

THE EFFECT OF BODY LANGUAGE ON SELF SELLING IN HOTEL BUSINESS

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Abstract

Today, with the effect of technological developments, the differences in the understanding and cultural characteristics of societies are reflected in verbal and non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication (body language) has an important place in the successful realization of communication in all parts of society. According to various studies, body language is more effective than verbal expressions in the communication process. The realization of sales in accommodation establishments depends on the persuasion of the customer. The customer's belief in the sales staff and persuasion to buy the product depends on the use of body language. In particular, the personnel who are in face-to-face communication with the customer should be knowledgeable about the correct use of body language. The aim of this study is to conceptually examine the importance of personal selling in hotel businesses and how body language effects personal selling. Conceptual literature review was used in the research.

Body language and personal selling concepts were evaluated in terms of accommodation businesses on the axis of literature review in the study. As a result of the literature review, it has been concluded that the correct and effective use of body language by the personnel in the personal sales process will help to achieve more sales in hotel businesses. According to the results obtained in the study, the body language model was developed in personal sales in hotel businesses. In this study, suggestions are presented for hotel businesses, sales personnel and educational institutions according to this model.

Keywords: Body language, personal selling, tourism.

Jel Codes: D83, M31, Z33.

INTRODUCTION

In previous years, communication differences in the cultural aspect of societies were less pronounced. Today, with the effect of technological developments, the differences in social understanding and cultural characteristics are reflected in both verbal and non-verbal communication. The importance of non-verbal communication in all segments of society has a

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vital role in successful communication. Most of the sales in the shelter administrations in the service sector are realized as self selling. In this respect, the success of self selling is closely related to the correct use of body language of the hospitality management personnel.

First impression is the only thing that cannot be repeated in the world. The first impression is made in 30 seconds. The conscious use of this period allows the impression to rise in opposites. In this case, everybody, regardless of their profession, recognizes and develops their relationships in face-to-face relations with the environment and themselves by using non-verbal cues and non-verbal communication (Baltaş,1997:7)

Earning profit is the main goal in businesses that produce goods and services. In these businesses, the sales process is an important step to make a profit. In addition, self selling has a great role in generating and increasing profits. The communication flow between staff and consumer allows it to change according to the specific needs of each consumer in the self selling (Bozkurt, 2004: 239). Self selling is an organizational function that creates value for customers and manages customer relationships in ways that benefit both the business and its stakeholders (Adewale et al., 2019).

Especially in the hospitality businesses in the service sector, the effective and correct use of all communication channels by the personnel plays an important role in the success of the management. In addition, the sales personnel's effective use of body language creates confidence in the consumer. Thanks to this trust, it will be easier to convince the consumer. Therefore, the correct use of body language in the service sector will both increase the service quality and provide a successful sales process.

The study is important in terms of revealing the importance of personal selling in the tourism marketing literature. At the same time, it is expected that the study will form a basis for the studies to be carried out on body language and personal selling in the literature. On the other hand, it is expected that the study will help accommodation businesses gain awareness about the importance of body language in the marketing process.

1. CONCEPT OF BODY LANGUAGE

Communication is divided into verbal and non-verbal. Verbal language and tone of voice consists of the verbal part; body language makes up the non-verbal part. At this point, words are the primary means of communication, while the secondary tools are non-verbal communication channels. 35% of the messages given are sent through verbal and 65% non-verbal channels (Schmitz, 2012). There are some features in non-verbal communication. These; conveying emotions effectively, making the lack of communication impossible, defining and determining relationships between people, giving information about verbal content, confusing it with words, not being clear, giving reliable messages and being suitable for culture (Kaya, 2001: 22). Non-verbal communication; body language, appearance, use of place and time, colors, clothes, environment and use of accessories (Çakır, 2006: 38).

Understanding the feelings and thoughts of individuals, not only with their words, but also enjoy using these data when voice tone, facial expression and body language (Russell et al.,

2003). When people communicate, they pass most of the data through body language. Hence, the minority of data is conveyed in words (Whipple, 2006: 20). In our daily life, we use silent gestures and imitation signals instead of words. These symbolic signals are part of body language. Body language occurs with gestures and gestures (Schober, 2003: 163).

