus, how each adapts to a communication process, whilst the Peplau's theory helped determine the caregivers' logical thinking based on how they treat their patients. It emerged from the study that the caregivers were able to enhance the patients' well-being and satisfaction through nonverbal communication cues like touching, use of body language, eye contact and smiling. Thereby, providing a sense of warmth, empathy, caring, reassurance and support to their patients. Hence, the patients interpreted a tap on the shoulder by a doctor or nurse as a sign of comfort, respect and affection. The study then concluded that doctors and nurses' use of nonverbal communication cues have been linked to patient recovery including satisfaction, adherence to instruction, and trust. The study recommended nurses and doctors to be conversant with how they use nonverbal cues in order to communicate more effectively. Meanwhile, the study did not specify the sample size of the participants. Making known the size and specific participants would inform future

research. Consequently, the findings of Akoja et al. (2019) could be compared with the communicative functions of the nonverbal cues of couples to exhibit a sense of warmth, empathy, reassurance, and support, among others.

Corroboratively, Keutchafo et al. (2020), in a systematic scoping review, explored twenty-two (22) articles on the evidence of nonverbal communication between nurses and older adults with no mental illness or communication impairment. The study discovered that diverse research methods have been employed within the selected twenty-two (22) studies where thirteen (13) were qualitative involving interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations, among others. Also, one (1) article was a survey, another a randomised controlled trial study and a mixed method. The remaining three (3) were related to continuous professional development studies. Out of the twenty-two (22) articles, twenty (20) articles reported that nurses use nonverbal communication behaviours such as haptics, kinesics, proxemics, vocalics, active listening, artefacts, and chronemics to communicate with older adults. Thus, haptics, kinesics, proxemics, and vocalics were the most frequently used nonverbal communication behaviours by nurses when communicating with older adults. The study espoused that nurses also used nonverbal communication behaviours to joke, praise, seek or convey attention, stimulate, show care, indicate acceptance or rejection, indicate presence, resolve disagreements amicably, and to create a sign of interest in the older adults. The study further argued that the most used nonverbal communication behaviour was haptics, because touch is an essential and an unavoidable part of nurse-patient communication with older patients. Based on the review, the study concluded that studies into nonverbal communication between nurses and older adults without mental illness or communication impairment must be conducted, particularly in Asia and Africa. The proposed studies were to provide an African and Asian insight into

nonverbal communication in health related issues and help answer the WHO's call for more data on the need and status of older adults. Keutchafo et al.'s (2020) findings corroborates Akoja et al.'s (2019) finding that caregivers enhance patients' well-being and satisfaction through nonverbal communication.

Similarly, Ananda et al.'s (2020) explored the types of nonverbal communication performed by foreign English language teachers using Affective Communication theory (Schmitz, 2012). The study sought to determine students' responses to foreign English teacher's use of nonverbal communication through descriptive qualitative approach. The data was collected through observations, interviews and open-ended questionnaire. Thirty-one (31) students completed the open-ended questionnaire and sixteen (16) students were engaged in interviews. At the end of the study, it was revealed that about eighty percent (80%) of the foreign English teachers use nonverbal communication cues such as kinesics, vocalics, and proxemics in teaching. This study focused on nonverbal cues teachers employ in the classroom and not the nonverbal cues couples employ in spousal communication.

Ananda et al. (2020) study was extended by Malnab and Humaerah's (2021) in a case study on the kinds of Kinesics used by a particular English Teacher in the English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom at the Islamic State Institute of Kendari. The data was collected through an observation checklist and video recordings. The data were analysed based on Ekman and Friesen's (1969) nonverbal communication theory on kinesics. The findings revealed that the English language teacher used all kinds of kinesics such as illustrators, regulators, emblems, and adaptors to improve the processes of teaching and learning of the English language. Ananda et al.'s (2020) study also corroborates with Malnab and Humaerah (2021) whose finding revealed that teachers

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use kinesics to facilitate teaching and learning. Based on these findings, it could be emphasised that nonverbal communication in the classroom helps students to grasp contents easily to make the teaching and learning process effective. The study thus recommended that teachers of language should be mindful of their use of nonverbal communication cues in an ELT classroom and not distort the learning process. This is another important context of human interaction where nonverbal communication has been found to enhance social relations and greatly impact goal oriented communication activities, hence the need for this current study too. This study emphasises was also on nonverbal cues of teachers in the classroom just like Ananda et al. (2020). This shows that much emphasis has been given to teacher's nonverbal cues than couples' nonverbal cues. Therefore, there is the need to explore couples use of nonverbal cues in spousal communication.

Further, Khan and Zeb (2021) have contributed to studies on nonverbal communication by qualitatively exploring the influence of nonverbal communication on human interaction using students in Parkistan in a case study. The purpose of the study was to determine whether teachers' nonverbal communication has any influence on the students' performance, and also examine the students' perception regarding the use of nonverbal communication cues in the academia and their impact. The study sampled thirty-seven (37) Pakistani undergraduate students from Quaid-i-Azam University using a random sampling technique. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data from the students and a conventional content analysis framework was also used to analyse the data. At the end of the study, two (2) themes namely; determinants of effectual performance and perceived hurdles for students learning were derived. The first theme, which is determinants of effectual performance, reflects the essential nonverbal features which were perceived by the students as a source of encouragement

from the teacher, was rightly used and properly displayed during the communication. These essential features being perceived by the students as a source of encouragement are eye contact, body language, gestures, and the voice quality of the teacher. The second theme was the composite of perceived hurdles by the students. Features which emerged under the perceived hurdles are extra movements, greater distance, and staring at an individual. Again, another important conclusion that could be arrived at from the above study is the fact that nonverbal communication is an important aspect of human interaction since it defines people and the understanding of this essentially effectual, yet oblivious feature of language makes it easier for people to know its impact and effect of their use in complementing communication.

In summary, based on the studies reviewed, it can be emphasised that, nonverbal communication is relevant in all aspects of human communication irrespective of the situation or environment. It enhances social interactions and contributes positively to benefits that can be derived from conscious or unconscious use of language within a social context. Meanwhile, studies on nonverbal communication have focused mainly in the classroom and hospitals. Hence, understanding the importance and kinds of nonverbal cues in spousal communications, may yield similar dividends in marital contexts for further studies.

2.2 Nonverbal Cues of Communication

Burgoon et al. (2022) allude to the fact that, nonverbal cues make up a "universal language" (p.10). Due to the universality of the cues, they are given importance because they can be used regardless of whether the interlocutors share the same language or not. However, in terms of interpreting or decoding the cues, the cultural backgrounds of the interlocutors contribute to the use and interpretation of the cues even though they are

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the same cues everyone uses (Burgoon et al., 2022). These nonverbal communication cues include, body posture, tone, pitch of speaker, personal space, gestures, facial expressions, and hair style, among others (Wacewicz & Zywiczynski, 2012).

Khan and Zeb (2021) postulate that nonverbal cues generally present the true intentions of someone through smiling, cheering, frown on the face, among others. Mandal (2014) establishes that, nonverbal communication cues enhance the elaboration and understanding of verbal messages. Mandal (2014) further noted that nonverbal communication cues that come with verbal communication help the receiver or listener to understand the message the speaker or sender is communicating better. That is to say, nonverbal communication cues are simply a more effective channel used in transmitting feelings, thoughts and ideas without using words.

Haneef et al. (2014) espouse that people are typically unaware of the signals they send nonverbally when communicating with others. The way they use body language, how they occupy personal space, how they look physically, how they sound, and how they make eye contact all give the listener additional insightful information. Haneef et al. (2014) further add that nonverbal communication cues express the most genuine and effective kind of information or message of a speaker which helps in enhancing both verbal communication and the conversation process. This suggests that nonverbal communication contributes greatly to the overall communication process. Not only do they augment the normal verbal communication process, they also can be perceived as a major communication channel that is capable of influencing a communication activity independently.

Reverting to the view of Goffman (1959), cited in Burgoon et al. (2022), actions are exhibited as spontaneous cues or symptoms. In that, communication cues are characterised by an innate relationship between the signifier and the signified and as such, could manifest naturally. For instance, "crying may come naturally when an individual is upset, when something gets into the eyes, or when people are sentimental. Thus, shaking hands could be an outward manifestation of interior feelings of anxiety" (Burgoon et al., 2022, p. 14). It is significant to note that these cues constitute a component of the communicative context within which it is being used.

On the other hand, cues that are given meaning are communicative in that they are, at least in part, oriented to an audience. According to Cherry (2022), these cues can take one of two different forms comprising symbols and pseudo-spontaneous. Symbols are signs in which the relationship between the object and its meaning is arbitrary (Burgoon et al., 2022). Arbitrary here means that the symbol or object is chosen to mean something at that particular point even though there is no natural relationship between the object and what it represents (Burgoon et al., 2022, p. 14). Therefore, in order to comprehend cues that take the form of 'symbols', researchers must first realise that the cues are arbitrary (human-made) stand-ins for the concepts they represent. For instance, nodding the head to something has value or meaning because someone chooses to exhibit it at that point. Furthermore, the cues are only significant if humans understand what the signs selected symbolise. This means is that nonverbal cues are often context-based and could reveal individuals or groups agreed or perceived meanings attributed to them (Cherry, 2022).

The second form that cues can take is what Cherry (2022) and Remland (2017) refer to as pseudo-spontaneous, semblances, or iconic cues. Even though they are rather prevalent, they are however perplexing. These sign types have a fundamentally natural relationship with their signifier, but when they are utilized, that relationship is broken or it does, but the behaviours are exaggerated in some way (Remland, 2017). For instance, even if a person does not feel sad, they might sigh in sympathy when someone says something sad. The sigh is not actually coming from a sensation, but it nonetheless resembles or indicates someone is feeling sad because it is the sign normally used to express sadness (Burgoon et al., 2022). Another scenario is when a person is surprised by something a friend has said and exaggerates the facial expressions to show it (typically without realising it), which helps the other person understand the emotion being conveyed. This could happen without necessarily meaning to send a message that is easier to read, but it can only happen when one is in a position where communication is necessary.
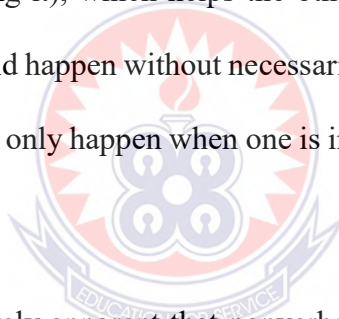
In essence, it is immediately apparent that nonverbal cues, indicators or signifiers do not only exist in one form. They might be, in many ways, connected to their meant or referent. They are very rich system for communication because of their diversity. That is why every cue is used or can be used differently by different kinds of people to mean different things. Some cues may have a fixed signified or referent, but can still be used to mean different things in different cultures or by different people. Based on this, studying the context-specific communicative functions of couples nonverbal cues would help affirm the diversified nature of the nonverbal cues as well as provide a frame for understanding how nonverbal cues project their significance in the marital context.

2.3 Spousal Communication

Spousal communication is the exchange of ideas, thoughts, feelings and behaviours among couples using words or signs and symbols (Omeje et al., 2022). Marital communication or spousal communication can be defined as the verbal and nonverbal exchange of information between spouses (Adekunbi, 2014). It is the process of sending and receiving messages between husband and wife as they interact in the marriage relationship (Nnadozie, 2014). Jent (1972), cited in Esere et al. (2014), elucidates that spousal communication is the constant exchange of information of messages between spouses through speech, letter writing, talking on phone, the exhibition of bodily or facial expression, and other methods as well. Simply put, spousal communication is the process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, feelings or behaviours, whether verbal or nonverbal among couples.

Spousal communication is very important because it goes beyond greetings, and making some remarks at the dinner table (Uwom-Ajaegbu et al., 2015). It comprises all the exchange of ideas, thoughts, feelings and behaviours among couples using words or signs and symbols. Spousal communication can be said to be "the glue that holds marriage together" (Adekunbi, 2014, p. 5). It helps couples to build up courage which is one of the character traits in any successful marriage (Omeje et al., 2022). It is a pillar which maintains the structure of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding.

Spousal communication is essential to maintaining harmonious relationships and is a strong foundation of marriage (Handayani et al., 2008). Uwom-Ajaegbu et al. (2015) espouse that the happiness of a couple depends largely on the effectiveness of their communication; how they communicate can make or mar their relationship. He adds that spousal communication sparks caring, giving, sharing and affirming, and this

depends on proper utilisation of the principles of listening and speaking. Therefore, spousal communication is the key to a strong, effective and healthy relationship, and effective spousal communication will allow the couples to negotiate problem areas, fulfill needs, avoid misunderstandings, and develop intimacy.

Interest in spousal communication has intrigued many scholars over the years. For instance, Rusmaan (2019) examined the interpersonal relationship and communication between couples at Batu City, Indonesia. The theory that underpinned the study was the Social Penetration Theory by Altman and Taylor (1973). This study is a qualitative-descriptive research in the form of a case study. Three (3) couples were selected using quota sampling. The data were collected through in-depth interviews and free-talk, especially, interpersonal interview with each person without the involvement of the partner. The data were further analysed descriptively to depict the relationship and interpersonal communication between the husbands and wives. The study revealed that dynamics in communication and relationships among couples and in all, three (3) relationship patterns were identified. The first couple's relationship style was that of 'friend' or 'enemy', giving colours to the relationship in the early years of marriage whereas the second couple pattern of relation was 'parent-child' where the husband often facilitates the role of parents in dealing with the wife. The third couple's case was 'adult-adult' relationship pattern. This is because both participants managed and did things together without exhibiting any form of dependence or superiority over the other. The study recommends that for effective communication among couples, couples must study each other to enable them use the most suitable communication patterns to ensure successful spousal communication.

Studies have shown that when couples fail to identify the most suitable communication patterns for stability of marriage, it is likely to crumble. This is revealed in Johnson et al.'s (2022) study where the behavioural theory was used to determine how deviations from one's own communication pattern help to predict future deviation in one's own and partner's relationship satisfaction. The sample for the study was recruited from 2007 to 2008 through a calling center that used targeted-listed telephone sampling technique to call households in the Contiguous United States (48 states in North America). As baseline, a sample of three hundred and sixteen (316) focal participants were recruited. Questionnaires were administered via email to the participants for data collection. It emerged from the study that when couples deviate from their specific communication patterns, there is deviation or no marital satisfaction among the couples and vice versa.

Moreover, Okorodudu (2010) emphasises that spousal communication enhances understanding, clears up doubts, promotes decision-making in the home as well as offers mental and creative expressions by couples on performances of their domestic responsibilities and duties. Drawing on these assertions, Nnadozie (2014) also avers that effective marital communication is the live-wire that strengthens the bond or relationship of a couple. Hence, without effective communication among couples, there would be no successful or satisfactory relationship between couples.

Over the years, poor and ineffective communication among couples have affected the growth and development of many homes (Esere et al., 2014). Esere et al.'s (2014) survey investigated obstacles to effective communication among couples in Kogi State, Nigeria using six-hundred and sixty (660) couples. A researcher-designed instrument named *Obstacles and Suggested Solutions to Effective Communication in Marriage*

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Questionnaire (OSSECMQ) was developed to access data. Using descriptive statistical analysis, the findings revealed that a possible obstacle to effective communication in marriages is ineffective interactions or communication. The study further argued that ineffective interaction happens when there is conflict or misunderstanding among couples, hence conflict in marriages should be minimised for effective communication to take place. The study concluded that the most expressed obstacle to effective communication in marriage is 'harsh tone of voice during conversation'. The researchers recommended that couples recognise the uniqueness of communicating by each person and understand as such. In essence, couples should learn to appreciate each other's patterns of communication to avoid conflicts which could lead to the lack of communication. The study however, did not take into consideration how other communicative elements such as nonverbal cues could affect the success or failure of a marital relationship. It also failed to analyse how 'getting home late on regular basis' could be perceived or interpreted as a form of nonverbal communication pattern adopted by a partner to drive home a specific message consciously or unconciously.

The ability for couples to communicate effectively is central to the establishment of a good marital relationship (Esere, 2001). Without communication, values, attitudes, feelings, knowledge, beliefs, and behaviours cannot be fully understood (Ojiah, 2004). For instance, some studies have shown that in intercultural marriages, it is communication that holds the marriage together. Tili and Barker (2015) in a qualitative study explored communication in intercultural marriages. The purpose of the study was to develop a theoretical framework, identify the factors that spouses perceive to influence the effectiveness of their communication, and also explore the experiences of the couples. The study also sought to navigate the process of developing intercultural competence in order to enhance communication, and examine how the couples perceive

and manage conflict. The study sampled nine (9) intercultural couples made up of Caucasian - American spouses (5 men and 4 women) who had lived primarily in the United States, and Asian spouses (3 Filipinos, 3 Koreans, 2 Japanese, and 1 Chinese), and had either spent the majority of their childhood in an Asian country or had grown up in a home where their minority culture was fully embraced. The participants for the study were recruited through personal networking and snowball sampling techniques. The researchers used biographical phenomenology or life-story interviewing to solicit information from the participants from which the data was thematically analysed. The study identified the most salient factors that influence spousal communication as; personal growth, language fluency, and high or low-context communication styles. For the navigation of the process of developing intercultural competence, the themes that emerged from the study are; self-awareness, open-mindedness, mindfulness, self-disclosure, supporting face, and showing respect. The study also revealed that the couples demonstrated the willingness to change their individual perspectives and to openly address conflicts using the intercultural communication competence they had developed. The study concluded that although individual differences and conflicts must be addressed in all marriages, intercultural marriages face additional challenges stemming from differing values, orientations and communication styles, and lack of language fluency. The study however, suggested that individuals in intercultural marriages undergo acculturative changes in order to enjoy the benefit of personal growth and the opportunity to construct a unique identity by blending features from two distinct cultures.

The promotion of good communication in marriage is a major solution to many cases of marital discord in the society (Okesina, 2022). As a result of the essential nature of communication in marriage, military couples on deployment find ways to communicate

with their spouses and to keep their marriages intact. A similar study by Carter and Renshaw (2015) had reviewed seventeen (17) articles on spousal communication during military deployments and realised that due to the affordances of technology, military couples on deployment are able to easily communicate with their partners. The study however proved that different media such as video calling, phone calls and letters serve different functions in communication during deployment. The study concluded on the advantages and disadvantages resulting from the various types of communication media during deployment. Based on the review, the study recommended future researches on how communication could function in other relationships beside that of the military.

In summary, the studies reviewed show the vitality of spousal communication and the extent to which various categories of couples are able to adopt strategies to keep communication as a top priority. Therefore, no matter the distance, couples have to communicate using any means available to ensure effective and healthy spousal life since it is the cord that binds a husband and a wife together, and help strengthen the bond of marital relationships even across boundaries.

