

Mast, M. S., & Cousin, G. (2013). Nonverbal communication. In J. A. Hall, & M. L. Knapp (Eds.), *Power, dominance, and persuasion*, (pp. 613-635). De Gruyter Inc.

Synopsis

In this chapter, Mast and Cousin pieced together a multitude of research and studies to explore the relationship between nonverbal communication and power, dominance, persuasion, and verticality. Mast and Cousin firmly believe that the use of dominance in nonverbal behavior affects the outcomes of different social interactions. Moreover, they also detail the difference between the “expression of verticality”, “perception of verticality”, and “accuracy and verticality” and how all of these concepts can be received differently by the perceivers. Additionally, one major focus of Mast and Cousin’s exploration into nonverbal dominance behavior is the difference between high power individuals and low power individuals. For instance, they detail how high-power individuals are more prone to be more expressive with their faces, keeping a “closer interpersonal distance”, and also tend to have more “open body positions” compared to low power individuals. However, even though Mast and Cousin discuss the different nonverbal cues that high power individuals possess in social interactions, they also discuss how things such as gender, personality and cultural background effect and often times change the way in which dominance is perceived. Lastly, Mast and Cousin close their exploration into “nonverbal behaviors in relation to power and dominance” by looking towards the future research of nonverbal behavior and verticality, and how concepts such as personality, attitudes, and cultural background still need further investigation.

Key Concepts

- **Verticality:** “interpersonal differences in power and dominance and their manifestations among two or more social interaction partners” (p. 614)
- **Dominance:** “Describes the behavior of someone who has power or who seeks power – can be specific to a situation or can be an enduring characteristic of the person” (p. 615)
- **Persuasion:** “To describe a process by which a person exerts control or influence over another by means of communication” (p. 615)

Key Quotes

- “The vertical dimension of social interactions is present in nearly every social context. We live in a hierarchically organized society in which a member of the parliament is considered a higher status person than a janitor.” (p. 613)
- “High power individuals (or more precisely: those high in verticality of any type), compared to low power ones, have more open body positions (arms and legs), maintain closer interpersonal distance (when sitting or standing next to someone), speak more loudly, and interrupt others more often.” (p. 616)
- “Nonverbal dominance behavior not only affects dominance perception but also other outcomes of social interactions (p. 629)

Essential Questions

- How can one exhibit nonverbal dominance behaviors through an online mediated communication form, such as Zoom?