The first studies investigating the effect of body language on communication were conducted in the 1970s. Researchers in the field of non-verbal communication state that 90% of face-to-face communication between two people is transmitted through non-verbal channels. In this case, non-verbal communication is of great importance in the sales process (Warfield, 2001: 1). According to Landis (2006: 57), a message consists of % 7 verbal communication (words), % 38 voice (tone, ritm etc.), % 55 body movements (especially face expressions).

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF BODY LANGUAGE IN SELF SELLING

Face-to-face sales and marketing have a great importance in the business world, where the level of competition has been constantly increasing in recent years. At this point, the sales representative should make sure that the messages he sends while talking are correct and whether the messages he receives while listening are received by people (Uslu, 2007: 75). People should combine words and what their body language says. If someone smiles and says you're doing a good job in comfort, you should make sure they're telling the truth (Warfield, 2001: 1). The use of words, sound and body language in a communication are characteristics of the ability to send messages. However, in order for a message to be successful and to reach the goal, it is good to answer the following questions as well as the ability to send messages (Baltaş, 1997: 31):

- What do I want to say?
- When should I tell to open the person's communication channels?
- Where should I start communication?

It is important for the sales person to say the words confidently and how they speak, which shapes communication (Scholz et al., 2020). The self selling period begins before the sale, continues in an inspiring and persuasive manner, and continues with the customer's adaptation of the same feelings and thoughts as the seller (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). Therefore, a successful sales person needs to know how to master subtle hints of body language (Goman, 2015). Sales personnel can predict how the customer is affected by paying attention to the customer's body language before they finish speaking. The customer's body language guides the salesperson's presentation, and each interaction informs the customer's feelings and thoughts. The customer must trust, feel close to, respect and admire the sales person to purchase the product. This is only possible by creating harmony between the customer and the sales representative. If the sales representative's speaking style, speed, body language and clothes are similar, it is possible to communicate with the customer (Çakır 2006: 101).

Self selling is defined as offering goods and services to customers and persuading customers to buy products or services (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). Therefore, self selling is a personal presentation made to establish a relationship with customers (Bozkurt, 2004: 239)

and a direct verbal communication process (Pauser and Wagner, 2019). The sales person can make a more successful presentation by using the customer's body language while making self selling. In this process, the customer also observes the salesperson's body language and reactions (Barkai, 1990). The most important supporter of success in self selling is the ability to speak effectively. Therefore, sales personnel who want to be successful in their presentations should not forget the principle of effective speaking. The principles of effective speaking can be listed as follows (Bozkurt, 2004: 240; Uslu, 2007: 115):

- Open and honest behaviors should be adopted.
- The advantages offered should be put forward separately. Predetermined examples should be given in this regard.
- Priorities should be specified in quality and price.
- It should be explained who bought the products.
- The sales person should address customers directly by asking questions and responding promptly to customers to determine their level of interest.

The most crucial point in the sales period is that the persuasion period accompanies the sales steps by creating a good communication. Undoubtedly, this communication will continue with verbal communication at the beginning and non-verbal communication from time to time (Hess, 2016). The form of self selling allows sales representatives to change the message according to the specific needs and interests of each consumer with the help of the communication flow between the seller and the consumer. Thus, self selling allow the business to learn many things about consumers. At this point, part of the responsibility of the sales representative is to help the customer find what he wants (Bozkurt, 2004: 239). Accordingly, it is vital for the person to show their willingness to convey the message to the other party in order for the communication to be successful (Parılı and Öztürk, 2002: 107).

3. METHOD

Conceptual literature review was used in the research. In the search carried out through online databases, the research was structured on the axis of the literature. In this direction, first of all, the concepts of body language and personal selling were examined and these concepts were also evaluated in terms of accommodation businesses.