2.4 Empirical Review of Nonverbal Communication in Spousal Communication

Some studies (Prinsen & Punyanunt-Carter, 2009; Gonzalez, 2020; Mahmood & Hussein, 2020) have attempted to focus attention on nonverbal communication in spousal communication. Prinsen and Punyanunt-Carter (2009) studied the differences in nonverbal behaviour and how it changes at different stages of a relationship. The purpose of the study was to investigate the gender differences in using nonverbal behaviour and also determine how nonverbal behaviours change overtime. One hundred and forty-five (145) students enrolled in a basic communication course from

Southwestern University, Texas - USA were used for this study. The study revealed that women rated items concerning nonverbal communication statistically higher compared to men. The study also revealed that nonverbal behaviours change in different stages of a relationship; thus, casual dating partners use less nonverbal behaviour than individuals from an engaged or married relationship do. The study concluded that nonverbal behaviours change at different stages of a relation, and there is the need to recognise the change and interpret as such. This study could have qualitatively focused on the differences in nonverbal behaviour and how it changes at different stages of a relationship, and provide descriptive interpretation of the findings for people to understand the differences and why it changes at different stage than using quantitative research.

In a survey, Gonzalez (2020) studied the benefits of nonverbal communication behaviours to intimate relationships and to determine if couples in longer relationships express nonverbal communication behaviours than couples in shorter relationships. Through a convenience sampling strategy, adults in exclusively intimate relationships were surveyed on their nonverbal immediacy behaviours. The sample consisted of adults ranging in age from 19 to 74. The shortest relationship length was pecked at two (2) months and the longest was fifty-seven (57) years. The findings revealed that couples in short term relationships are more likely to actively maintain their relationship by practicing nonverbal communication behaviors compared to couples in long term relationships. The study concluded that the study was based on particular nonverbal immediacy behaviours and not limited to only those studied. This study emphasised that couples employ nonverbal cues just that the frequent use differs in terms of number of years the couples have been together. The study fails to establish the nonverbal cues the couples use during interaction.

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Operating from a Sociopragmatic approach, Mahmood and Hussein (2020) investigated how the sociological interface of pragmatics influence the usage of nonverbal communication cues. The study randomly sampled one hundred (100) participants from refugees in the Kurdistan region of Iraq and analysed the data on the contextual sociopragmatic variables including gender, age, ethnicity and religion, and their influence on the use of the nonverbal cues use. The study revealed that males and females use nonverbal cues distinctively, and this was evident in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and religion. The findings of the study corroborate with an earlier study by Prinsen and Punyanunt-Carter (2009) which showed that females' use nonverbal communication cues differently from that of males. However, the study was not focused on married individuals. It focused on every individual irrespective of age, gender, marital status, among others. The study could have investigated how the sociological interface of pragmatics influence the usage of nonverbal communication cues in marriages or among the youth etc.

2.5 Communicative Functions of Forms of Nonverbal Communication Cues

Ascribing meaning or interpreting nonverbal cues has received contention among researchers (Austin, 2013). The decision of where to best situate the judge of meaning and what constitutes communication is known to be based on a researcher's orientation and approached from a variety of angles (Burgoon et al., 2022). Austin (2013) defines communicative function as "the purpose of vocal, gestural and verbal acts that intend to communicate messages to others" (p. 1). Thus, the intended meaning or purpose for using verbal or nonverbal communication. Burgoon et al. (2022) assert that nonverbal cues can be interpreted from four orientations, namely; source orientation, receiver orientation, interaction orientation and message orientation. These orientations are noted to be useful in providing interpretations for nonverbal cues. Firstly, *source*

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orientation, considered to be up to the person using the cue to decide if it is communicative or not or what it means. That is, the person using the cue needs to determine the meaning. Secondly, *the receiver orientation* maintains that everything a recipient interprets as a message constitutes communication, regardless of the source's awareness, and that the meaning the receiver receives is what matters most. Thirdly, *the interaction orientation* also asserts that those involved frequently in communication collaborate to ascertain the purpose and significance of any message being shared. This perspective focuses on ways by which individuals engage with one another and create meaning (Burgoon et al., 2022). For instance, if couples sit to discuss each other's use of nonverbal cues, they are likely to come up with a shared understanding of what each other's cues represent. Therefore, as people collaborate to determine meanings for particular behaviours, a shared meaning is developed as opposed to diverse interpretations. Fourthly, *the message orientation* (Burgoon et al., 2022) shifts the focus from determining meaning and communication potential of a cue from an individual to the larger communicative system or content. Thus, behaviours or cues that convey intents are frequently used by society or group of people and have been assigned specific meanings that are widely or generally recognised. For instance, 'frowning' is a cue generally accepted and recognised as anger or not happy. Therefore, for message orientation, the meaning of the cue is generally accepted and reorganised by every individual.

Further, nonverbal communication cues specifically perform some basic functions as stipulated in literature (Knapp & Hall, 2006). Scholars including Malandro et al. (1989), Knapp and Hall (2006), and Wrench et al. (2022) espouse that, nonverbal communication codes or behaviours function in six (6) main ways; complementing, repeating, accenting, contradicting, substituting, and regulating. Malandro et al. (1989)

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emphasise that, the first three functions; complementing, repeating, and accenting, work 'with' the meaning of verbal messages. For instance, a nonverbal communication cue that functions as *complement* adds additional information to verbal messages. Malandro et al. (1989) further state that, the tone of voice, facial expression, and gestures complements verbal message by clarifying or reinforcing the meaning of the entire message. For instance, Gerber and Murphy (2021) exemplified that when a friend says they have been promoted with an increased pay at work, we mostly exclaim, 'wow, this's amazing! I am happy for you!' whilst we smile or hug them at the same time. Here, the 'smiling' or 'hugging' is complementing the verbal message. Also, some nonverbal communication cues function as *repetition* to clarify verbal messages just like those used as complements. For instance, when someone says he/she is angry while frowning, the 'frowning' is further repeating or emphasising the anger. The difference between 'repeat' and 'complement' is that, nonverbal communication cues that function as repeat can make meaning on their own whereas the complement cannot (Wrench et al., 2022). Accenting which is the third is a nonverbal communication technique used to highlight a word or other element of a statement (Gerber & Murphy, 2021). For instance, when slamming hand on table is used in conjunction with a word such as 'no', the person has emphasised or highlighted 'no' by slamming the hand on the table while saying it.

The last three; contradicting, substituting, and regulating do not work with the meaning of verbal messages but show the communicative value of a message (Malandro et al., 1989). Nonverbal communication cues functioning as *contradictory* contradicts verbal messages, therefore, making it difficult for the participants using the cues to decode the 'mixed' messages. For instance, when an individual expresses appreciation for a gift with obvious fake smile, it may be interpreted that the gift is not appreciated (Malandro

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et al., 1989). *Substitution* is used in place of verbal messages. For instance, in a noisy environment, a person might wave at a friend instead of shouting to call attention or greet the person (Knapp & Hall, 2006). *Regulating* messages function outside of the content of communication but mediates the flow of the verbal dialogue. For instance, nodding head, eyebrow raising, moving or leaning forward, and eye contact, among others during dialogue are ways of regulating communication. There are a number of nonverbal behaviours people also take when attempting to end a dialogue and some includes, looking at the watch, gathering one's things or moving away from the speaker (Wrench et al., 2022). These are nonverbal ways of regulating verbal dialogues.

Gyasi and Bangmarigu (2022) aver that nonverbal cues are used to express emotions and feelings in intimate relationships. This is consistent with Shaver et al. (1987) who also postulate that emotions can be divided into two; primary and secondary. Primary emotions are innate and experienced for a shorter time. Examples of such emotions include; fear, anger, surprise and joy. The secondary emotions are not innate or experienced for a longer time but often not easily recognised. Examples include; love, shame, jealousy, guilt, among others. Guerrero and Floyd (2006) also emphasise that nonverbal cues could express two types of emotions; hostile prototype and affectionate prototype. The hostile prototype is the expression of displeasure and anger (negative emotions) towards others while the affectionate prototype refers to the love and affection (positive emotions) individuals communicate to others (Guerrero & Floyd, 2006).

Although literature has stipulated six (6) general functions of nonverbal cues which comprising complementing, repeating, accenting, contradicting, substituting, and regulating (Malandro et al., 1989; Knapp & Hall, 2006; Wrench et al., 2022), this study

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however seeks to identify the functions of the forms of nonverbal cues couples employ in context (contextual meaning) on the basis of 'the source orientation'. This approach helped to interpret the cues identified and the meanings ascribed to them from the perspectives of the users which is the objective of research question two (R.Q. 2).

2.6 Motivations for employing Nonverbal Forms in Spousal Communication

Motivation is a force that inspires people to behave in a particular way (Tranquillo & Stecker, 2016). Cherry (2022) adds that motivation is an inward desire such as need, idea, emotions etc. that incites an individual to act or behave in the way they do. Tanner (2022) also espouses that motivation refers to the reasons behind someone's actions. Basically, motivation is the force that drives individuals to perform a task or behaviour. Waters (2022) states that motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic or internal motivation comes from within (Waters, 2022). Thus, intrinsic motivation occurs when someone acts in accordance with their personal beliefs, interests, or passions. Cherry (2022) emphasises that when someone is intrinsically driven, he or she participates in an activity just because they like and find it satisfying on a personal level. Therefore, those motivated intrinsically do not concern themselves with external rewards, punishment or pressure, rather, they are motivated internally for personal satisfaction. Examples of intrinsic drive include reading, viewing movies, writing, singing, among others. These are examples because people only engage in these activities for enjoyment and not under duress or in anticipation of a prize (Tanner, 2022). Extrinsic motivation on the other hand is the outside forces that motivate people to behave in a certain way (Tranquillo & Stecker, 2016). Waters (2022) affirms that extrinsic or external motivation results from external factors such as medals, cash, accolades or social recognitions. Extrinsic motivators are best utilised for short-to medium-term initiatives because of their transient nature (Tanner, 2022). For instance, money is an extrinsic

motivator at work. This is because managers can give bonuses to employees to encourage them to work hard.

Studies (Forson et al., 2021; Kuchava & Buchashvili, 2016; Zohoorian, 2015; Seniwoliba & Nchorbono, 2013) have been done on motivation from different perspectives. For instance, Forson et al. (2021) examined the link between job motivation factors and performance among basic school teachers in the Effutu Municipality of Ghana. The study was underpinned by the Self-determination theory (SDT) and data was collected through questionnaire and interviews. A sample size of two hundred and fifty-four (254) was sampled for the study, however, only one hundred and fifty-nine (159) filled and returned the questionnaires. The study revealed that compensation package, job design and environment, and performance management system are significant factors in determining teachers' motivation in the municipality using multiple regression and ANOVA. Thus, when performance was regressed at aggregate and decomposed levels, these motivational variables were significant predictors of performance. Based on the results, the study recommended that the Municipal Directorate of Education should create more space for inexperienced young teacher trainees to be hired in order to supplement the seasoned staff strength. The theory was used to understand the behaviours of teachers in the basic school and not married individuals.

In similar vein, Kuchava and Buchashvili (2016) assessed staff motivation strategies and its features at three universities in Tbilisi, Georgia using multiple method. The study randomly selected ninety (90) employees, thirty (30) each from the three universities and was underpinned by three theories, namely; Maslow's need hierarchy theory (1943), Adams' equity (1965) theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory (1959). Data was collected through internet questionnaire (Google form). The study revealed

that extrinsic motivation such as salary increment was a strategy the three universities used to motivate their staffs. The study however recommended and concluded that salary increment is not the only way to motivate staff therefore management should adopt other forms of extrinsic motivation such as recognition, appreciation, among others. this study used different motivational theories excluding McClelland Motivational theory of need to analyse the motivational strategies of university teachers. The study did not state how the three theories were used to analyse the data.

Zohoorian (2015) also investigated the motivational benefits of providing Iranian English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students with an authentic context by using authentic texts and tasks. A mixed-method approach (questionnaire and focus group interviews) and cluster random sampling were used to select and gather data from EAP students pursuing engineering at Islamic Azad University of Mashhad branch in Iran. The participants were grouped into two, the control group and the experiment group with thirty (30) participants in each group. After triangulating the quantitative and qualitative findings, the study realised that students' degree of motivation was raised more effectively in the authentic context as compared to the traditional context. The study concluded that the study on authenticity is very versatile, in that, the types of real-world materials used, the kinds of activities or tasks that supplement those materials, the kind of teacher or learner roles, the goals of the course, and the topics involved all have an impact on the results. Zohoorian (2015) investigated the motivational benefits of providing Iranian English for Academic Purposes and not the motivations behind couple's nonverbal behaviours.

More so, Seniwoliba and Nchorbono (2013) examined the role of motivation in the performance of University of Development Studies – Wa Campus staffs. The objectives

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of the study were to examine ways of motivating employees to put up their best, assess the factors that motivate UDS staffs the most, evaluate the role motivation plays in workers' performance and the relationship between motivation and performance. The study adopted a single case study approach and was carried out at UDS- Wa campus in the Upper West Region of Ghana. The stratified random sampling technique was used to select one hundred and fifty participants (150) participants from two hundred and forty (240) staffs. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. The study revealed that ways of motivating employees to work hard was inadequate, in that, junior staffs do not take any allowances aside their monthly salary due to this, the participants posited that they do not have the desire to execute work assigned to them. The study also revealed that the factor that motivates the UDS staffs the most was conducive environment. The participates argued that they work better if the work place is conducive for them than hostile environment since hostile environment does not promote efficient work as eighty-one percent (81%) of the participants indicated that there is a relation between motivation and performance. The participants espoused that to get staffs to perform well, motivation in any form is essential to inspire staffs to perform well. The study then concluded that since motivation has the ability to increase productivity in the organisation, management should consider it when developing their human resource plans.

From the studies reviewed, it is realised that studies on motivation have focused mainly on work place and academia. This study however seeks to add up to the existing literature on motivation by studying it from the perspective of couples.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

A theory is formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena, and to also challenge the existing knowledge on the phenomena (Abend, 2008). Littlejohn and Foss (2011) define a theory as a unified body of propositions that provide a philosophically consistent picture of a subject. In research, theories determine the data that needs to be collected and the tenets under which they are to be analysed to confirm or challenge the theory (Collins & Stockton, 2018). Basically, a theory serves as a guide in explaining the data collected for a particular study. The two theories underpinning the study are discussed subsequently.

2.7.1 Theory of Nonverbal Communication

The theory of nonverbal communication by Bonaccio et al. (2016) was adopted for this study because it encapsulates all the forms of nonverbal cues and how they are exhibited in communication, making it easier to read and understand. Bonaccio et al. (2016) define nonverbal communication as the exchange of information through nonverbal behaviours. The nonverbal communication theory states that the shared construction of meaning requires all the physical features of a person including the structure (body language), head and facial expressions including voice, smell, eye movements, gesture, posture, orientation or placement, use of touch, attire, personal space or territorial consideration, the environment, and time along with cultural preferences in defining mental state of a person in addition to spoken words (Eunson, 2012).

Nonverbal cues are distinguished based on the medium being used to transmit the message (Burgoon et al., 2022). These nonverbal communication cues are organised into typology of codes which come together to form the theory of nonverbal communication (Schroeder, 2017). Codes refer to "the systematic means through which

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meanings are created (encoded), transmitted, perceived, and interpreted (decoded)" (Burgoon et al., 2011, p. 240). This means that codes are the different means used for transmitting information nonverbally. Bonaccio et al. (2016) group these codes into three categories, comprising body codes, sensory and contact codes, and spatiotemporal codes. Below is a tabular summary of the theory of nonverbal communication cues and their forms as adopted from Bonaccio et al. (2016, p. 5 - 6).

Table 1: The theory of nonverbal communication. Adopted from Bonaccio et al. (2016, p. 5 - 6)

FORM	MEANING	CUES/CODES/BEHAVIOURS
Body Codes		
Kinesics	Communication through body movement	Facial expressions, gestures, interactive synchrony, posture etc.
Appearance/objectics	Communication through one's physical appearance	Attire, makeup, height, weight, hair style, etc.
Oculesics	Communicating through the eyes	Eye contact, pupil dilation, blinking, eye movements, etc.
Sensory and Contact Codes		
Haptics	Communication through touch	Types of touch; patting, slapping, handshake, a hug etc.
Vocalics (paralanguage or prosody)	Communication via voice qualities	Laugh, pitch, volume, segregates ('eh', 'hmm'), silence etc.
Olfactics	Communication through smell	Body odour, use of perfume or collogue
Spatiotemporal Codes		
Proxemics	Communication through physical space	Personal space, territory, etc.
Chronemics	Communication via the use of time	Talk time, body speed, etc.
Environment and Artefacts	Communication through objects	Built environments, design and objects, landscape of natural environments, etc.

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Body codes encompass kinesics, physical appearance, and oculesics (Bonaccio et al., 2016). Kinesics refers to communication through body movements which include gestures, posture and gait, and facial expressions (Bonaccio et al., 2016). One main way to convey and share emotions or feelings is through the use of facial expressions (Paynton & Hahn, 2018). Patterson (2017) argues that facial expressions are a valuable source of information. In that, the faces of people are evidential for interlocutors to interpret emotions. Patterson (2017) adds that, facial expressions that expresses happiness, sadness, rage, fear, contempt, and surprise, have become globally recognised because they are primarily signals of emotions. In addition, a person's posture reveals their feelings and intentions (Mahmood & Hussein, 2020). That is to say, an individual's posture can convey interest, respect, and openness in the rate of engagement. For instance, a stiff or closed posture is less hospitable than an opened or relaxed posture. Patterson (2017) emphasises that differences in posture can also be an indicator of social position and power. Hence, individuals with greater dominance are less concerned with their social environment and are more relaxed with regards to communication.

In the seminal work of Ekman and Friesen (1968), five (5) categories of kinesics were presented comprising; adaptors, emblems, illustrators, regulators, and affect. First, adaptors refer to subconscious or unconscious self-touch, which often reveals someone's internal state (Malnab & Humaerah, 2020). That is to say, adaptors are subconsciously or unconsciously self-touching behaviours that reveal an individual's internal state which is usually connected to arousal or anxiety. Adaptors emerge from unease, anxiety, or general feeling that are experienced in everyday social situations (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). For example, during an interview an individual may

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unconsciously exhibit some nonverbal behaviours such as, 'touching the face' or 'shaking the legs' which would reveal whether he/she is anxious or feeling uneasy.

Second, emblems are gestures that have socially understood meaning (Leonard, 2012). Thus, emblems are gestures that have specific meanings understood within an ethnic, cultural or sub-cultural group (Malnab & Humaerah, 2020). Example is 'thumbs-up' which means well-done or good performance. In Ghana, it is culturally understood that when mothers' blink or stare at their child in public, it means 'stop' or 'be careful'.

Third, illustrators are the gestures which accompany verbal messages (Leonard, 2012). They are the most popular gestures used subconsciously or unconsciously to support verbal messages (Malnab & Humaerah, 2020). For instance, when an individual is talking about the size of an object or something, the person subconsciously or unconsciously would draw the size of the thing with the hand to support the verbal message. Even when someone is talking on phone, the person unconsciously gesticulates even though the person he/she is talking with cannot see the gestures (DeVito, 2002).

Fourth, regulators are gestures used to regulate or control the flow of conversation (Malnab & Humaerah, 2020). Thus, regulators are gestures used to moderate the back-and-forth nature of conversation. In essence, regulators are used to manage turn-takings in dialogue and such gestures or cues are head nods, eye movements, slight movement forward, among others (Ekman & Friesen, 1968). These regulators convey a specific meaning to the speaker, such as repeat, elaborate, stop, etc. (Malnab & Humaerah, 2020). For instance, during conversation, interlocutors nod to show they are listening or agree to what the speaker is saying.