“Literature review is a logically discussed written document based on a comprehensive understanding of the current state of knowledge about a study topic” (Machi and McEvoy, 2016: 28). Hart (1998) states that in a literature review, a research should be shown to contribute to something new. The purpose of the literature review is to attract the attention of the reader by presenting the important parts of the study (Machi and McEvoy, 2016: 265). Thus, literature reviews facilitate the development of theory on the subject under consideration (Webster and Watson, 2002: 13).

4. FINDINGS

Face-to-face communication with customers is important in two ways. The first of these is to give meaning to the non-verbal messages and verbal messages of the operating staff and to increase the level of influence. The second is that the operating personnel can get more clear information about the thoughts and feelings of the customer. Considering that the customers' thoughts about the business are determined within the first 3-4 minutes, the communication ability of the personnel who make the first dialogue with the customer is of particular importance (Demiray, 2006: 170). Therefore, the behaviors of the first dialogues affect the prestige of the business. These personnel must be very successful in verbal and non-verbal communication.

Tourism sector is a labor-intensive service sector. In this respect, the most important feature of the tourism sector is that it is dependent on people. People who receive and provide services in the tourism sector. The success of hotel businesses depends on the satisfaction of the customers or the quality of the service offered to them. At this point, when customers' problems can be answered and individual persuasion skills can be used, sales increase (Hacıoğlu, 2000: 89). Thus, effectively selling the tourism product is linked to the success of the staff during the sales period. Communication, which is the most important factor affecting this success, takes place only verbally. For this reason, non-verbal communication or body language is highly effective in selling products and services in tourism. In this way, learning the body movements and thoughts of the customers in the hospitality businesses will provide a successful sale. While customer satisfaction increases in successful sales businesses, the prestige of the enterprise also increases.

Self selling in hotels; to ensure maximum occupancy rate, to increase extra income other than room income, to contribute to the advertisement of hotels, and to provide teamwork in terms of hotel staff. Self selling in hotels are made with the food department and beverage for customers, housekeeping and staff working in the front office. The functions of self selling personnel in tourism are to establish a face-to-face relationship with existing and potential customers for sales. Nevertheless, it is necessary to develop friendship, solve the problems of the customer, follow, examine and research the developments in the tourism and hotel management sector in order to establish good relations with the customer (Sahilli, 2005). Salespeople have more than one responsibility. These are to attract new customers, retain existing customers, determine competition, conduct market analysis, coordinate sales activities and work to meet the needs of customers (Smith et al., 2000: 1). For example, a customer with an onion allergy might ask if there is onion in the steak and the waiter can answer this question. Only then can the waiter recommend the onion-free mixed grill and say it's delicious. Thus, the sales person can persuade the customer to buy the product (Avcıkurt, 2005: 113). Thus, self selling which is important for success in many sectors, is also a necessary condition for the tourism sector. The tone of the sales staff is very important in hotels, especially in some departments where self selling are made by telephone. In particular, the tone of voice is important in customer service (Warfield, 2001: 1).

Self selling are very important in hotels due to the cultural diversity between staff and customers. Also, people from different cultures interact with hotels. This interaction is generally more consistent between staff and customers. Body language and communication are very important both in private and institutional terms for everyone involved in the tourism sector, which coordinates different cultural points. People from different countries speak different languages and their body language is also different. Universal gestures such as blushing, smiling and expressing fear mean the same in every culture around the world. For example, each person can have a unique smile style (Sel et al., 2015). Therefore, body language may differ according to culture and society (Tutar and Yılmaz, 2003: 68). These differences may arise from lifestyle and climate reasons (Kaşıkçı, 2003, 95). For example; eye contact never bothered Americans, it can be a threatening attitude for the Japanese and they feel uneasy. Therefore, sales person should pay attention to body language such as facial expression and hand movements (Çakır, 2006: 141). Otherwise, these expressions may cause misunderstandings (Kirel, 2007: 97).