Fifth, affect displays are physical behaviours that communicate emotional conditions such as sadness, anger or happiness (Malnab & Humaerah, 2020). Gamble and Gamble (2013) espouse that humans primarily express emotions nonverbally through facial expressions. Thus, humans' emotional conditions are mostly noticed from their facial expressions. For instance, squeezing the face when angry or not happy with something is an affect display.

The table below is the summary of the types of bodily cues (kinesics) by Gamble and Gamble (2013, p. 163);

Table 2: Types of bodily cues (kinesics). Adopted from Gamble and Gamble (2013, p.163)

Cue category	Description	Examples
Emblems	Deliberate body movements that can be translated into speech	Thumbs-up, wave hello
Illustrators	Body cues that support or reinforce speech	Direction pointing
Regulators	Intentional body movements that reflect emotional states of being	Head nods, breaking eye contact
Affect displays	Unintentional body movements that reflect emotional states of being	Slumping body, relaxed, confident body
Adaptors	Unintentional movements that are frequently interpreted as signs of nervousness	Nose scratching, hair twirling

Further, it can be emphasised that kinesics is crucial to communication. Waiflein (2013) asserts that kinesics accounts for seventy percent (70%) of the context of most conversations. Meaning kinesics helps interlocutors to understand the feeling and thinking of other interlocutors. Waiflein (2013) further adds that couples to communicate emotions such as can use that kinesics: anger, happiness, fear, and anxiety, among others. Consequently, couples can use gestures, postures or facial

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expressions to communicate emotions without necessary using words as complementary.

Physical appearance or objectics is made up of height, weight, skin, and hair colour or style, clothing and accessories, and body art (Bonaccio et al., 2016). The evaluation of physical appearance contains a certain degree of 'within-culture' and 'cross-cultural' consistency (Bonaccio, 2016). Thus, across cultures, people credit physically attractive individuals as people with higher levels of poise, sociability, warmth, and power than they do to unattractive individuals (Grothe, 2022). Many cultures have rules and conventions for dressing and appearance established through customs or religious beliefs (Bonaccio, 2016). For example, in the Masai tribe of Kenya, the wearing of earrings and necklaces designate the marital status of women, while wearing of earrings and arm rings show the social status of men and indicate their status as elders or warriors (Grothe, 2022).

Similarly, Grothe (2022) postulates that in rural northern India, the level of a woman's veil over her face indicates her romantic interest or disinterest. Therefore, this is consistent with Livingston and Pearce's (2009) argument that the physical characteristics are interpreted as signals of traits where stereotypes are often rooted in their interpretations. Basically, appearance (colour, skin, clothing, hair style, among others) is generally the first nonverbal code people process about others in their first encounter. This shows that a couple's style of dressing at a particular time could be communicative to the other and could be deemed as sad, anxious, sensual or happy.

Lastly, oculesics deals with eye gaze, eye contact, eye movements, blinking, and other ocular expressions (Bonaccio et al., 2016). The eye contact during conversations is culturally prescribed as part of conversational norms (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013).

Jarick et al. (2016) add that eye contact can both engage attention and increase arousal among individuals. Thus, eye contact can perform three different gaze trials on couples, and studies have shown that, participants produce significantly time-estimates when engaged in eye contact rather than looking at someone's profile. Jarick et al. (2016) add that couples use eye contact to get the attention of their spouses by intentionally staring at them or by communicating with their eyes.

Sensory and contact codes encompass haptics, vocalics, and olfactics. Haptics refers to the sense of touch and touching capabilities (Bonaccio et al., 2016). Haptic communication is the way someone touches another person as a form of communication (Andersen et al., 2013). Touch is very vital to humans, such that it can send a positive, negative, sexual, or platonic information to either of the participants being touched (Bonaccio et al., 2016). Haptic communication is important in relationships because it is one of the keys to physical intimacy. Without it, there would be no sexual intimacy between couples (Allard-Kropp, 2020). An ethnographic representation of haptics in different cultures depends on what is socially acceptable (Mahmood & Hussein, 2020). Gamble and Gamble (2013) assert that haptics is typically included in the closest interactions which should be used in accordance with cultural standards, just like proxemics, to avoid any form of discomfort or disrespect. In effect, haptics is crucial to interpersonal communication and transmits a variety of messages depending on a cultural context, such as expressing one's attitude, emotion, or support, indicating one's affiliation and encouraging others, and demonstrating control and concern for others. For example, Grothe (2022) states that, in the United States, it is usually interpreted as a form of positive touch (i.e. feeling affectionate or showing care) when an individual pats the head of someone whilst in the Thai culture, touching or patting someone's head is considered as being rude. Burgoon et al. (2011) allude that the location of touch as

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well as the intensity and type of touch (e.g. stoke, a pat, a slap) convey different meanings. This is because norms for touch vary across cultures with different meanings. For instance, individuals from 'contact cultures' like Latin American, Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Northern American countries, engage in greater frequency of touching as compared to individual from 'noncontact cultures' such as Northern European and Asian countries (Andersen et al., 2013).

Also, Stewart et al. (2008) argue that touch can be friendly, threatening, or persuading and is essential for human social growth. There are various kinds of touch, such as; functionally professional that occurs as part of job requirement, socially polite, warmly friendly, deeply intimate, and sexually arousing (Hans & Hans, 2015). Hans and Hans (2015) add that, at a more personal level, touch is crucial unlike the social-political level where touch is more significant and ambiguous at the level of companionship and warmth that assist social interaction. Gamble and Gamble (2013) espouse that, haptic communication is very important in romantic relationships that includes marriage, because it helps couples to physically get intimate. In addition, in extreme cases, spousal abuse is mostly nonverbal; striking, punching, kicking, among others are nonverbal ways couples' use to express anger (Gamble & Gamble (2013). Hans and Hans (2015) affirm that touch interactions are crucial for maintaining relationships and conveying closeness, liking, care, and concern. Touch is regarded as a valuable sense that humans value enormously when it comes to their relationships (West & Turner, 2007). Therefore, couples to communicate intimate, aggression, among others nonverbally can use touch. Thus, the act of touching suggests power, even though it can also denote disapproval, dominance, hostility or abuse.

Vocalics is simply the study of paralanguage and involves the auditory aspects of how a verbal message is conveyed (Burgoon et al., 2011). Asemanyi et al. (2018) emphasise that vocalics is mostly referred to as paralanguage since it is associated with meanings derived from the use of voice or sound during verbal communication. The use of vocalics is as important as the message being conveyed, and it includes the pitch level, intonation, volume, accent, and pronunciation of one's speech (Asemanyi et al., 2018). For instance, Linneman (2013) avers that in a conversation, a declarative statement pronounced with a rising intonation is considered as interrogation associated with displays of uncertainty. Bonaccio et al. (2016) state that, dysfluencies, such as excessive pauses or segregates (e.g. use of oh! ah! err…mm, hmm), and other vocal cues tend to involuntarily convey emotions without the notice of the speaker. According to Hinde (1975), the Psychologist, Michael Argyle studied the speed and significance of verbal and nonverbal communication in everyday environments using some selected videotapes and revealed that, nonverbal communication cues are 4.3 times quicker and more effective during communication than verbal cues. The study also revealed that when couples argue, nonverbal cues such as the vocalics is prevalent, and the use of the vocalics at that particular time could communicate anger, discomfort, happiness, tiredness, and affection, among others. Hence, it is important for every partner to decode the variant vocalics used at every point in a confrontation and respond accordingly.

The last part of sensory and contact codes is olfactics which refers to communication through scent and smell (Bonaccio et al., 2016). Scent plays a vital role in social functions where pleasant scents attract, and unpleasant ones deter (Bonaccio et al., 2016). In Africa, and in the Middle East, people prefer to stand close enough to each other during conversations just to detect body odour. This is because body odour is used

to categorise people in relation to status, power, or social class (Grothe, 2022). Therefore, the smell of sweat or strong body odour is likely to suggest a person engaged in manual labour, and of lower social status and vice versa. Also, some smells are associated with particular ethnic groups which may lead to prejudicial treatment (Grothe, 2022). Jackson (2014) affirms that, the smell of curry has been linked to South Asians, and as a result, Indians and Parkistanis have refused to rent out their apartments to South Asians. Although some smells such as jasmine, lavender, and roses are observed to be universally attractive, they could also be differently perceived in certain cultures (Grothe, 2022). For instance, the smell of onions is considered unpleasant in many cultures but the people of Dagon in Mali find the smell of onions attractive, to the extent that, they rub onions on their bodies before any intimate activity (Neuliep, 2006). In effect, communication through scent and smell is deemed important in specific contexts and couples need to know particular scents of their spouses and to interpret as required.

Bonaccio et al. (2016) also discuss spatiotemporal codes to include proxemics, chronemics, the environment and use of artefacts. Proxemics refers to the use of personal space to communicate (Andersen et al., 2013) and what is considered an appropriate personal space is often dictated by the culture of interlocutors in a communicative endeavour. Delaney (2022) alludes that proxemics is the study of proximity and distance in interactions between individuals, and explores the degree to which individuals keep their distance from one another when interacting, as well as whether bodily contact occurs or not. For instance, North Americans prefer greater physical space during conversations to Mediterranean or South Americans (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2013). Hence, the violation of personal space could be communicative threat

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(e.g., from bully to a victim) or an overture (e.g., when flirting with another) experienced negatively if it is deemed as unwanted (Bonaccio et al., 2016).

In addition, Gamble and Gamble (2013) argue that there exist three types of environmental space comprising fixed-feature space, semi-fixed-feature space, and informal space or non-fixed-feature. Fixed-feature space refers to a space that has fixed features such as walls, doors, built-in cabinets, windows, roadways, and paths (Hans & Hans, 2015). For instance, a hospital's positioning of windows differs from a school's window. Semi-fixed-space on the other hand refers to moving elements such as furniture, plants, makeshift walls, and paintings that are used to demarcate boundaries and encourage or forbid interaction (Delaney, 2022). For example, in educational settings, desks can discourage interaction while chairs that face each other can encourage interactions. Informal space or non-fixed-feature space may be seen as the space immediately surrounding every individual that is expanded or constricted at will to keep people at a certain distance or draw them in depending on the connection or relationship (Delaney, 2022). The usage of informal space brings about the notion of territoriality (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Territoriality refers to identifying one's own rooms, seats, and other spaces which may be problematic if others fail to notice them or use them without authorization (Storey, 2017). Gonzalez (2020) asserts that the use of space by couples could communicate feelings such as withdrawal when angry or being touchy to show affection or need for intimacy. Therefore, couples use physical space or territoriality (proxemics) to communicate nonverbal messages including intimacy, affection, aggression or dominance (Delaney, 2022).

Further, Chronemics comprises walking speed, work speed, promptness, and punctuality, all of which communicate meaning about how time is perceived,

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interpreted, and used by a person or in culture (White et al., 2011). Sandhu (2021) states that chronemics is the field of study that examines the use of time in communication. Grothe (2022) also defines chronemics as the study of how time is perceived. Chronemics can also be defined as the study of the role of time in communication (Ambady & Weisbuch, 2010). The perception of time could play significant roles in various forms of nonverbal communications such as when a slight pause before finishing an announcement could help build a sense of anticipation in one's audience. Also, time can be interpreted in communication as a form of attention span and express or reinforce power relationships (Delaney, 2022). Chronemics is divided into two types, namely; monochronic and polychronic (Hall, 1959). In monochronic, time is considered a commodity and not easily changed (Grothe, (2022). Thus, doing something at a precise time, the set time, or agreed time. Monochronic may also include time set for certain activities which may include the time set for religious, social, educational, civic, and special activities (Delaney, 2022). On the other hand, polychronic time is engaging in more than one thing at a time (Hall, 1959). For instance, eating, driving and receiving phone calls at the same time or cooking while watching television, among others. Polychronic involves a time system where several things could be done at the same time in a more fluid way (Grothe, 2022).

Environment and artefact is considered a nonverbal spatiotemporal since the environment or surroundings also convey meanings and impact communication (Burgoon et al., 2011). Bonaccio et al. (2016) posit that the environment and artefact involves the physical aspects of the surroundings that serve as the contexts of the communication. For instance, the close approach of a stranger is more likely to arouse discomfort when standing in line at a cash machine than when attending a crowded concert (Li & Li, 2007). In essence, environment and artefact is communication through

our environment or surroundings whether expressing one's ideas or emotions through room size and shape, furniture, interior decoration and climate.

Further, Bonaccio et al. (2016) emphasise that the theory of nonverbal communication cue has become the number one indicator of emotions and essential to communication. Docan-Morgan and King (2012) report that the most common and vital forms of nonverbal communication in a relationship are facial expressions, paralinguistic, touch, and the use of space whilst eye movement, gestures, time, and clothing are secondary. The theory of nonverbal communication is used in multiple studies on nonverbal communication in diversified fields. Scholars like Keutchafo et al. (2020); Ananda et al. (2020); Khan and Zeb (2021) employed this theory in their research articles. All these studies concluded that the NVC theory provides all the codes involved in nonverbal communication, and explicate how the codes could be identified.

Keutchafo et al. (2020), for instance, used the theory to study the nonverbal communication between nurses and older citizens in a hospital by grouping all identified nonverbal communication cues under the NVC theory. At the end of the study, it was revealed that nurses communicate with patients mostly through haptics, kinesics, proxemics, and vocalics. Keutchafo et al.'s (2020) study is similar to the current study because the current also employs the NVC theory but the focus is on spousal communication.

More so, Ananda et al. (2020) explored the nonverbal communication cues used by foreign English teachers in the classroom. The study revealed that, the foreign English teachers used three forms of nonverbal communication, namely; kinesics, vocalics and proxemics in teaching. Ananda et al.'s (2020) study is different from the current study

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because the sample for Ananda et al. (2020) comprised foreign English teachers whereas the current study focuses on couples who are graduate students.

Similarly, Khan and Zeb (2021) explored the influence of nonverbal communication on human interaction by using the NVC theory. The study revealed that, all the composite of nonverbal communication come along with speech and writing, and they contribute to enhancing, elaborating and understanding of verbal messages. Khan and Zeb's (2021) study is similar to the current study because they both focus on nonverbal cues in human interaction using NVC theory. However, the difference lies in the fact that the current study is limited to spousal interaction and not classroom interaction as was in the case of Khan and Zeb's (2021).

From table 1, it could be observed that each nonverbal communication form also has specific cues that are used for communication. However, haptics, kinesics, proxemics and vocalics have been proven to be the most used forms of nonverbal cues (Mahmood & Hussein, 2020; Docan-Morgan & King, 2012). Some researchers (Ketchafo et al., 2020; Patterson, 2017; Gamble & Gamble, 2013) affirm that haptics, kinesics, proxemics and vocalics are the commonly used forms of nonverbal cues. Therefore, this study seeks to determine if the conclusions of the earlier researchers are in consistent or not with in spousal communication. Corroboratively, this current study also seeks to explore forms of nonverbal cues in spousal communication.

2.7.2 McClelland's Human Motivation theory of Needs

McClelland's Human Motivation theory of Needs is an expansion of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs hypothesised by the American psychologist David McClelland in 1961. McClelland (1961) believes that no matter an individual's age, gender, and ethnicity among others, there is always a motivator behind how he/she behaves which

is heavily influenced by the person's social environment and experiences. The theory has been reiterated by Khatri (2021) to include that every person possesses three motivational factors or needs, one of which will ultimately become the person's main motivator. Gordon (2022) avers that, McClelland's Human Motivation theory is based on the notion that, individuals acquire their wants as they go through lives' experiences and to respond to certain stimuli in the external environment that could lead to the development of their needs.

According to the McClelland's Human Motivation theory, every individual is primarily driven by one of these three needs: power, affiliation (connection) or achievement (success), and these needs greatly influence the person's behaviour. Each of the needs is discussed subsequently.

Need for Power

McClelland (1961) defines the need for power as a "concern with the control of the means of influencing a person" (p. 167). Lussier and Achua (2007) also define the need for power as "the unconscious concern for influencing others and seeking positions of authority" (p. 42). In effect, the need for power is the need to exert control over others. Thus, attaining power is attaining the capacity to influence people or to make others behave in ways they would otherwise not have behaved (McClelland, 1961, 1975, 1985). In other words, people who have a high need for power are motivated to achieve positions of authority in order to exert their influence over others such that an individual's urge to coach, mentor, educate, or inspire others to succeed might be seen as a reflection of their need for power (Raeisi et al., 2012).

Jha (2010) avers that instead of being more dictatorial and authoritarian in accomplishing corporate goals, power motivation is more about making an impression

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and using persuasive power. There are two different kinds of needs for power (nPow): personal and institutional (Chusmir, 1986). Those who crave personal control or power have the desire to command others for their personal gain while those who require institutional power, often referred to as social power, wish to coordinate efforts from others to promote an organisation's objectives or goals (Chusmir, 1986).

Gordon (2022) asserts that people with a strong sense of power needs are driven to hold positions that will allow them to sway others' opinion and exert control over them. Thus, they prefer to exert influence and control over events and people and tend to establish and maintain friendly relations with other humans to satiate the establishment of personal relationships (Akram 2016). Basically, the need for power is driven by the desire to control and influence others so they behave in ways that ordinarily they would not have.

Need for Affiliation

McClelland (1961) defines the need for affiliation as "establishing, maintaining or restoring a positive affective relationship with another person and these relations is adequately described by the word friendship" (p. 160). This means that, the drive to form intimate cordial ties with other people can be shown in the demand for affiliation. Going by this assertion, individuals with strong affiliations may likely participate in team activities where mutual reliance and cooperation are essential (Yamaguchi, 2003). Robbins (2003) emphasises that McClelland's needs theory of affiliation has received less critical scholarly attention than need for power and need for achievement since the willingness to uphold specified standards of behaviour and accept responsibility for others may be interpreted by some people who prioritise friendship and cooperation over competition as an indication of the organisationally sought civility and to others it

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could be something else. In order to prevent the hurt of rejection, studies (Weir, 2012; Legg, 2019) have shown that some individuals try to get emotionally attached and become more sensitive and understanding of others' demands since humans have a deep-seated desire to fit in or feel belong. Basically, people with the need for affiliation may associate themselves with people and organisations with similar characteristics. They are propelled by faith and love, and enjoy creating welcoming surroundings within themselves and to draw other people to their side (Legg, 2019).

Need for Achievement

The urge for achievement as described by McClelland (1961, 1985) refers to a person's motivation to perform well in comparison to some predetermined set of norms. Yamaguchi (2003) states that when people are able to realise their own goals in relation to that of others, their demand for is considered to have been achieved or met if the response is acceptable. Additionally, people with high achievement needs may feel happy or sad depending on some obvious results of their efforts (McClelland, 1985). Thus, need for achievement is considered the need to make a significant accomplishment or receive praise (McClelland, 1961).

Further, when a person is motivated by the urge to succeed, they will exert all effort into accomplishing their goals and may take reasonable risks in the process (Khatri, 2021). Another sign of a person who is driven to succeed is observed in the level of efforts they put in for the accomplishment to succeed (Gordon, 2022). According to McClelland (1961, 1975, 1985), people who score highly on this dimension set themselves apart from others by wanting to perform at a higher level than their contemporaries. Achievement then is a reflection of a person's ambition to outperform themselves in terms of mastery and competitiveness (Khatri, 2021). Brunstein and

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Maier (2005) assert that implicit and explicit reasons are two distinct but interdependent factors that influence achievement needs. Implicit motivations fuel impulsive behaviours like efficient task completion. That is to say, how well a person performs a task is correlated with how he or she behaves appropriately for the position. On the other hand, explicit reasons are shown through purposeful choice actions such as explicitly stated preferences for challenging tasks. As a result, a desire to hold others formally accountable for their actions maps well onto high accomplishment needs (Brunstein & Maier, 2005).

In summary, humans acquire these motivators through culture and life experiences; they are not inherently present in humans (McClelland, 1961). The initial idea of the theory was to explain how the needs for achievement, affiliation and power affect the actions of people from managerial context (Raeisi et al., 2012). It was believed that, every employee is particularly motivated by a predominant need and consequently experiences different stimuli as rewarding to a different extent (Rybnicek et al., 2017). However, Raeisi et al. (2012) add that, researchers have tested the McClelland's Human Motivation theory in different disciplines and fields outside managerial context to see if the theory applies there. Some of these studies are discussed subsequently.

Researchers (Raeisi et al., 2012; Jha, 2010; Akoi-Gyebi, 2009; Varona & Capretz, 2021; Rybnicek et al., 2017) have used the theory to study the motivation of humans from different context just to validate the relevance of the theory, and also text if it applies to every context. Raeisi et al. (2012) in a quantitative study used the McClelland's Human Motivation theory to study the motivational needs of physical education teachers at West Azarbaijan. Two hundred and forty-one (241) teachers (165 males and 76 females) were randomly selected from six hundred and forty (640)

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physical education teachers. The study revealed that, the need for success, need for communication and the need for power are paramount to physical teachers at West Azarbaijan with the need to succeed and the need to communicate being the highest ranked. The study added that, the need to succeed and communicate are ranked first and second respectively because they are kind of unconscious desires of teachers, and achieving them would make the teachers gain more happiness. Based on the findings, the study recommended that educational planners and authorities should increase career motivations for physical education teachers by creating effective strategies to meet their needs, and also further research should examine the motivational needs of physical education teachers in other provinces.

Similarly, Jha (2010) studied the effect of need for growth, need for power and need for affiliation on intrinsic task motivation in five star hotels in Mumbai. The purpose of the study was to trace the influence of motivational needs on empowerment. Data was collected by collating responses gathered from a personal distribution of standard questionnaires to the frontline employees working in some selected five star hotels. Out of the five hundred (500) questionnaires that were distributed, three hundred and nineteen (319) responded. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The study revealed that the motivational needs have a greater influence on meaning and impact dimension of intrinsic task motivation. The study added that, it can be noted that employees with high need for growth, achievement, power and affiliation would like to have a job that is meaningful and can create some impact in the work context.

Corroboratively, the findings of a study by Akoi-Gyebi (2009) on the effects of teamwork, a byproduct of affiliation, on the work output of teachers in junior and senior high schools in the Eastern Region of Ghana, revealed a stronger correlation between

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the need for affiliation and teacher's work output. It can be inferred that teachers who belong to a group of association at their place of employment share knowledge, compete for leadership positions through their ability to influence others, and also achieve higher levels of success in terms of academic, moral, and physical development of their students.

Varona and Capretz (2021) explored whether there was a connection between individual motivations and roles they performed as software engineers using the motivational theory of McClelland. The researchers surveyed one hundred (100) Cuban software practitioners, including project leaders, analysts, designers, programmers, and those working in quality assurance and maintenance related roles. The McClelland motivational questionnaire was used to identify participants' motivation based on McClelland's three motivational needs. The study revealed that, software practitioners were not completely motivated by 'power'. They were rather motivated by 'achievement' because of the project objectives, and also, the analyst and designer roles have a more marked associated with that of motivation than roles. The study then recommended that the McClelland's motivational theory should be used in different software industries to deepen the understanding of the impact of team members' motivations.

In addition, Rybnicek et al.'s (2017) study was to validate McClelland's (1985) need theory using neuroscientific methods and thereby fostering foundations of work motivation. To fulfill the aim of the study, the focus was on how the distinct management rewards relating to different McClelland needs can result in similar rewarding effects, and whether these distinct rewards match an employee's need. The study was a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), and forty-four (44)

participants took part in the study. The participants completed decision tasks before receiving any of the three performance-contingent rewards which are high income, respectful leadership or a prestigious company car. The participants provided information on their need for achievement, affiliation and power. The findings from the study revealed that, the three different rewards lead to overlapping neutral activations in parts of the reward circuitry, such as the putamen or caudate but these rewards also activate distinct brain areas that are not stimulated by the remaining two reward types. The findings also revealed that, the more a particular reward matches an employee's need, the stronger the neutral activations in the reward circuitry. That is, individuals with high need for achievement, affiliation or power are more effectively rewarded by a closely corresponding reward. The study then concluded that, the study may be used to strengthen and expand motivation theory since the findings have validated McClelland's (1985) theory by demonstrating the importance of the matching between McClelland's needs and congruent rewards on a neutral level. Therefore, organisations should consider their employees' needs when setting up reward systems. Rybnicek et al.'s (2017) suggested that further studies could, for example, include needs from other theories and also replicate the results with additional rewards at different fields.

In effect, the studies reviewed have affirmed that indeed, the McClelland's Human Motivation theory does not apply to only managerial contexts but to every context. This is because, no matter an individual's age, gender, education, background or ethnicity, he or she is motivated by any of the three needs; power, affiliation and achievement (McClelland, 1961; Khatri, 2021). Consequently, there is the need for this theory to be tested among couples to add to the literature on the relevance of the theory in diversified disciplines. Therefore, this current study seeks to identify the motivations behind

married graduate students' use of nonverbal communication cues in spousal communication through the lens of McClelland's Human Motivation theory.

2.8 Relevance of the theories to the study

Even though communication occurs all the time, understanding the phenomena would be improved by considering it specifically in the context of spousal communication to focus on its nonverbal effects (Khan & Zeb, 2021). Burgoon et al. (2022) assert that, nonverbal communication is essential and omnipresent in all aspect of human communication. This is because nonverbal communication is human's first language which helps in encoding and decoding verbal messages for effective communication. The Nonverbal Communication theory presents the behaviours or cues involved in nonverbal communication, and the way these behaviours communicate meaning (Bonaccio et. al., 2016). Employing this theory to the current study would help the researcher to identify the various forms of nonverbal communication behaviours or cues couples employ. It would help in grouping the identified nonverbal cues under the various forms, and also establish the communicative function of each of the cues.

The second theory, the McClelland's Theory of Needs or McClelland's Human Motivation Theory, would help in analysing the motivations for using the identified nonverbal cues by the participants. The theory says that every human being is motivated by three basic needs; need for power, need for affiliation and need for achievement, and each person is primarily driven by one of the three needs (McClelland, 1961). These needs greatly influence human behaviour.

Moreover, people are motivated to pursue their goal and ambitions when they are motivated. In fact, without these sources of energy, people would be lazy, resulting to a life that is monotonous and fruitless. In this view, employee desire rather than what

an employer does to employees serves as motivation (Byars & Rue, 2002). In same vein, couples have specific motivations that inspire them to behave or react in the way they do. Hence, there is the need to study the motivations behind couples' use of nonverbal communication cues in spousal communication, and the McClelland's theory of needs would help in gathering and analysing the needed data for the study. The three tenets would help the researcher to group the various motivational themes that would emerge from the analysis.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods and procedures employed in carrying out this study. The chapter thus, discusses the research approach, research design, sampling and sample size, data collection method and procedures, methods of data analysis, ethical consideration, and trustworthiness of data.

3.1 Research Approach

In the attempt to explore the forms of nonverbal communication cues employed by married graduate students at the School of Communication and Media Studies - University of Education, Winneba, this study employed the qualitative research approach. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research involves "emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participants' setting, analysed inductively, building from particular to general themes, and making interpretations of the meaning of the data" (p.4). Consequently, the qualitative approach was seen as the most appropriate for this study because the study seeks to obtain data from the participants' natural setting in order to inductively construct themes from the specific to general and then create subjective interpretations from the data gathered with a view of gaining a better understanding of the phenomenon of nonverbal communication among married graduate couples of the SCMS.

Lindolf and Taylor (2017) posit that, a qualitative research strategy concentrates on the social behaviours and meanings of individuals within a particular historical or cultural setting. Thus, a qualitative approach aims to recognise and deeply delve into phenomena to obtain the reasons, attitudes, and behaviours of that phenomenon. In

effect, this study seeks to identify the reasons and behaviours on how married graduate students employ nonverbal cues in spousal communication.

Similarly, the qualitative research approach is focused on dealing with meanings, descriptions and interpretations of various phenomena in the social world (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Thus, it is exploratory, descriptive, interpretive, subjective, inductive, and reflexive. In tandem with this, the qualitative research approach is adopted for this study to enable the researcher to explore forms of nonverbal communication cues in spousal communication as employed by married graduate students at the School of Communication and Media Studies - University of Education, Winneba, and interpret the reality from the participants' perspectives. The study seeks an in-depth knowledge on issues of nonverbal communication where the participant users could recount and share their experiences on the use of the different categories of nonverbal cues.

3.2 Research Design

Based on the focus of study and the participants involved, the case study design was adopted to generate an in-depth and multi-faceted understanding of the phenomenon. Creswell (2014) describes a research design as an inquiry that provides specific guidance for procedures in a study. In other words, a research design provides the researcher with information on established guidelines and strategies involved in studying a phenomenon or case. This means that the selection of a research design is determined by the nature of the research, the research problem, the research questions as well as the target audience of the study. Some examples of qualitative research designs are the phenomenology, ethnography, case study, and qualitative content analysis, among others (Lindlof & Taylor, 2017).

3.2.1 Case Study

The case study design was selected for this study because the study seeks to comprehend people in a social context by viewing their activities as a single group, community, or singular event (Creswell, 2014). Thus, a case study seeks to examine a current occurrence while concentrating on the dynamics in the case in the context of the real world (Yin, 2018). Creswell (2014) adds that, a case study helps the researcher to explore a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time through detailed, in-depth data collection that involves multiple sources of information. In other words, a case study research involves exploring a real-world issue over time through in-depth multiple data collection procedures.

Additionally, a case study allows the researcher to extensively analyse a case, event, activity, process, or a people (Yin, 2018). Miles et al. (2014) also aver that a case could be an individual, a role, a small group, an organization, a community, or even a nation. Furthermore, Yin (2018) states that a case study could be single or multiple depending on the phenomenon under study. A multiple case study is when the researcher decides to study two or more cases whereas a single case study involves studying a single case or group of people. This current study adopts the single case study method because it is focused on a single phenomenon of how married graduate students at the University of Education, Winneba employ forms of nonverbal communication cues in spousal communication.

3.3 Sampling and Sample Size

The participants of this study comprise only married graduate students at the University of Education, Winneba, specifically the School of Communication and Media Studies. Lindolf and Taylor (2017) postulate that, sites are sampled on the basis of their

importance and belief that what happens at the sites are important for the understanding of a phenomenon. Hence, the researcher sampled the site (SCMS) based on the importance and the assumption that what happens at the site would help the researcher gain the needed information or responses and also gain an in-depth knowledge on the phenomenon. Further, Creswell (2002) espouses that, in case study, the nearness of the researcher to the case helps in easy accessibility of data. In essence, since the researcher is a student at the SCMS, access to data was easily available, hence, the selection of the graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies – UEW.

This study adopted the homogenous purposive sampling technique to access the needed data since the study seeks to understand how a group of people with the same or similar characteristics employs nonverbal cues. According to Daymon and Holloway (2011), qualitative researchers depend on purposive sampling to select the needed sample as new clues and avenues become known. In the same vein, Stake (2013) argues that, purposive sampling allows the researcher to determine access to the needed information by accessing people with the requisite to provide the needed information. This is in line with Creswell (2014) assertion that qualitative researchers purposively select sites or participants (towns, documents or visual materials) that will resonate with the focus of their research and to understand the problem or issue being studied appropriately as they answer the research questions guiding the study. In other words, purposive sampling becomes the process of selecting the participants who qualify or can provide the needed information on the phenomenon directing this study. Thus, in line with the identified propositions, homogenous purposive sampling was used to sample the participants and the site since the researcher purposively sought to access an in-depth understanding of the forms of nonverbal communication cues employed by the graduate couples, determine their communicative function, and examine the motivations for

using the identified nonverbal cues. As a result of this strategy, the researcher did not have a predetermined sample size when I began the study. However, the researcher designed a recruitment and consent form (see Appendix A) for the participants. This was recruitment due to their eligibility, availability, and their readiness to provide the needed data. As of September 2022, the graduate students at the School of Communication and Media Studies – UEW were about one hundred and thirty (130) as recorded at the School of Graduate Studies - UEW. This number comprised both the married and unmarried. Therefore, with the help of the administered recruitment and consent forms, the researcher purposively recruited thirty-three (33) graduate students who consented to be part of the study. On the form, participants were asked to tick whether they want to be interviewed or join focus group discussion, twenty (20) ticked interviews whereas the remaining thirteen (13) ticked focus group discussion. Out of the thirty-three (33) participants, eighteen (18) were males and fifteen (15) were females. Hence, a sample size of thirty-three (33) was used for this study.

3.4 Data Collection Method

This study adopted interviews and focus group discussion as data collection procedures. Creswell (2014) emphasises that data collection is the process of gathering information through visual resources, documents, semi-structured or unstructured observations and interviews. In other words, data collection refers to a systematic method for precisely gathering information from many sources to offer insights and solutions, such as analysing an outcome or testing a hypothesis (Kabir, 2016). Thus, data collection involves developing a protocol for accessing the needed information.

In case studies, Yin (2018) postulates that researchers should collect data through in-depth multiple data collection procedures to ensure data triangulation. Based on this, the researcher adopted two data collection methods; semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions to ensure triangulation of the data.

3.4.1 Interviews

This study adopted semi-structured interviews as the tool for gathering data. According to Creswell (2014), "interviews are the means by which a researcher conducts conversations with participants, either by telephone, face-to-face or via the internet" (p. 189). This means that interview is the process through which researchers dialogue with participants over the phone, in-person or online. Creswell (2014) then adds that the semi-structured interview is effective for accessing in-depth information from each participant at a given time.

Interview is the process of gathering data from participants through questions and answers method in order to record and analyse people's opinions, experiences, beliefs, and ideas related to the phenomenon of study (Kabir, 2016). Kabir (2016) suggests that interview is one of the most essential ways of gathering data from a natural setting such as a communicative event. Stake (2013) postulates that in situations where the researcher aims to obtain diverse information on a phenomenon, the interview is the best method of data collection. Using interviews to collect data helps the researcher to access most sensitive and crucial information that may not easily be accessible through other means (Stake, 2013).

Interview can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured (George, 2022) depending on the focus of the study. Therefore, this study adopted the semi-structured interview method where the needed questions were posed in no particular order (George, 2022).

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In other words, the semi-structured interview method comprised a combination of elements from both structured and unstructured interview formats to enhance the gathering of the needed data. This means that, the semi-structured interview method made room for the participants to express themselves freely without any form of inhibition in a conversational manner.

In effect, the semi-structured interview method helped the researcher to gather responses on nonverbal communication cues as employed by the married graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies – UEW.

3.4.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The study adopted focus group discussion as another tool for collecting data for this study. George (2021) defines focus group as a research method that assembles a small group of individuals to respond to questions in a controlled environment. In other words, focus group is a research method that allows researchers to gather data through group interactions. Gundumogula (2020) also espouses that focus group discussion is considered a form of group interview where a small group of people are gathered to share ideas or beliefs on one topic of interest. Creswell (2014) adds that the purpose of focus group discussion is to gather multiple points of view on the phenomenon under study. Therefore, focus group discussion was used to gather multiple points of views on forms of nonverbal communication employed by married graduate students in spousal communication, the context-specific communicative functions of the identified forms and the motivations behind the use of the nonverbal forms.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection procedure is the systematic approach to gathering data.

3.5.1 Interviews

The interview was thus, conducted via face-to-face and telephone within a period of two months (3rd July, 2022- 3rd September, 2022) and data collection began with the designing of a semi-structured interview guide for requisite information. The questions comprised both open-ended and close-ended questions which were informed by the objectives of the study, the tenets of the Theory of Nonverbal Communication (Bonaccio et al., 2016) and McClelland's Theory of Needs (McClelland, 1961). This was to allow the participants to explain and share their opinions on the phenomenon. The semi-structured interview guide was piloted using two (2) participants as suggested by (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012) who assert that piloting the interview guide enables the researcher to delete any form of unwanted information and then restructure or update the protocol with new ideas so as to prevent ambiguity and ensure validity. Therefore, I piloted the interview guide on some participants similar to the sample. The interview guide was subsequently updated with some new information on the basis of the findings of the preliminary or pilot study. After the piloting, each participant was asked the same questions in no particular order. The rationale was to make comparability possible as well as the analysis of the emerging data simple (Agyemang et al., 2020). The interview guide enabled me to obtain diverse information from the participants, and to also access some sensitive information on the phenomenon which under normal circumstances may not have been possible or easily accessible.

Further, since the twenty (20) participants consented through the recruitment and consent form to be part of the study, it was easier to negotiate entry to the research site and conduct the interviews. In effect, each of the participants provided the time and setting suitable for the interviews. Eleven (11) of the participants were interviewed using the face-to-face interaction mode whilst the remaining nine (9) were interviewed

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on telephone because of their busy schedules. With permission from the participants, the researcher recorded the interview sessions using a Samsung Galaxy A03 (and an audio recorder as a backup). With emphasis on their thoughts and impressions on the issue under inquiry, the semi-structured interview guide was used to moderate all the interview sessions in a conversational manner where each interview session lasted between 15 and 20 minutes. The interviews were conducted in the English language because all the participants were proficient in the English language.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion

Janghorban et al. (2014) are of the view that technological advances and changes have allowed online FGDs and researchers can overcome time and financial constraints, geographical dispersions, and physical mobility boundaries which used to affect onsite FGDs. Based on this assertion, the study thus conducted two focus group discussions on 8th and 9th of October, 2022 via zoom due to geographical dispersions and time constraints. The thirteen (13) participants that consented to be part of the focus group were made up of six (6) females and seven (7) males. The males were in group one whiles the females were in group two. The discussion lasted for 45mins – 1hr. The questions in the focus group guide were informed by the objectives of the study, the tenets of the Nonverbal Communication theory and Mclelland's Motivation theory of Needs. With the help of the question guide, the researcher was able to moderate the discussion and gather in-depth data on the phenomenon. The researcher recruited a repertoire for each group and also recorded the discussions in other to ensure consistency of the data. The discussions were done in English language since all the participants were proficient in English language.