Body language reflects not only belonging to a culture or a community, but also character (Altıntaş and Çamur, 2001: 50). Therefore, it is necessary to have the competence to understand the body language of the community. In addition, it is necessary to know the culture, communication and lifestyle of people. When we think of body language, formal wear is an important factor in using the correct body language. In hospitality management, it is thought that the quality, regular and professional appearance of the staff with formal clothes (Çakır, 2006: 52). For example, he gives expressions of seriousness and standing upright with a dark outfit, and confidence, with hand gestures. It is especially important to know how everyone who sells face-to-face with customers uses their body language and how they correct their mistakes. Therefore, personnel who can directly communicate with the customer should be trained about body language. In this way, sales person helps increase sales (Sahilli, 2005).

According to the results obtained from the literature review, a body language model has been developed in personal sales in hotel businesses. The stages of this model are given in Figure 1.

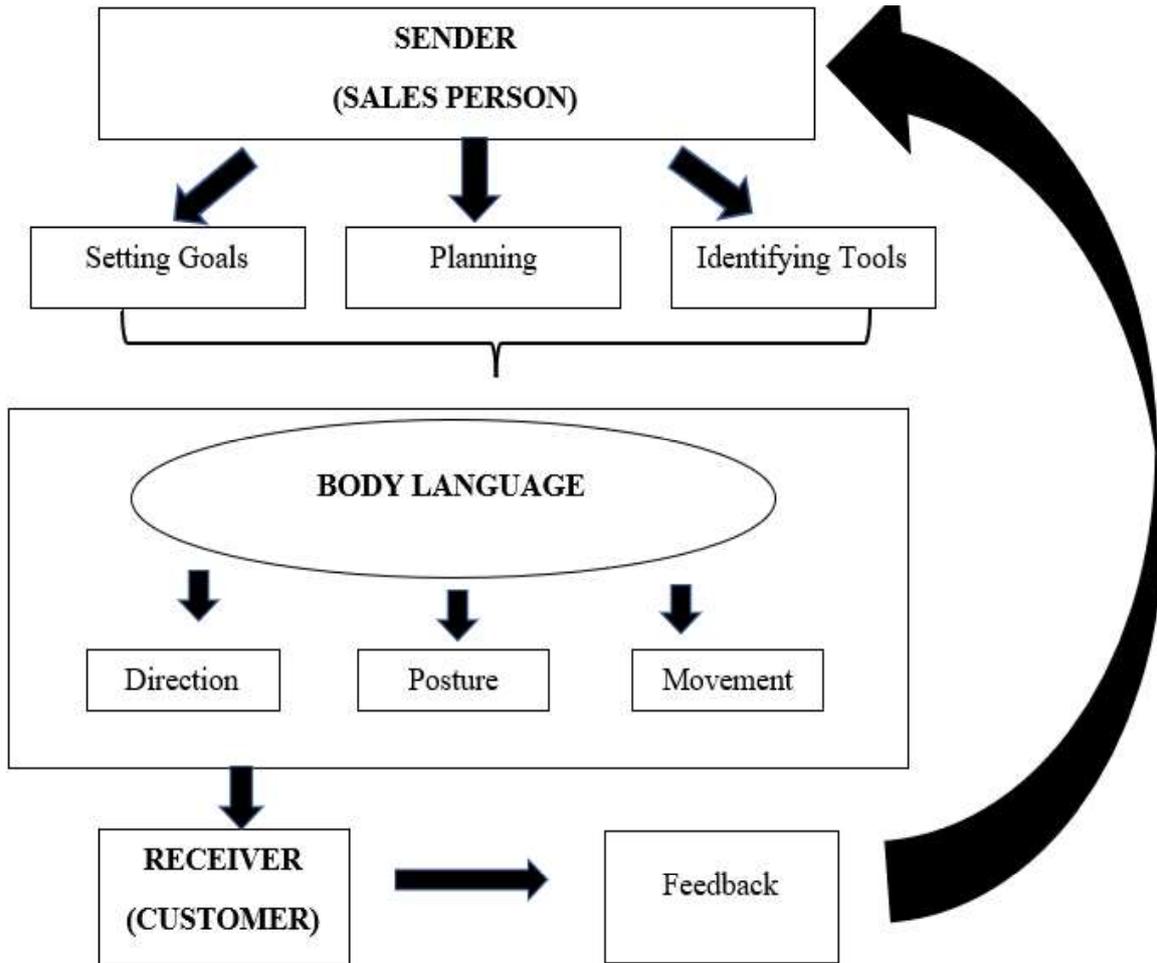


Figure 1: Body Language Model in Personal Sales in Hotel Businesses

According to Figure 1, the body language model in personal sales in hotel businesses consists of 6 stages. These stages consists of setting goals, planning, identifying tools, applying body language, receiver and feedback. Sender (Sales person): The sender is the person who tries to convey meaning to another person in communication and initiates the communication. In line with the above model, the sender who initiates the communication process regarding body language of sales person.

The first stage of the model, setting goals. It is the sales personnel's determination of how to make a sale using body language. It is the analysis of the processes related to body language in the sales process and determining the behaviors in accordance with their targets. Planning is the stage of planning the behavioral changes needed by the sales person in order to achieve the determined goal. At this stage, it is determined that each behavior of the sales person will create on the customer. In addition, it should not be forgotten that human psychology lies in the background of the whole process. It is the determination of how the sales person will benefit from the appropriate body language elements in line with their targets at the stage of determining the tools. In addition, how the process will progress at each level should be established. While these are being determined, the sales person should also know in advance what they will get. It conveys the messages conveyed to the customer by the gestures and facial expressions of the sales person and expresses the physical posture of the personnel. Sales person

should pay attention to body language expressions and should not behave in a way that would make the customer think that they do not believe. In addition, sales person communicate with the customer in three different ways: orientation and posture (Hans & Hans, 2015: 47).