3.6 Data Analysis Plan

In order to make sense of the bulk of data gathered from this study, the thematic data analysis method was employed to analyse the data gathered. Data analysis is the act of labeling and breaking down raw data and reconstituting them in patterns, themes, concepts and propositions (Lindolf & Taylor, 2017). Creswell and Creswell (2018) further add that in qualitative studies, data analysis entails organising and preparing the data (texts, such as transcripts, or image data, such as photographs), reducing the data into themes via a process of coding and condensing the codes, and then representing the data in the form of figures, tables, or a discussion. Therefore, for this study, the data analysis comprised a meticulous procedure of segmenting the gathered information and reassembling them to convey the expected meaning.

Braun and Clarke (2019) also describe thematic analysis as the process of labeling and breaking raw data and grouping them into concepts, themes and propositions. This is in line with the assertions of Alhojailan (2012) who also posits that, thematic analysis is best for any study that focuses on discovering ideas or concepts or describing human behaviour through interpretations. With these scholarly suggestions and the focus of the study, I adopted Braun and Clarke's (2019) six-step thematic analysis flow for data analysis, namely, (1) becoming familiar with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) generating themes, (4) reviewing potential themes, (5) defining themes, and (6) write-up or producing report.

First of all, to enable me become familiar with the data, I needed to listen to the interviews and focus group discussion responses several times to conduct iterative readings or read the transcribed data several times for an in-depth understanding of the content. Due to this, I familiarised myself with the data by listening to the recorded

interviews and focus group discussions several times and then transcribed them. After the transcription, I immersed myself in the data through iterative readings to identify similar patterns or occurrences that are related to the questions guiding the study.

 Second, I generated initial codes from the data. The codes are the essential building blocks of what eventually developed into themes. Braun and Clarke (2019) state that coding is used to provide concise, brief descriptive or interpretive labels for informational items that can be relevant to the research issue. Therefore, the data coding helped to produce categories which allowed additional interpretations to be made and to develop a theoretical understanding of the topic under study. In effect, it was advisable that I proceeded methodically through the full dataset, and give each data point equal attention by noting familiar characteristics which were intriguing useful in creating subthemes and themes.

At this stage, I coded the main ideas or issues I considered intriguing and useful in creating the themes. After that, I assigned the codes to the patterns using pseudonyms to ensure anonymity, confidentiality and trustworthiness of the data. I then labelled and organised the data in a meaningful and systematic way by reducing the data into brief and concise meanings relevant to the research questions. Since I was concerned with addressing specific research questions, I coded each segment of the data which was relevant to the research questions.

Third, generation of themes occurs once all pertinent data items have been coded. Braun and Clarke (2019) emphasise that, at this stage, the coded data is examined and analysed to determine how various codes may be merged based on some common meanings and to create themes or sub-themes. This process thus, frequently entails combining several

codes with common underlying notions or data aspects into single themes or sub themes.

At this stage, I assembled some codes into initial themes and organised the codes into broader themes to correspond with the research questions. The inductive and theoretical methods of thematic analysis were again employed since some data fitted into the pre-existing coding frames (deductive or theoretical) whilst with the others, using the open coding approach (inductive), were also emerged. For the open coding approach, I identified coding schemes from the data by critically examining their similarities and uniqueness to enhance their commonality and further categorisation.

Fourth, reviewing of potential themes. At this stage, I performed recursive analysis of the potential themes in connection with the coded data points and the overall dataset as suggested by Braun and Clarke (2019). Thus, I tested the themes to determine if they are applicable to the coded extracts as well as the overall data set.

Further, in reviewing the potential themes, I modified and developed the preliminary themes as was done in step 3. I then ensured that there were enough data to support each theme after the testing as I collapsed all the overlapping themes which were identified.

Fifth, definition of themes. Braun and Clarke (2019) espouse that a researcher defines themes by giving a thorough examination of the data. The dataset and the research topic were discussed in accordance with each particular theme and sub-theme. At this stage, the researcher should be able to decide which data points to utilize as extracts when summarising the findings. The excerpts thus selected were to provide a vivid

convincing overview of the arguments put forth by each of the themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Therefore, at the fifth stage, I identified the essence of each theme in defining the focus data of each research question. I then iteratively organised the data into a coherent and internally consistent themes from where I provided (Braun & Clarke, 2019) a detailed analysis and convincing overviews.

Sixth, producing a report. This is the stage where I presented the final analysis which involved providing a detailed account of the findings from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2019). This detailed account included a vivid description of the data to address each research question and using excerpts from the coded data to ground the analysed themes (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Therefore, I produced a vivid report on the themes and how they addressed each research question on the basis of the understanding and responses of the participants. As already indicated, direct quotes from the data were used as excerpts to support the interpretations and to further ground the arguments in the descriptions and interpretations of the findings.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), ethical difficulties in research arise at every stage of the research process and as such, every researcher needs to anticipate ethical issues that may arise throughout the research process in order to minimize their occurrence. Further, because the data collection in this research was from individuals, it was important to depict a high level of objectivity and sensitivity to prevent any form of impropriety, but develop trust and promote the integrity of the research. This is

consistent with the assertions of Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) that "confidentiality and anonymity are closely linked to rights of beneficence and respect for dignity and fidelity of participants in every research" (p. 20), and therefore there is the need to protect the identity and information of participants in a study. Since this study involved the collection of data on forms of nonverbal communication cues couples employed in spousal communication, I adherence to the ethics of research in relation to the informed permission of the participants, anonymity of identity and the confidentiality and protection of every information provided as data.

With regard to seeking the consent and recruiting of participants for the study, I administered a recruitment and consent form (see Appendix A) to all the married graduate students at the School of Communication and Media Studies – UEW. Only those who consented to participate in the study were recruited for the study. The completion of the form served as a contractual agreement between the participants and the researcher. The researcher ensured the need to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the data. The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview and focus group discussion, or decline to answer any of the semi-structured interview and focus group discussion guide questions if it had anything to do with their privacy. Again, with respect to the confidentiality and anonymity of both the participants and information, I resorted to the use of alphanumeric codes which is the combination of alphabets and numerals to designate the participants and not their real names. For the twenty (20) participants I interviewed, I used "P1 – M" to "P11 – M" to designate the eleven (11) males, and "P12 – F" to "P20 – F" to designate the nine (9) females. Also, for the thirteen (13) participants of the focus group discussion, I designated the males in group one as "FGD P1 – M" to "FGDP7 – M", and "FGDP1 – F" to "FGDP6 – F" for the females in group

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two. This is in line with Yu's (2008) assertion that using pseudonyms in qualitative research ensures the participants' anonymity and protect the ability to link the participants' identity to any kind of information provided.

3.8 Trustworthiness of Data

Trustworthiness is the level of confidence in a study's data, interpretation, and procedures (Pilot & Beck, 2014). In other words, the idea of trustworthiness is to ensure that the interpretation and methods used in a research are not influenced by the biases of the researcher. Therefore, to ensure the credibility or trustworthiness of this study, I employed Creswell's (2014) eight (8) verification procedures, namely; triangulation, member checking for accuracy, peer debriefing, spending prolonged time at the research field, rich, thick descriptions of data, clarifying research biases, presenting negative case analysis, and providing opportunities for external auditing. Creswell (2014) further adds that, qualitative researchers could use a minimum of two (2) strategies in a research to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. Therefore, in this study, I employed five (5) of the verification procedures comprising member checking; peer debriefing; spending prolonged time at the research field; triangulation; and rich, thick descriptions to ensure the credibility of this study.

First, I conducted series of member checking activities with my supervisor, some lecturers and some colleagues who also offered to edit my work for me. Specifically, during weekly seminar presentations in my Department, the interview data were periodically verified and critiqued by lecturers, fellow graduate students, and some research assistants. Second, a number of peer debriefing meetings with the main participants were undertaken to assess the precision of the data and the interpretations which were made. Some of the study participants were provided with copies of the

typed transcripts from the audio recordings for them to authenticate the information. In cases where errors were found, they were duly rectified so that I could actively include the representations of their comments. Third, I spent a prolonged period at the research field by immersing myself in the data on countless times. I did this by replaying the recorded interview responses over and over again to help become familiar with the data and to also identify the recurring themes. Fourth, I employed triangulation to increase the credibility and validity of the research findings as asserted by Lincoln and Guba (2000). Lincoln and Guba (2000) propose four types of triangulation; data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and methodological triangulation. I however employed the investigator triangulation and data triangulation. For investigator triangulation, I recruited three other researchers to assist in transcribing the recorded interview and focus group discussion responses, and to assign codes to the data. This enabled me to confirm the findings across different investigators and to enhance the credibility of the findings. Ensuring data triangulation, I used different methods to collect data on the phenomenon under study. This helped me to get multiple views from different participants. Finally, I subjected the analysis of the data to rich, thick description so as to convey the interpretations of the findings and use excerpts to make the arguments stronger. During the interpretations of the data, I was conscious to link the findings to the literature and the tenets of the theories underpinning the study with the view to making the discussions more engaging.

In conclusion, since the participants were my colleagues, I did not allow my relationship with them to influence the interpretation and judgment of the data. I was able to bracket my biases by suspending my beliefs and objectively interpreted the data to ensure that the participant's belief and assumptions are not obscured through the lens of my own biases to ensure trustworthiness of the data.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has discussed in detail the methodological procedures of the study. The study is qualitative in nature, and the case study design was adopted with the aim to comprehend the people involved in the study in their social context. The chapter has also presented descriptions on data collection processes and the plan for the data analysis. The chapter concludes on how ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the data gathered was ensured.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the data collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussion on the nonverbal cues employed by couples in spousal communication, their context-specific communicative functions, and the motivations for using such forms of nonverbal cues. The chapter presents the data as obtained from married graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies, UEW.

The study employed the Nonverbal Communication Theory (Bonaccio et al., 2016) and the McClelland's Theory of Needs (McClelland, 1961) to analyse the data gathered as a way of addressing the research questions guiding the study. The collected data was carefully examined to identify the patterns of themes. For the twenty (20) participants I interviewed, I used "P1 – M" to "P11 – M" to designate the eleven (11) males, and "P12 – F" to "P20 – F" to designate the nine (9) females. Also, for the thirteen (13) participants of the focus group discussion, I designated the males in group one as "FGD P1 – M" to "FGDP7 – M", and "FGDP1 – F" to "FGDP6 – F" for the females in group two. The research questions that guided the data collection and analysis are:

1. What forms of nonverbal cues are employed in spousal communication by graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies (SCMS)?

2. What are the context-specific communicative functions of the identified forms of nonverbal cues employed in spousal communication by graduate students of the SCMS?

3. What are the motivations behind the use of the identified nonverbal cues in spousal communication by graduate students of the SCMS?

4.1 RQ 1:   What forms of nonverbal cues are employed in spousal communication by graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies (SCMS)?

Nonverbal communication is considered an integral part of humans' daily communication that is unconsciously or consciously produced (Etman & Elkareh, 2021). Thus, nonverbal communication is inevitable and forms an integral part of human communication whether consciously or unconsciously. In answering R.Q. 1, data was gathered through interviews and focus group discussion, and was reduced to themes. The themes that emerged from the data includes; body codes (kinesics, objectics & oculesics), sensory and contact codes (haptics, vocalics & olfactics), and spatiotemporal codes (proxemics, chronemics & environment and artefacts). The themes are in line with the categorisation of the nonverbal forms by the Nonverbal Communication Theory (Bonaccio et al., 2016). The findings indicate that the participants employ various forms of nonverbal communication to express their ideas, thoughts, emotions etc. as displayed in Table 3. This affirms Prinsen and Punyanunt-Carter's (2009) and Gonzalez's (2020) assertion that, people in intimate relationships are likely to use various forms of nonverbal communication cues to express different thoughts, feelings and emotions.

Table 3: Forms of nonverbal communication cues employed by the participants

Forms	Cues	Excerpts
1. Body codes a) Kinesics b) Oculesics c) Objectics/ Appearance	• Facial expression • Eye movement • Colour and style of clothing	*I **sternly look** at my wife when she does something that I dislike. When I sternly look at her, she immediately becomes aware of my reaction. Sometimes, she simply leaves the scene of our conversation as a response to my stern look* (P17– F) *It is important for a female to communicate with her looks or appearance because men naturally love to admire things that get attracted to them. I know the **colour of undergarments** that 'turns on' my husband and I wear it any day just to get him in a desired mood* (P6– M)
2. Sensory and Contact codes a) Haptics b) Vocalics c) Olfactics	▪ Touch ▪ Voice quality ▪ Perfume	*I romantically **whisper little nothingness** for purposes of intimacy and my husband understands it, especially in the bedroom. I do so we can do our own thing without the children hearing us (P15 – F)* *I **rub my right fingers through my husband's hair** and **place one hand on his chest** to show affection and to request something from him. I do this almost every time I am in need of something and he has grown to understand it in specific contexts ...... hahaha!* (FGDP6 - F) *When I use the **'Red Door' perfume** in the night, it has a special way of getting my husband in the mood for 'action' ...... hahaha! I do it on purpose and I think he loves it* (FGDP1-F)
3. Spatiotemporal codes a) Proxemics b) Chronemics c) Environment and artefacts	▪ Space ▪ Time ▪ Room setting & change in the regular atmosphere	***I intentionally come home late** whenever I am upset about something. I don't even call to inform her that I would stay out late. My wife understands this behaviour and so she won't call to check up on me. She becomes very apologetic when I get home. Problem solved be that!.hahahaha (FGDP7-M)* *My wife is the type who does not like cleaning one bit. But it will interest you that she has special days when she does all the cleaning in the house. You know how cunning women can be. When I come home and meet **the house neatly cleaned, especially the living room beautifully rearranged with new curtains and picture frames,** my sister, pray for me. Her aim is to impress me and drain my small pocket with countless demands. Eeei, women. You have your tricks.* (FGDP6 – M)

Source: Field data, 2022

4.1.1 Body codes

An analysis of the data revealed the use of body codes as one of the nonverbal communication forms employed in spousal communication by married graduate students of SCMS. Body codes comprises kinesics, objectics and oculesics. Participants in the communication process express their feelings, thoughts, emotions and ideas using parts of their body. These include the use of facial expressions (kinesics), body posture (kinesics), eye movement (oculesics), head movement (kinesics), clothing (objectics), hair style (objectics), colour preference (objectics) among others. According to the NVC theory, kinesics is communication through the use of facial expressions, posture and body movement. Objectics is communication through physical appearance or apparition often comprising height, weight, complexion or skin tone, hair colour or hairstyle, clothing and accessories, body art, among others whereas oculesics involves the use of eye gaze, eye contact, eye movements, blinking and other ocular expressions. For instance, a participant from the focus group discussion (FGDP5-M) indicated that he wears a frown to express his anger to his partner;

> *I wear a **frown** to communicate with my wife especially when she annoys me.*
> *This is something I always do when I am angry* (FGDP5 – M)

A participant from the interview group espoused that he winks at the wife to coerce her to do something as exemplified in the excerpt;

> *I **wink** at my wife when I want to convince her to do something for me. Winking*
> *coerces her to do it. It makes her laugh and walk away without arguing further"*
> (P6 - M)

Another participant from the interview group also indicated that she uses her eyes to express her thoughts to the husband as revealed in the excerpt;

> *I **sternly look** at my wife when she does something that I dislike. When I sternly look at her, she immediately becomes aware of my reaction. Sometimes, she simply leaves the scene of our conversation as a response to my stern look* (P17–F)

Some other participants also disclosed that they adorn themselves with particular colours of undergarments and hairstyles to express their feelings or desires to their partners. For instance, FGDP4 – F and P18-F revealed that;

> *It is important for a female to communicate with her looks or appearance because men naturally love to admire things that get attracted to them. I know the **colour of undergarments** that 'turns on' my husband and I wear it any day just to get him in a desired mood* (P6– M)

> *My husband loves it when I wear **pineapple waves hair style**. He openly shows it when I do it so at least every other month, I do it* (P14-F)

From the discussions, it is realised that the participants employ various forms of body codes including physical appearance, facial expressions and eye movement to convey their affections, thoughts and emotions to their partners. This affirms Waiflein's (2013) assertion that couples make use of varied nonverbal cues to communicate emotions, thoughts or feelings in specific contexts and for varied reasons. The findings are also in sync with the nonverbal communication theory (Bonaccio et al., 2016) that individuals employ cues such as physical appearance, eye movement, facial expressions and body posture to communicate affection and thoughts in communication. Also, in the data, it was realised that the female participants resorted more to the use of physical appearance than the males. This revelation affirms Montemurro and Gillen's (2013) conclusion that in spousal communication, females tend to use their physical appearance to attract male counterparts for different purposes. This is also an affirmation of Smolak et al. (2014) that women perceive that what they wear communicate their feelings and intentions

louder than any other means of communicating with men and hence, sometimes obsessed with their looks, specifically their clothing and hairstyle.

4.1.2 Sensory and Contact codes

The NVC theory classified haptics, vocalics and olfactics under sensory and contact codes. Haptics borders on the manner in which people connect and communicate with each other through touch while vocalics is defined as the use of paralanguage or paralinguistics to convey specific meanings. Olfactics entails communication through smell including fragrances and body scent or body odour. The data revealed that the participants use perfumes, voice quality and touch to communicate with their partners. For instance, FGDP5-M and P15-F espoused that they use their tone to convey information to their partners as noticed in the excerpts;

> *I **raise my voice** at my wife whenever I get angry. It is not that I do it intentionally, it is unintentional but then it communicates and she understands and comply accordingly* (FGDP5 – M)

> *I romantically **use a low pitch or whisper** for purposes of intimacy and my husband understands it, especially in the bedroom. I do it so that we can do our own thing* without *the children hearing us* (P15 – F)

The excerpts give credence to the fact that the participants use paralinguistic features for different communicative purposes in varied contexts. This is in congruence with conclusions from Gordon and Fleisher (2019) who advance that couples use varying pitches and tones of voice to express varied attention to intimacy as well as anger.

The data also revealed that some of the participants used perfumes to communicate specifically for purposes of intimacy. One participant from the focus group discussion (FGDP1-F) indicated that the husband is obsessed with a certain fragrance so she wears

it at times and on certain days just to get the husband's attention for intimacy as seen in the excerpt;

> *When I use the **'Red Door' perfume** in the night, it has a special way of getting my husband in the mood for 'action' …… hahaha! I do it on purpose and I think he loves it so it's our little communicative secret to become intimate* (FGDP1-F)

In addition, some participants from the focus group discussions revealed that they use intimate touch to affectionately express themselves to their participants. For instance, FGDP6 - F and FGDP4 – M said;

> *I **rub my right fingers through my husband's hair** and **place one hand on his chest** to show affection and to request something from him. I do this almost every time I am in need of something and he has grown to understand it in specific contexts …… hahaha!* (FGDP6 - F)

> *I **touch my wife's butt** for fun and to tease her sometimes. **Touching her butt** is something I just do to lighten up her mood and cause her to teasingly scream at me playfully* (FGDP4 – M)

In summary, the findings indicate that the participants employ sensory and contact codes such as touch, voice quality and perfumes in spousal communication. This is consistent with Andersen et al.'s (2013) assertion that couples use touch, voice quality and perfumes to convey information in interaction with their partners.

4.1.3 Spatiotemporal codes

Couples also resorted to the use of spatiotemporal codes as a means of communicating with their partners without necessarily using words. According to the NVC theory, spatiotemporal codes includes proxemics, chronemics, and environment and artefacts. From the theory, proxemics includes anything from claiming and defending a person's space to adjust to the physical proximity in order to feel comfortable whereas

chronemics is the use of time to communicate. Environment and artefacts involves communicating through the physical things and objects that surrounds an individual. It also involves the nature of the environment or atmosphere such as the mood, serenity and bustle. From the data, it was revealed that the participants communicated through their environment for specific purposes. Thus, some interpretations are derived from the presence or absence of some artefacts in the environment of the participants. This is exemplified in the excerpts (P12 - F) and (FGDP6 – M).

> *Whenever I offend my wife and want to make amends, I have a collection of country music which I play. All I need to do is **to play her favourite music** and once I do that, bingo. Your guess is as good as mine. I'm forgiven and assured of my points. Abi you know now* (P12 - F)

> *My wife is the type who does not like cleaning one bit. But it will interest you that she has special days when she does all the cleaning in the house. You know how cunning women can be. When I come home and meet **the house neatly cleaned, especially the living room beautifully rearranged with new curtains and picture frames,** my sister, pray for me. Her aim is to impress me and drain my small pocket with countless demands. Eeei, women. You have your tricks.* (FGDP6 – M)

From the excerpts, P12 – F reveals that he changes the regular atmosphere with his wife's favourite country music whenever he offends her as a way of showing remorse and seeking forgiveness. Playing his wife's favourite country music brings about a change in the environment and this is understood by his partner. Similarly, FGDP6 - M also states that whenever his wife cleans the house thoroughly, it means she wants to make some demands. These show that the setting, arrangement, atmosphere and mood of the environment communicate a lot on different occasions to different people. This finding affirms Patterson and Quadflieg's (2016) assertion that human beings make use

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of objects in their environment such as arrangement of items and the general set up of a person's environment to convey information.

Further, the data revealed the use of space or proxemics by participants in spousal communication. For example, a participant from the interview group (P10 – M) expressed that he intentionally creates distance by sleeping in the living room to convey his displeasure to his wife without uttering any word. Another participant from the focus group (FGDP3 – F) also indicated that she sleeps in a different room just to express her emotions;

> I **intentionally create a distance** just to express my emotions to my wife. I create that distance by not talking to her or sleep in the living room just for her to notice that I am not happy about something (P10 – M)

> I **sleep in a different room** when I am angry with my husband so that I can have my own space to think and overcome my anger (FGDP3 – F)

From the excerpts, it could be seen that the participants use spacing cues such as sleeping in separate rooms or places in the same house to create some distance and to express emotions to their partners. This finding is consistent with Gonzalez's (2020) position that one of the main ways by which couples communicate their emotions of displeasure is through distance. Thus, the shorter the distance, the more intimate, and the longer or wider the distance, the more likely the level of anger or tension in the relationship.

More so, the data revealed that the participants use timing or chronemics to share information with their partners. For instance, FGDP7-M and P11-M disclosed that they use specific times to convey messages to their partners as seen in the excerpts;

> I **intentionally come home late** when I am upset with my wife. I come in late to avoid further confrontations and to allow the issue we are angry about die off

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naturally. She gets worried when I do that and she invite me to seek an amicable solution to the problem. In this come the time I come home is my medium of communication (FGDP7-M)

I call thrice a day *when I go to work. I do this to check up on my wife and the children. If I call at 9pm and she doesn't pick, it communicates to me that she is already asleep* (P11– M)

From the excerpts, it is evident that the participants use time in communicating nonverbally for different reasons. This result gives credence to Gamble and Gamble's (2013) avowal that, couples' respect for time in relation to each other, is indicative of some form of communication beyond words.

To conclude, the study's findings further revealed that, of all the nonverbal forms employed by the participants, haptics and kinesics were the most used forms of nonverbal cues. This is due to the fact that all the participants said they basically use touch, facial expression and gestures to communicate with their spouses because they see it as unavoidable in romantic relationships. For instance, the use of haptics and kinesics are consciously or unconsciously used as complimentary to the use of words for purposes of affirmation and intimacy. This revelation aligns with Waiflein (2013) claim that kinesics and haptics account for about seventy percent (70%) of all the nonverbal cues used in conversation in specific context. Also, facial expression which is a cue of kinesics is one of the main ways by which a person can convey and share their emotions and feelings (Burgoon et al., 2011). Haptics and kinesics are also globally recognised as the primarily signals or cues for expressing intimacy in relationships (Smith, 2020). Again, Allard-Kropp (2020) alludes that without touch or haptics there would be no sexual intimacy because it is regarded as a valuable human sense for promoting intimacy and affection in relationships (Allard-Kropp, 2020). This

assertion from Allard-Kropp (2020) perhaps, explains why all the participants involved in the study provided information on body gestures as indispensable nonverbal forms of spousal communication.

After identifying the various forms of nonverbal cues employed by the participants, the researcher sought to examine the context-specific communicative functions of the identified forms of nonverbal cues and that is the focus of research question two (RQ2).

4.2 RQ2: What are the context-specific communicative functions of the identified forms of nonverbal cues employed in spousal communication by graduate students of the SCMS?

The R.Q.2 sought to identify the context-specific communicative functions of the identified nonverbal forms of communication. Austin (2013) defines communicative function as the purpose of vocal, gestural and verbal acts that intend to communicate messages to others. Burgoon et al. (2022) also state that nonverbal cues could be interpreted from four orientations, namely; source orientation, receiver orientation, interaction orientation and message orientation. Source orientation was used to analyse the data for the R.Q. 2. This means that the participants gave the meanings they communicate with the various identified nonverbal forms. The participants reported that the nonverbal forms they employ in spousal communication served different communicative functions depending on the context of the interaction.

4.2.1 The context-specific communicative functions of the identified forms of nonverbal cues

The communicative functions of the identified nonverbal forms were explored using the source orientation (Burgoon et al., 2022). The data revealed that the participants used the identified forms of nonverbal communication to communicate negative and

positive emotions, and other communicative functions. The themes generated under the negative emotions are anger, jealousy, and guilt, while that of the positive emotions comprised excitement, love, attention, sexual desires, acceptance, and appreciation.

4.2.1.1 Negative emotions

Guerrero and Floyd (2006) espouse that negative emotions are expressions of emotions that include resentments and wrath towards others. In essence, negative emotion is the negative reaction or feedback an individual express to another about a displeasure. The themes generated from the data under the negative emotions are existing themes from Shaver et al. (1987), and Guerrero and Floyd (2006). Each of these emotions are discussed in relation to the nonverbal forms that were used to express such negative emotions.

The themes realised for negative emotions are anger, jealousy, and guilt. Table 4 presents these themes along with the nonverbal forms used to achieve the themes.
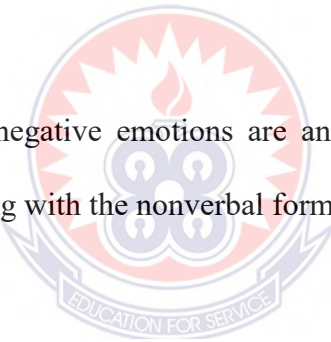
Table 4: Negative Emotions

Themes	Nonverbal Forms	Excerpts
Anger	Facial expression	*I **wear a frowned face** whenever I am **angry** with my wife. Whenever I do that, she realises I am angry and then approaches to talk about any issue causing the discomfort* (FGDP2 – M)
	Body posture	*There is a way I sleep whenever I am angry. **I lie at the end of the bed with my hands in-between my thighs**. Whenever I sleep like that, it means I am **angry about something.*** (P15 – F)
	Space or distance	***I don't sleep in the same room with my husband** when I am **angry with him**. I do this to avoid him any form of confrontation with him. So anytime I move to a different room or to the room of the children, he can easily interpret this behaviour* (P16 – F)
		*I **intentionally leave the house and return late in the night** when I **get angry**. So anytime I leave the house, especially unannounced and in the middle of an argument, it communicates that I am angry* (FGDP6 – M)
	Timing	*Mostly, when I travel, **I call my wife at least thrice a day**. So when **I don't call at all**, **she can easily interpret that something is amiss**. The worst is when she calls and I refuse to respond. I do this whenever I am **angry*** (P8 – M)
	Eye movement	*I give my wife a **stern look** and she is able to decode that I **am not happy with her** or something that she has done* (FGDP1 – M)
	Voice quality	*I **raise my voice or use high pitch** anytime I am **unhappy about something**. This is usually unconsciously or spontaneously done but it communicates a certain intention and my partner understands it. Sometimes, it may not even be anger but just an expression of opinion in that matter* (P11 – F)
	Object	*I **throw any object** close to me at my husband whenever he **irritates me**. It is not intentional but anger can make you do a lot of things without thinking* (FGDP5-F)
Jealousy	Facial expression	I assumes varying facial expressions whenever I am **jealous**. However, I **frown** most often when I notice my husband flirting with other ladies (P12-F)
	Eye movement	*I **fixedly gaze at my husband to express jealousy** whenever I notice him in comprising position when the opposite gender (P10-F)*
Guilt	Voice quality	*I **ironically change the tone of my voice to sound jovial** whenever I am guilty of something so that my partner will not realise that something is wrong, especially when I receive a phone call from a 'certain somebody' and I try to hide it. Sometimes **my voice will quiver** from nervousness* (FGDP7 – M)

Source: Field data, 2022

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4.2.1.1.1 Anger

Liu et al. (2018) define anger as a powerful negative emotion of resentment and hostility brought about by a sense of wrongdoing or injustice and could manifest as the urge to hurt or subjugate another. Recker (n.d.) believes that anger is a natural emotion that is part of human life that can be described as unconscious feeling irate in response to frustration or other situations. This means that, anger is a hostility toward someone or something that has wronged someone. The study revealed that, the participants use different nonverbal forms such as facial expressions, body posture, timing, distance, objects, and voice quality to express their anger. Below is a discussion of the nonverbal forms that were employed by the participants to express anger.

The study revealed that the participants employed facial expression which is a kinesics cue to communicate anger to their partners. Kinesics involves the use of facial expressions and body movements to communicate (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). From the data, all the participants indicated that they use facial expressions to communicate anger such as; frowning, squeezing of face or putting up a frowned face. The use of facial expressions as realised from the data is shown in these excerpts:

> *I **wear a frowned face** whenever I am **angry** with my wife. Whenever I do that, she realises I am angry and then approaches to talk about any issue causing the discomfort* (FGDP2 – M)

> *I **squeeze my face** anytime I am **annoyed** to let my husband know that I am not happy with him. I can squeeze my face all day just to express my displeasure* (P13 – F)

From the excerpt, it is revealed that the participants wear a frown face to their partners to mean that they are experiencing a discomfort. The finding affirms Waiflein's (2013) assertion that frowning and squeezing the face are basic cues to express anger. Waiflein

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(2013) avers that a frown is a universal expression of displeasure, and so couples can easily interpret such nonverbal communication from their spouses.

Apart from using facial expressions to express anger, body posture was also identified as a kind of kinesics used by the participants to express anger. Some of the participants indicated the following:

> There is a way I sleep whenever I am angry. **I lie at the end of the bed with my hands in-between my thighs**. Whenever I sleep like that, it means I am **angry about something.** My husband understands and would sometimes ask why that behaviour or would also push to the other end of the bed to show 'I can go to hell' with that attitude. This is also to show that he is also angry with my nonverbal cue of communication (FGDP1 – F)

> When I am **angry**, I always **sit upright with my arms folded and sternly look at her** in disbelief. Anytime I am in an argument with her, I will do that and she will immediately interpret it by keeping quiet to listen to me (P7 – M)

The excerpts from FGDP1 – F and P7- M are indicative of the fact that, aside facial expressions, the participants express their anger through their body posture, thus how they position themselves in relation to their spouses. It was realised from the data that any particular posture adopted over a period of time registers itself in the mind of the other spouse as a sign of displeasure or anger towards the other.

Further, some participants also indicated that when they are angry, they use space such as leaving home and returning late at night to avoid further confrontations to communicate their anger. Moreover, some also said they do not sleep in the same room with their partners when they are angry. The excerpts below give evidence to these:

> I **intentionally leave the house and return late in the night** when I **get angry**. So anytime I leave the house, especially unannounced and in the middle of an argument, it communicates that I am angry (FGDP6 – M)

> *I don't sleep in the same room with my husband* when I am *angry with him*. I do this to avoid him any form of confrontation with him. So anytime I move to a different room or to the room of the children, he can easily interpret this behaviour (P16 – F)

For some of the participants like FGDP6-M and P15-F, distance is as helpful in signalling an offence as it is in signalling a need for the offending spouse to reach out and render an apology or seek redress. This finding is consistent with Gonzalez's (2020) declaration that withdrawal or distancing is common in spousal communication as a cue for the expression of displeasure, especially when aggrieved partners choose to sleep in separate rooms.

More so, some participants indicated that they use timing to express their anger. For instance, P8 – M revealed that he calls thrice a day whenever he travels so when he does not call as such, it means he is angry with the wife. This is evidenced in the excerpt:

> *Mostly, when I travel,* **I call my wife at least thrice a day**. *So when* **I don't call at all**, **she can easily interpret that something is amiss**. *The worst is when she calls and I refuse to respond. I do this whenever I am* **angry** (P8 – M)

P8 – M has revealed that time and frequency play an integral role in the use of nonverbal communication. By reducing the frequency of calls or refusal to respond to calls, the other partner can easily interpret the nonverbal cues being used. The use of time to communicate offence affirms Gamble and Gamble's (2013) avowal that couples use timing to also communicate anger. Gamble and Gamble (2013) advance that a reduction in frequency, a delay, or ceasure of communication signals or registers a displeasure of a spouse to the other, especially for very sensitive spouses who can easily affirm such a behaviour to previous ones.

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In addition, movement of the eye was also used by the participants to communicate anger as shown in:

> *I give my wife a **stern look** and she is able to decode that I **am not happy with her** or something that she has done* (FGDP1 – M)

For participant FGDP1 - M, the stern look in the said circumstance is to communicate a form of displeasure. This way of expressing anger is in tandem with Jarick et al.'s (2016) findings that one of the most used means of communicating anger between couples is the movement of the eye. Again, Matsumoto and Hwang (2013) who maintain that, for many couples, the use of the eye is the safest and most obscure way to express anger at each other echo the finding.

Finally yet importantly, the data revealed that the participants also used voice quality to express anger. Some voice qualities identified from the data are pitch level, intonation, accent, and silence. In congruence with Bonaccio's (2016) postulations, the current study reveals that the participants used varying pitch levels, intonations, accent, and silence to express anger as indicated in this excerpt:

> *I **raise my voice or use high pitch** anytime I am **unhappy about something**. This is usually unconsciously or spontaneously done but it communicates a certain intention and my partner understands it. Sometimes, it may not even be anger but just an expression of opinion in that matter* (P11 – F)

For most of the participants in the current study, the most common use of voice quality in expressing anger is raising of voice or using a high pitch even though they indicated that it is usually not intentional. For example, P11 - F said that she unconsciously or spontaneously raises her voice anytime she is unhappy about something which may not even mean she is angry. This shows that although this action is usually not intentional

or by impulse, it is often interpreted as anger or discomfort which may be a miscommunication.

Lastly, the data revealed that the participants use objects to communicate anger. According to Shaver et al. (1987), and Gyasi and Bangmarigu (2022), in offensive situations, couples can fall on any physical objects in the environment and kick at it, punch, or throw it at a wall or smash on the floor just to communicate their anger. The objects could also be thrown at the offending spouse in extreme case of domestic abuse. A participant revealed that, she throws any object she gets when irritated as seen in the excerpt;

> *I **throw any object** close to me at my husband whenever he **irritates me.** It is not intentional but anger can make you do a lot of things without thinking* (FGDP5-F)

In summary, the findings show that the participants express anger differently. In as much as majority expressed their anger through facial expressions, others expressed theirs through time, space, voice quality, among others. This shows the diverse use and interpretation of nonverbal forms.

4.2.1.1.2 Jealousy

Jealousy is an emotional reaction to the fear of losing something valuable especially, in romantic relationships (Pam, 2013). Harris (2009) asserts that, in romantic relationships, jealousy is a frequent emotion in every relationship but often properly managed by the people involved in the relationship. Consequently, when couples experience jealousy, there is a behaviour they exhibit as an expression of the jealousy (Harris, 2009). The data revealed that the participants use frowning to express jealousy. In congruence with Pam's (2013) postulations that jealousy is most demonstrated through facial expressions, P12 – F confirmed that she assumes varying facial

expressions to express jealousy in varying situations. A participant also indicated that she wears a frown when other women flirt with her husband as seen in the excerpts;

> *I assumes varying **facial expressions** whenever I am **jealous**. However, I **frown** most often when I notice my husband flirting with other women* (P12-F)

Also, the study revealed that a feeling of jealousy could be expressed through oculesics. For some participants, a fixed gaze at a spouse in any compromising position with the opposite gender sends a warning of jealousy and discomfort. As averred by Pam (2013), the fixed gaze makes a spouse uncomfortable and thus results in a refrain from uncompromising situation. From the data, a continuous stare and a stern look are interpreted as caution or warning to the recipient of the nonverbal action.

> *I **fixedly gaze at my husband to express jealousy** whenever I notice him in comprising position when the opposite gender* ([P10-F)

Due to the diverse interpretations that could be given to any form of nonverbal communication, it was noticed that some participants used facial expressions and eye movement to convey anger whiles others used it to express jealousy. This shows that nonverbal forms can be used to communicate different emotions in different context; therefore, the interpretation of nonverbal forms is context-specific (Burgoon et al., 2022).

4.2.1.1.3 Guilt

Guilt is an emotional condition that happens when a person recognises or believes that they have broken a moral code and takes ownership of the transgression (Phillip, 2010). Tangney et al. (2007) assert that, guilt is the consciousness that something is amiss and it is likely to affect the relationship between some individuals or group. Knez and Nordhall (2017) argue that in romantic relationships, the individuals may pretend or

ignore their guilt but may rather communicate it through their body language. The use of nonverbal cues such as muttering, shivering, quivering in voice, stuttering, sweating in the palm, wobbling in legs, among others were instances to show that a partner was communicating a feeling of guilt. For instance, a participant said that the intentional use of a jovial voice is indicative of a feeling of guilt as indicated:

> *I **ironically change the tone of my voice to sound jovial** whenever I am guilty of something so my partner will not realise that something is wrong, especially when I receive a phone call from a 'certain somebody' and I try to hide it. Sometimes **my voice will quiver** from nervousness* (FGDP7 – M)

It could be seen from the excerpt that FGDP7 – M instead of admitting his guilt vocally refused and used nonverbal behaviours to express it. Thus the quiver in his voice, and change in pitch are indicative of the communication of guilt. For some participants, the touching of face is an indication of guilt or nervousness. Meyer (2022) who avers that a very common cue signalling guilt in romantic relationships is fidgeting and repulsive touching of the face echoes this finding.

Further, it is evident from the discussion that every married couple has specific ways of expressing guilt in specific contexts. Thus, the participants in this study have revealed different forms of nonverbal cues such as touching the face and voice quality to show quilt. This is in line with Meyer's (2022) avowal that couples employ different forms of nonverbal cues or behaviours to communicate the same emotions.

4.2.1.2 Positive emotions

Kok and Fredrickson (2013) assert that positive emotions encompass enjoyable or desirable situational reactions ranging from interest and contentment to love and pleasure. Positive emotions that emerged from the data are excitement and love (Guerrero & Floyd, 2006). However, following the iterative and close reading of the

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data gathered, and the meticulous thematising of the data, one other positive theme, namely; sexual desires was also identified in addition. The participants indicated that they employ cues of touch, facial expression, artefacts, time, space, movement of the eye, and physical appearance to communicate variant forms of positive emotions. Each of the positive emotions identified in the data are shown in table 5, and are subsequently discussed with excerpts from the data in this section of this write-up.

Table 5: Positive Emotions

Themes	Nonverbal Forms Used	Excerpts
Excitement	• Friendly touch	*I playfully **touch or hug** my partner to show affection and to solidify our relationship. I would sometimes intentionally **touch her 'butt'** so she would playfully hit my hands and burst into **laughter**. This helps **to lighten up our mood**.* (P2 – M)
	• Facial expression	I **smile** *a lot whenever I am in **a happy mood**. So when my wife notices that I am smiling about everything, she deduces that I am happy.* (P6-M)
	• Time	***I call my husband almost every two hours*** *for him to know **I love him**. He may be very busy at work but I make sure I call him at least twice for him to know that he is on my mind all the time even as I also work* (FGDP3 – F)
Love	• Space	*I make sure I **sit close** to my wife every time we go out and vice versa. We do this to show that we are still in **love** just like when we first met. We whisper and share little jokes as we **sit together** in public* (P8 – M)
	• Environment & artefact	*I take my wife on **holidays outside Winneba** as **a token of my love** for her. I do this anytime I have the means to do so just **to rekindle my love** for her. I also get her **red roses** on special occasions such as her birthday or our wedding anniversary. She in turn **prepares special meals** for the family on such commemorative occasions. Love in this sense is expressed better and not merely in words like 'I love you' which may not even be true* (P1 – M)

Sexual desires	• Sexually arousing touch	*I **touch my wife's breast** whenever I **want to make love to her**. So whenever I touch this spot, she understands what I mean. At times too, I **rub my hands on her thigh** to arouse her **for sex*** (P2 – M)
	• Intimate stare	*I feel shy to express my **sexual desires** verbally so I always resort to **intimately stare** at my husband and kiss him deeply as a way of saying 'I need you'* (P17 – F)
	• Seductive clothes	*I wear **sexy clothes** whenever I want to express **my desire for sex** to my husband. Especially, a **red mini see-through night gown.** The red colour has a certain effect on my husband. So I don't bother expressing **my sexual desires** verbally, all I do is **wear that dress** and show some skin and we are good to go…… hahaha!* (P19 – F)
Appreciation	Gifts	*I buy **gifts** for my wife as a token of my **appreciation. It works better than saying I appreciate her.*** (FGDP3-M)
Acceptance	Head movement	*I **nod** to show **agreement** or signal an **acceptance** during discussions at home. Also, I **nod** in public **as a sign of approval** when my wife asks or shows me something* (P14- F)
Attention	Stare	*I **continuously watch my husband's face** when I want him to **notice me** or **get his attention**. Sometimes, I just put **my hands in between my thighs** and **shake my legs** to **get his attention** in public* (P12 – F)
	Fragrance	*I use his **favourite perfume** to get his **attention** especially when all his attention is on football or game. I do this by spraying it on myself and intentionally pass in front of him* (FGDP14-F)

Source: Field data, 2022

4.2.1.2.1 Excitement

Excitement is defined in a variety of ways to involve positive feelings and a sense of

fulfilment in life (Cherry, 2022). Ackerman (2019) alludes that excitement is a feeling

of contentment with one's life circumstance resulting from emotion of joy or

satisfaction. The study revealed that the participants use some forms of nonverbal cues;

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friendly touch, and facial expression to communicate different forms of excitement. For instance, P2 – M indicated that:

> *I playfully **touch or hug** my partner to show affection and to solidify our relationship. I would sometimes intentionally **touch her 'butt'** so she would playfully hit my hands and burst into **laughter**. This helps **to lighten up our mood**. I also hug her when I miss her and I see her* (P2 – M)

From P2-M, it could be realised that friendly touch is used to express excitement in a playful manner in the form of hugging, and touching the butt. This affirms Gamble and Gamble's (2013) assertion that the use of touch is crucial in intimate relationships since it could be used to transmit variety of messages including affection, companionship and excitement. Furthermore, the finding also affirms Andersen and Guerrero's (2008) conclusion that touch is used to solidify relationships, with emphasis on the intensity and type of touch in romantic relationships.

The data again revealed that the participants use facial expressions to express joy or excitement. The smile was indicated to be used as a sign of excitement by participant P6 - M. This is a confirmation of Patterson's (2017) postulation that wearing a smile is often used to communicate excitement globally as a primary signal of positive emotions.

4.2.1.2.2 Love

Love is a feeling that maintains relationship and sustains loyalty (Karantzas, 2020). Smith (2021) states that love is a strong sense of elation and passionate enthusiasm for someone or something. Cherry (2022) adds that, love is a set of feelings characterised by intimacy, passion, attraction, affection, and commitment. Hence, love involves a feeling of warm attachment or deep affection towards another person. The data revealed

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that all the sixteen participants use various forms of nonverbal communication including kissing, time, space, and environment to express love to their partners. For instance, FGDP3 – F indicated that;

> *I **call my husband almost every two hours** for him to know **I love him**. He may be very busy at work but I make sure I call him at least twice for him to know that he is on my mind all the time even as I also work* (FGDP3 – F)

From the excerpts of P14 – F, time is seen in the frequency in calling the spouse to express love and attention. In essence, the participant uses the time of the day which ideally is considered a busy time for both partners to still show affection for each other.

Also, in the data gathered, it was revealed that the participants employ space or distance of proximity to express love. For instance, participant P8 – M indicated that:

> *I make sure I **sit close** to my wife every time we go out and vice versa. We do this to show that we are still in **love** just like when we first met. We whisper and share little jokes as we **sit together** in public* (P8 – M)

The finding in the data is in line with Gonzalez's (2020) avowal that space is one common way by which couples express love especially in public.

Further, environment and artefact involves the physical aspects of our surroundings, and objects that serve as the contexts in which people interact (Patterson & Quadlieg, 2016). Couples therefore use the environment and objects in it to express their love for each other. P1 – M indicated that:

> *I take my wife on **holidays outside Winneba** as **a token of my love** for her. I do this anytime I have the means to do so just **to rekindle my love** for her. I also get her red roses on special occasions such as her birthday or our wedding anniversary. She in turn **prepares special meals** for the family on such commemorative occasions. Love in this sense is expressed better and not merely in words like 'I love you' which may not even be true* (P1 – M)

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4.2.1.2.3 Sexual desires

Marieke et al. (2020) opine that sexual desire is the drive to engage in sexual conduct. The desire for sex could be aroused by the imagination of sexual fantasies with someone a person finds attractive (Toates, 2009). This means that, a sexual desire is characteristic of sexuality and varies from person to person based on specific situations. In line with this, the current study reveals that the participants employ sexually arousing touch, intimate look, and seductive clothes to express their desire for sex.

The data revealed that the participants sexually touch their partners to express their sexual desires. The excerpts indicated that the participants have specific parts of the body that they touch including the breast, thighs, among others to convey erotic messages to their partners. For instance, P2 – M indicated that he touches the wife's breast to express his sexual desires as noticed in the excerpt.

> *I **touch my wife's breast** whenever I **want to make love to her**. So whenever I touch this spot, she understands what I mean. At times too, I **rub my hands on her thigh** to arouse her **for sex** (P2 – M)*

The excerpt from P2 – M is affirmed by Marieke et al. (2020) who assert that couples exhibit certain behaviours including touching of the breast and other parts of the body of their partners to express the desire for sex. According to Marieke et al. (2020), different couples develop a system of nonverbal communication through which they communicate the desire for sex. Marieke et al. (2020) further advance that for most couples, the nonverbal way of expressing a sexual desire is more appropriate or louder than using words.

Further, the data revealed that the participants intimately stare at their partners to also communicate their sexual desires. For instance, P17 – F said:

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> *I feel shy to express my **sexual desires** verbally so I always resort to **intimately stare** at my husband and kiss him deeply as a way of saying 'I need you'* (P17 – F)

In the excerpts from P17 – F, intimate stare is used to communicate the desire for intimacy. This corroborates Rieger and Savin-Williams' (2012) assertion that couples could decode sexual desire in each other's eyes in specific contexts and each context could be understood differently by different people.

More so, the use of clothing is used to communicate erotic emotions among couples, especially from the females (Montemurro & Gillen, 2013). In this study, it was realised that the participants use seductive clothes to communicate sexual desires to their partners. For instance, P19 – F indicated that:

> *I wear **sexy clothes** whenever I want to express **my desire for sex** to my husband**. Especially, a **red mini see-through night gown.** The red colour has a certain effect on my husband. So I don't bother expressing **my sexual desires** verbally, all I do is **wear that dress** and show some skin and we are good to go…… hahaha!* (P19 – F)

From P19 – F, she uses sexy clothes such as red mini see-through night gown to seductively express her desire for sex to her partner. In the data, the female participants were noted to use seductive clothes to communicate sexual desires and not the males. This revelation in the data is in line with Montemurro and Gillen's (2013) assertion that women sometimes communicate their sexual desires through their choice of clothing, colours, perfume, undergarments, and cosmetics, among others.

4.2.1.2.4 Appreciation

Appreciation was identified from the data. Appreciation is acknowledging the value and meaning of something, a person, an event, a behaviour, or an object and

experiencing a positive emotional connection to it (Locklear et al., 2022). In other words, appreciation is an attitude of recognising the worth, excellence, or significance of something. The study revealed that the participants used nonverbal cues to express appreciation. FGDP3 – M indicated that he buys gifts to show appreciation to his partner:

> *I **buy gifts** for my wife as a token of **my appreciation**. It works better than saying I appreciate her* (FGDP3 – M)

The excerpt from FGDP3 – M gives credence to the affirmation of Howard's (n.d) notion that one major lubricant for spousal communication is the constant show of appreciation through the giving of gifts, especially as surprises. The more couples show appreciation to each other, the more likely they are to spice up their love life (Howard, n.d) and the show of appreciation can range from small acts such as a hug, thumbs-up, to bigger manifestations such as the giving of gifts.

4.2.1.2.5 Acceptance

Acceptance was also identified in the data. Williams and Lynn (2010) define acceptance as a self-regulation technique that is centred on having an approachable and a receiving mind-set toward a person's own feelings or ideas. In effect, acceptance is a feeling of belonging, favour, and support towards oneself or another. The findings, thus, the use of head movement to communicate acceptance. The participant (P14-F) indicated their use of kinesics to express acceptance as shown in the excerpt:

> *I **nod** to show **agreement** or **signal an acceptance** during discussions at home. Also, I **nod** in public **as a sign of approval** when my wife asks or shows me something* (P14- F)

The excerpt from P14 - F affirms Latha's (2014) assertion that head movement such as nodding is used to express agreement or acceptance as nonverbal communication cue.

4.2.1.2.5 Attention

The data revealed the participants use of nonverbal cues to get the attention of their partners. Legg (2020) posits that consciously or unconsciously, the seeking of attention involves an effort to monopolise the spotlight to garner approval or appreciation. Thus, a person could consciously or unconsciously exhibit some communicative behaviours with the intention to capture the attention of someone or a group of people. The participants use nonverbal forms such as staring, posture and fragrance to seek the attention of their partners as shown in the excerpts:

> *I **continuously watch my husband's face** when I want him to **notice me** or **get his attention**. Whenever he realises that I have been watching his face for long, he gets closer to me for us to talk. Sometimes, I just put **my hands in between my thighs** and **shake my legs** to **get his attention** in public* (P12 – F)

> *I use his **favourite perfume** to get his **attention** especially when all his attention is on football or game* (FGDP14-F)

The excerpts revealed that the participants have different ways of getting their partners attention. For instance, P12-F used staring and body posture to get the attention of the husband, whiles FGDP14-F used fragrance to get the partner's attention. This shows the uniqueness in the use of the different forms of nonverbal cues as affirmed by Gonzalez (2020).

Concisely, the data for R.Q.2 revealed that various forms of nonverbal communication cues are employed by the participants to communicate different things. This shows the diverse nature of the forms of nonverbal communication and as such, gives credence to

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Gonzalez's (2020) declaration that couples choose from the plethora of nonverbal forms and cues in communication for specific purposes or intentions to communicate with their partners. Furthermore, the findings align with Smith's (2021) assertion that the variance in nonverbal forms and cues adopted by couples in specific settings and under peculiar circumstances, gives variety to spousal communication and enhances romantic relationships and thus, should be encouraged.

4.3 What are the motivations behind the use of the identified nonverbal cues employed in spousal communication by graduate students the SCMS?

R.Q. 3 sought to identify the motivations behind the participants' use of the identified forms of nonverbal communication cues. Motivation refers to the reasons behind one's actions that persuades or encourages the person to act in the way they do (Cherry, 2022). In order to analyse the motivations behind the participants use of the forms of nonverbal cues, the McClelland's Human Motivation theory or McClelland's theory of Needs was used to analyse the data. The theory posits that, no matter an individual's age, gender, education, background or ethnicity, the person possesses three motivational needs, one of which will ultimately become the person's main motivator. The three motivational needs are; power, affiliation and achievement. Nevertheless, all the three were identified in the data. The participants were motivated by the three needs, namely; control (power), association (affiliation) and achievement to employ the identified nonverbal cues in specific contexts. In the analysis, control is used to replace power whereas association is used to replace affiliation. This is due to the fact that both 'control and association' are in consistent with the 'power and affiliation' elements of the theory. Each of these are discussed subsequently with excerpts from the data.

4.3.1 Control

McClelland (1961) defines the need for control as a "means to control or influence a person" (p.167). Lussier and Achua (2007) also define the need for control as "the unconscious concern for influencing others and seeking positions of authority" (p. 42). Thus, the need for power could be described as the need to control others. Hence, the need for power relates to a person's capacity to influence or cause others to behave in a way that they prefer. In this study, control is manifested in various ways under two sub-themes, namely; seductive control and dominance. The sub-themes and excepts are tabulated below;

Table 6: Control

Sub-themes	Nonverbal Forms	Excerpts
Seductive control	Seductive clothes	*When my husband is angry with me, I just put on his favourite **see-through night gown, walk pass him and bend in front of him** as if I am picking something from the floor. Whenever he sees that, **he starts smiling and that ends his anger*** (P16-F)
	Seductive touch and voice	*I **seductively touch** my husband as I **romantically lower my voice** to **persuade him to buy me something he has earlier refused to buy*** (FGDP2 – F)
Dominance	Eye movement	*I mostly **use my eyes to control** my husband in public especially when he is all over the place flirting with other women. **He leaves the scene or stops whatever he is doing whenever he notices that I am continuously watching him*** (P20-F)
		*Whenever my wife goes against my orders or refuses to abide by my rules, I **gaze at her with an intimidated look** without uttering a word. Immediately she notices that, **her behaviour changes*** (P9-M)
	Body posture	*I mostly use my **posture** to control my wife. Whenever I notice that she is going overboard with her behaviour, I just **stand upright and hold my waist as I wear a frown face**. Anytime she notices that, she **would immediately check herself to be in line** …. Hahaha!* (FGDP2 – M)

Source: Field data, 2022

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4.3.1.1 Seductive control

Seductive control explains how some individuals use behaviours which are alluring, enticing, and sexy, among others to persuade or influence someone's behaviour. The data revealed that most of the female participants employ nonverbal cues because the cues help them to seductively influence their partners' behaviour. The participants use seductive clothes, romantic voice and seductive touch to control their spouses. For instance, FGDP2-F indicated that when her husband refuses to buy her something she has requested, she strategically touches her husband in a romantic manner as she lowers her voice seductively to influence the husband to buy it for her. She added that this helps her to get her husband to do as she wishes as noticed in the excerpt:

> *I **seductively touch** my husband as I **romantically lower my voice** to **persuade**
> **him to buy me something he has earlier refused to buy*** (FGDP2 – F)

Another participant (P16-F) also asserted that she wears seductive clothes as apologetic strategy to influence the husband to forgive her whenever she offends him.

> *When my husband is angry with me, I just put on his favourite **see-through night***
> ***gown,*** *walk pass him and bend in front of him as if I am picking something from*
> *the floor. Whenever he sees that, **he starts smiling and that ends his anger***
> (P16-F)

These instances revealed how the participants are driven by the need of control to persuade or influence their partners' behaviours nonverbally through seduction. This is in line with Carney's (2020) conclusion that control is inevitable in relationships, and that women mostly exhibit control through seduction.

4.3.1.2 Dominance

Dominance is power and influence over others (Dunbar, 2015). In this study, dominance encompasses nonverbal cues used to assert power or control and influence in marriages. The data revealed that the participants use nonverbal cues to exert control over their partners. For instance, a participant (i.e. P20 – F) indicated that she mostly maintains prolonged eye contact especially in public to control her husband whenever he flirts with other women.

> *Eye contact is very powerful in communication. I mostly **use my eyes to control my husband in public especially when he is all over the place flirting with other women. He leaves the scene or stops whatever he is doing whenever he notices that I am continuously watching him** (P20-F)*

The excerpt from P20 – F gives credence to the fact that, the participant is motivated to use the eyes to influence the behaviour of the husband.

Another participant (i.e. P9-M) also indicated that he uses his eyes to control the wife most often, and whenever he does that, the wife's behaviour changes to suit what is expected of her. In this, the participant has exerted dominance over the wife using vocalics cue.

> *Whenever my wife goes against my orders or refuses to abide by my rules, I **gaze at her with an intimidated look** without uttering a word. Immediately she notices that, **her behaviour changes** (P9-M)*

Additionally, it came to light that the participant (FGDP2-M) exhibited control or dominance through body posture as revealed in the excerpt:

> *I mostly use my **posture** to control my wife. Whenever I notice that she is going overboard with her behaviour, I just **stand upright and hold my waist as I wear a frown face**. Anytime she notices that, she **would immediately check herself to be in line** …. Hahaha! (FGDP2 – M)*

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From the excerpt, the participant indicated that when he stands upright and hold his waist as he wears a frown face, it is indicative of his anger and the fact that the partner is seeing him as aberrant. The partner immediately becomes conscious of his superiority and accords him same. In light of this, the man in a way has exerted some form of control using nonverbal behaviour. This is in consistence with Riggio's (2021) avowal that humans naturally exhibit superiority or power nonverbally through body posture and eye gaze without necessarily uttering any word.

In effect, the need for control is a motivation to use the nonverbal communication cue however subtle or domineering it may seem on a partner. This revelation is an affirmation of McClelland's theory of need that a person's action is based on their need for a certain level of power. In this case, the power is exerted over the spouse as a form of nonverbal reaction which is usually unpleasant.

4.3.2 Affiliation/Association

McClelland (1961) describes affiliation as "establishing, maintaining or restoring a positive affective relationship with another person and these relations are adequately described by the word *friendship*" (p. 160). Thus, the drive to form intimate or cordial ties with others could be shown in the demand for affiliation (Robbins, 2003). Consequently, the need for affiliation is the requirement for connection, whether from a spouse, friend, or the larger society. People who are motivated by affiliation as a need are often propelled by love, and enjoy creating intimacy with people (Khatri, 2021). In this study, the need for association refers to the use of nonverbal cues to establish and reinforce intimacy and closeness in relationships. Two sub-themes (intimacy and mutual support) were derived from the data and are discussed subsequently.

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Table 7: Association

Sub-themes	Nonverbal Forms	Excerpts
Intimacy	Intimate behaviours	*I **engage in physical touch such as hugging, holding hands or kissing, to get emotionally connected** and also **strengthen the bond** between my wife and myself* (P8 – M) *I want t**o be associated with all the important people in my husband's life**. Therefore, I am motivated **to wear a broad smile anytime we encounter such people at social functions*** (FGDP6-F)
Mutual Support	Head movement	*I mostly **nod to approve or agree to issues** especially when my wife wants to be sure I **support her decisions or actions** when we visit acquaintances or attend programmes* (P5-M)
	Supportive touch	*I smile and **pat my husband shoulder** to give him morale whenever he is about to deliver a speech. **I do this to let him know that I am in support of him*** (P12-F) *I **hug** my husband anytime he is emotionally down **to let him know that I care for him and I would be there for him no matter what*** (P16-F)

Source: Field data, 2022

4.3.2.1 Intimacy

Intimacy refers to a sense of closeness and connection in relationships (Kraft, n.d). The data revealed that the participants are motivated by the need for association to use nonverbal cues in spousal communication because, they seek to create connections, affection or intimacy with their partners. The participant (i.e. P8 – M) use intimate behaviours including eye contact, smiling, hugging, kissing, among others to convey friendliness and approachability, and also get connected with the partner which help create positive communication climate and foster relational closeness. For instance,

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I **engage in physical touch such as hugging, holding hands or kissing, to get emotionally connected** *and also* **strengthen the bond** *between my wife and myself* (P8 – M)

The data again revealed that the participants do not only create intimacy with their partners, they also create intimacy with their partner's friends, family and acquaintances. FGDP6 - F espoused that:

*I want t***o be associated with all the important people in my husband's life***. Therefore, I am motivated* **to wear a broad smile anytime we encounter such people at social functions***. I even encourage him to allow us to take pictures which I share on my status or Facebook wall. The pictures, shaking hands and the broad smiles are very important for me as a wife whose husband is a friend to such important personalities* (FGDP6-F)

From the excerpt of FGDP6 - F, she is motivated to use intimate behaviours including shaking hands, broad smile etc. to create connections and friendship with the important friends of her husband. The excerpts from P8 – M and FGDP6 - F affirm Yamaguchi's (2003) avowal that association is common in relationships as it fuels intimacy, connection, affection or love. According to Yamaguchi (2003), when couples are able to connect with their partners emotionally, they are able to bond even with the family and friends, and can easily create associations or connections for purposes of networking and the creation of social capital as indicated in the excerpt.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the participants of this study are motivated to act or behave the way they do with the underlying desire or need to create connections, bonds or association with their partners and their extended relatives.

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4.3.2.2 Mutual Support

Mutual support in this study means expressing physical and emotional support to one's partner without using words and couples express mutual support through cuddling, hugging, paying attention, among others (Dadula, 2022). This is as a result of the fact that every relationship is based on a solid foundation of compassion and emotional support (Kraft, n.d). The data revealed that the participants are motivated to use nonverbal cues because they wanted to show support to their partners without necessarily using words. For instance, P5-M indicated that he nods his head or smiles to signal agreement or approval to his wife.

> *I mostly **nod to approve or agree to issues** especially when my wife wants to be sure I **support her decisions or actions** when we visit acquaintances or attend programmes* (P5-M)

Additionally, another participant (P12-F) also revealed that she smiles and pats the husband's shoulder as a sign of support and morale whenever her husband is about to deliver a speech as seen in the excerpt.

> *I smile and **pat my husband shoulder** to give him morale whenever he is about to deliver a speech. **I do this to let him know that I am in support of him** (P12-F)*

P16-F also espoused that she hugs her husband whenever he is emotionally down to let him know that she cares for him and would be there for him no matter what. This is an indicative of how couples are motivated to use various nonverbal cues to express support emotionally and physically to ensure closeness and friendship.

In summary, the participants are motivated by the need of association to employ various forms of nonverbal cues in spousal communication because they want to create intimacy and mutual support with their partners as noticed in the discussions.

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4.3.3 Achievement

Achievement is described as the desire to succeed (McClelland, 1961). The data revealed that the participants are also motivated to employ nonverbal forms in spousal communication because the want to achieve privacy and manage conflict. Therefore, they employ nonverbal forms such as proxemics, objectics, and vocalics in achieving this desire. These are discussed subsequently.

Table 8: Achievement

Themes	Nonverbal Form	Excerpts
Privacy	Body gestures	*I mostly use **body gestures such as eye, body posture and touch** to communicate with my wife when the children are around or when we are in public so that what I intend to say would **not be heard by others*** (FGDP5-M)
Conflict management	Silence	*Argument or misunderstanding is inevitable in marital communication but whenever it happens verbal cues do not help; it is only **nonverbal cue which is silence that help**. I use **silence to end arguments** whenever it rises* (P16-F)
	Space	*Whenever I have heated argument with my wife, I **sleep in different room** or **leave the house and return late** when everyone is sleeping so that I don't hit her out of anger. This helps **me to calm down and also die down the argument*** (P1-M)

Source: Field data, 2022

4.3.3.1 Privacy

Privacy is the state or condition of limiting the access to information or a person (Moore, 2018). The data revealed that the participants were motivated to employ nonverbal cues because they wanted to ensure or achieve privacy. They used body gestures such as, eye contact, facial expression, among others to ensure that others did

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not hear what they were communicating. For example, FGDP5-M indicated that he uses body gestures to communicate with the wife in public places or when the children are around:

> *I mostly use **body gestures such as eye, touch and posture** to communicate with my wife when the children are around or **when we are in public so that what I intend to say would not be heard by others** (FGDP5-M)*

The excerpt from FGDP5-M is evidence that couples use nonverbal cues to express their thoughts to their partners especially in public places to ensure that they are not heard by others. This is an affirmation of Jarick et al.'s (2016) aversion that couples are driven to use various forms of nonverbal cues understandable to each other in public places to ensure privacy.

4.3.3.2 Conflict management

Conflict is defined as an argument or difference of opinion between people that could be detrimental (Ronquillo et al., 2022). Therefore, conflict management is settling disputes or arguments in ways that would be beneficial to the parties involved. In the data, it was realised that the participants use nonverbal cues such as silence and space to handle and solve conflicts efficiently. For instance, a participant (P16-F) indicated that she keeps quiet or remains silent whenever she realises that the argument between the husband and her are going the extreme. Her silent helps by ending or minimising the rise of the argument.

> *Nonverbal communication is the reason why most of our arguments haven't escalated. Argument or misunderstanding is inevitable in marital communication but whenever it happens verbal cues do not help; it is only **nonverbal cue which is silence that help**. I use **silence to end arguments** whenever it rises (P16-F)*

Similarly, P1-M also espoused that he uses distance or space to manage conflict. He added that he sleeps in different room or walk away whenever he quarrels extremely with the wife.

> *Whenever I have heated argument with my wife, I **sleep in different room** or **leave the house and return late** when everyone is sleeping so that I don't hit her out of anger. **This helps me to calm down and also die down the argument*** (P1-M)

From the excerpts, it is realised that the participants desire to ensure peace motivated them to employ various forms of nonverbal cues to manage conflicts that arise from their communication. This is in line with Ronquillo et al.'s (2022) conclusion that individuals adopt different strategies mostly nonverbal in order to manage conflict or argument before it escalates.

In essence, R.Q. 3's findings show that the participants are driven by control, association, and achievement to act in particular ways at particular times. In order to fulfil a certain demand at a specific time, they do this by utilising a variety of nonverbal communication forms. Whenever the participants are driven by any of the identified motivations, they respond in accordance with the need through nonverbal forms. This finding supports the position of Varona and Capretz (2021), and Rybnicek et al. (2017) that regardless of the circumstance or setting, every person is driven or motivated to act or behave in a particular way.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed the findings from the data collected through interviews and focus group discussions on the forms of nonverbal cues in spousal communication using thematic analysis. Hinging on the theory of nonverbal communication (Bonaccio et al., 2016), the McClelland Motivation theory of Needs (McClelland, 1961), and relevant literature, the chapter revealed the forms of nonverbal communication the participants

employed through their corresponding cues, their context-specific communicative functions, and the motivations for using the identified forms of nonverbal communication.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study focuses on identifying forms of nonverbal communication employed in spousal communication. Among other things, the study sets out to identify the nonverbal forms of communication employed in spousal communication by married graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education, Winneba and ascertain the context-specific communicative functions of the nonverbal communication forms. It also seeks to examine the motivations behind the use of any identified nonverbal forms and their communicative importance to specific spousal communication. This chapter thus, presents a summary of the main findings of the study, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations on the basis of the conclusions drawn. Finally, the chapter highlights the limitations of the study, and recommends suggestions for future researches in the area of nonverbal communication.

5.1 Summary of Main Findings

As already indicated, this study sought to identify forms of nonverbal cues employed in spousal communication, examine context-specific communicative functions of identified forms, and explore the motivations for using the identified nonverbal forms. As a result, there was an extensive review of literature upon which the identified research gap was problematised and explained. Data was collected from married graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education, Winneba. The theory of nonverbal communication (Bonaccio et al., 2016) and McClelland's theory of Needs (McClelland, 1961) were used to analyse the data. The findings of this research are therefore a result of critical iterative analysis of the data gathered.

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The research approach adapted is qualitative (Creswell, 2014) and the research design is a single case study (Yin, 2018). The study purposively sampled thirty-three (33) married graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies – UEW using a recruitment and consent form. Twenty (20) of the participants consented to provide data through interviews while thirteen (13) consented to join the focus group discussions. The data was thematically analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2019) through thick rich narrative discussions supplemented with excerpts from the data.

The first research question (i.e. R.Q. 1) was targeted at identifying forms of nonverbal cues employed in spousal communication by married graduate students of the SCMS. The data gathered for this R.Q. was thus thematically analysed using the nonverbal communication theory (Bonaccio et al., 2016) and the relevant literature. The themes for R.Q. 1 are body codes, sensory and contact codes, and spatiotemporal codes.

The data revealed that the participants in spousal communication employed various forms of nonverbal communication cues. The participants exhibited the forms through the help of various cues correspondent to the forms. For instance, forms under body codes were kinesics, objectics and oculesics. Each of them was realised through their specific cues including facial expressions, physical appearance (colour and style of clothing, & hairstyle), and eye movement. Sensory and contact codes were also made up of haptics, vocalics, and olfactics. They manifested through cues such as touch, voice quality (high & low pitch) and perfume respectively. Spatiotemporal codes comprised proxemics, chronemics, and environment and artefact. Proxemics manifested through cues such as space and distance while chronemics was noticed through timing. The environment and artefact was greatly seen in the use of atmosphere, room design and setting. Consequently, the data showed that the participants employed these forms of

nonverbal communication to express their thoughts, feelings or ideas which is an affirmation of Adekunbi's (2014) assertion that nonverbal communication is inevitable in communication in context to express attitudes, feelings, thoughts or ideas.

Furthermore, the study revealed that inasmuch as nonverbal communication is inevitable in communication, some forms are used more frequently than others for specific purposes. For instance, in this study, it was revealed that kinesics and haptics were the most used forms of nonverbal communication and this is in line with the avowal of Waiflein (2013), and Smith (2020) that kinesics and haptics are the most used forms of nonverbal cues in communication, in variant contexts.

Research question two (i.e R. Q 2) was also targeted at gathering data on the context-specific communicative functions of the identified forms of nonverbal cues employed in spousal communication by the participants. In addressing this research question, the Source Orientation Framework (Burgoon et al., 2022) which states that, the individual using a particular form determines the communicative function of the form as well as what the form specifically intends to communicate for them was used. The themes that emerged from the data were grouped under positive and negative emotions. The themes were; anger, guilt and jealousy (i.e. negative emotions), and excitement, love, sexual desires, appreciation, attention seeking, and acceptance (i.e. positive emotions). This revelation is consistent with Gonzalez's (2020) postulation that couples choose from a plethora of nonverbal forms and cues to convey intentions and to achieve specific communicative goals. Furthermore, the findings also align with Smith's (2021) assertion that the use of nonverbal forms and cues in specific settings and under peculiar circumstances gives variety to various communicative functions in spousal communication.

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The research question three (i.e. R.Q. 3) sought to gather data on the motivations for using the identified nonverbal forms in spousal communication by the participants. The data was analysed through the lens of McClelland's Motivational theory of needs which comprises power, affiliation, and achievement. The data revealed that the participants were motivated by control (power), association (affiliation), and achievement to employ the identified nonverbal forms of communication to seductively exert control and dominance, create intimacy and mutual support, and also ensure privacy and manage conflict. The findings thus, support the position of Varona and Capretz (2021), and Rybnicek et al. (2017) who state that regardless of any circumstance or setting, an individual is often driven to behave or act in a particular way to serve a certain communicative purpose. The finding is also an affirmation of the theory's conclusion that every individual, irrespective of the age, gender, ethnicity, educational background, among others, is driven by a force to exhibit specific behaviours.

5.2 Conclusion

The study sought to identify the nonverbal cues in spousal communication, examine context-specific communicative functions of the identified forms and explore the motivations for using the identified nonverbal forms. Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions have been drawn;

Firstly, couples employ forms of nonverbal communication in spousal communication, but more especially, haptics and kinesics to express their thoughts, emotions, and ideas in specific contexts. This is because nonverbal communication is complementary. Thus, it provides more information about the verbal forms of communication being used for variant purposes including intimacy and affection.

Secondly, for R.Q. 2, the study concludes that the forms of nonverbal communication are used to communicate different functions in specific contexts and this is evident in the plethora of communicative functions assigned to the various forms of nonverbal communication cues.

Thirdly, R.Q. 3 concludes that couples are motivated by specific needs to employ particular nonverbal forms, for purposes of control, create association, privacy or manage conflicts. This is in line with the assertions of Khatri (2021) and the McClelland Motivation theory of Needs that individuals irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, or educational background are motivated to satisfy specific desires, and so behave or act in certain ways to meet their target needs.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations have been made;

1. Couples should make the efforts to understand the nonverbal communication forms employed by their partners in specific contexts for specific purposes since nonverbal cues can be used to communicate different meanings depending on the context.

2. Couples are motivated by specific needs to employ particular nonverbal cues, for purposes of control, create association, privacy or manage conflicts. Hence, married individuals should have knowledge on the reasons behind their partners' behaviour in other to understand their specific behaviours.

3. Marriage counsellors could incorporate the findings of this study into their communication programs for couples during premarital counselling sessions to enrich the programs and enhance relational satisfaction.

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5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions are proffered for further studies.

1. Future studies may replicate this study with different participants to affirm or disprove the findings of the current study.

2. Since this study was based on a literate population of graduate students, future researchers could conduct a comparative study on the forms of nonverbal communication cues employed by literate and non-literate couples to ascertain similarities and differences in nonverbal communication as a universal language.

3. Moreover, future studies can also focus on the gender differences in the use of nonverbal communication in spousal communication.

4. Future research could investigate the influence of individual and relational factors on the use of nonverbal cues in spousal communication and should examine how personality traits, cultural backgrounds, and relational dynamics could influence the use of nonverbal cues in spousal communication.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The study is primarily aimed at identifying forms of nonverbal communication among married graduate students, and examine their motivations and purposes in specific context. Just like every research project, this study was not without limitations.

For instance, it was a herculean task accessing participants who have consented to be part of the study to be interviewed due to their busy schedules. The researcher therefore patiently agreed to conduct the interviews at the participants' own schedules most often in the evenings. This was a bit challenging because some of the interviews were conducted via phone amidst erratic network which prolonged the stipulated time frame for the interviews. However, in spite of the challenges, I was able to interview all the

twenty (20) participants of the study at separate times and gathered adequate data to represent the use of nonverbal cues by the selected married graduate students of SCMS, UEW. Through this, I was able to navigate the challenges encountered and so they did not in any way affect or influence my findings.

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APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT AND CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Dear Sir/ Madam,

This form is to recruit participants for an academic research on nonverbal cues in spousal communication. I would greatly appreciate your participation in my intended semi-structured interview which would not last more than **15 minutes**.

Gender: male [   ]   female [   ]

Please tick *'YES'* or *'NO'* for the questions below;

1. Are you a graduate student of the School of Communication and Media Studies?
    YES [   ]   NO [   ]

2. Are you married? YES [   ]   NO [   ]

Please, if you responded *'YES'* to all the questions above, then you qualify to participate in my study.

➢ Kindly give your consent by ticking one of the following;

[   ] I agree to participate.

[   ] I decline to participate.

➢ If you agreed to be a participant, kindly provide your phone number to enable a follow up.

Phone number: …………………………

➢ Do you want to *be interviewed* [   ] or *join focus group discussion* [   ]?

Please note that, **the study will comply with the general guidelines of confidentiality and nondisclosure of information obtained throughout the interview**. All the responses provided for the study will be anonymous.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

…………………

Sandra Pokuaa Mensah

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APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

My name is Sandra Pokuaa Mensah, a postgraduate student at the University of Education, Winneba, pursuing a Master of Philosophy Degree in Communication and Media Studies (Communication Instruction). As part of the requirements for the course I am pursing, I am conducting a research titled "Exploring the forms of Nonverbal Cues in Spousal Communication", and will be pleased if you can assist me with the needed response for the study. All responses would be kept confidential, and would be used specifically for academic purpose.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The interviewees would answer all questions, and it would last for 15 – 20 minutes.

R.Q 1. What are the forms of nonverbal communication cues employed by married graduate students at the School of Communication and Media Studies - UEW?

   a. How do you communicate with your partner without using words?

   b. What gestures do you use to communicate with your partner?

   c. What are the body languages you use to communicate with your partner?

   d. What facial expressions do you use to communicate with your partner?

   e. How do you use distance and space to communicate with your partner?

   f. What kinds of touch do you use to communicate with your partner?

   g. What other nonverbal cues do you use to communicate with your partner?

R.Q. 2. What are the context-specific communicative functions of the identified nonverbal cues employed by married graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies - UEW?

   a. What message do you intend to send to your partner when you communicate to them through the identified cues in R.Q 1?

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R.Q. 3. What are the motivations for using the identified nonverbal forms by the married graduate students of the School of Communication and Media Studies - UEW?

    a. Why do you communicate with your partner using nonverbal cues?

    b. Do you use the nonverbal cues to communicate because you want to exhibit control?

    c. Do you use the cues because you want to achieve a specific purpose?

    d. Can the desire to create connection make you use the nonverbal cues?

APPENDIX C

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What are some of the novel nonverbal cues of communication that you have been using with your partner?

2. Do you think your use of nonverbal cues is just complementary or intentional and meaning embedded?

3. Would you say you have certain reasons or motivations for using particular nonverbal cues?

4. Has there been instances of misinformation or miscommunication in your use of particular nonverbal cues?