Direction shows the angle of the sales person towards the customer, the sales person should look at the customer's face while meeting with the customer (Baltaş et al., 2007). Making eye contact, meeting, shaking hands is one of the most basic elements in sales and first impressions in sales (Serimoğlu, 2013: 103). Meeting the customer with a sincere smile of the sales person will create a positive first impression in successful communication (Kuhnke, 2016: 124). Posture is the distance that the sales person should leave between the customer and the customer. Sales staff should very well adjust their proximity and distance while talking to the customer. The proximity and distance measures here may differ from culture to culture and even depending on the structure of the geographical region. The proximity measure can be considered between 60-120 cm and the distance measure as 120 cm and above (Baltaş et al., 2007). The hand and arm movements of the sales personnel should move according to the rhythm of the conversation with the customer. For this reason, staff must keep their hands and arms free and be consistent with the words they form. Customers will look at the staff's body position and movement to make a very quick decision as to whether the sales person is a potential threat or trustworthy (Bowden, 2010: 54). For this reason, it should ensure that the actions of the sales person creates a request for help in the customer and come to the conclusion that they are reliable.

Receiver (Customer): At this stage of the model, the person (customer) who is the target of the message is defined as the receiver (Öztürk and Güven, 2019: 160). The receiver (customer) tries to decode the message sent to him and sends a feedback to the sender. Feedback: At this stage of the model, feedback gives information about whether the emotions and thoughts of the sales person is conveyed to the customer correctly and as desired (Koçel, 1993: 297). In order to understand how this stage is going, the sales staff should observe the customer's face and breathing patterns. Thus, the sales person will notice the positive or negative feedback and will be able to re-analyze the body language movements if they have encountered a negative feedback.

RESULTS

According to the stage of applying the body language of the model, ensuring sales depends on convincing the consumer to buy. According to the result obtained in the study, the personnel must convince the customer by using the body language correctly in the personal selling process. Some studies in the literature support this statement (Parılı & Öztürk, 2002; Driver, 2014).

In the study, it was concluded that eye contact, head-to-face movements, hand-arm movements, sitting arrangement and distance, which include the elements of body language, should be consistent with the words used by the staff. Similar results have been reported in some studies in the literature (Akgemci et al., 2008; Goman, 2008). Some studies mention the

importance of smiling face in the first contact of sales personnel (Goman, 2008; Serimoğlu, 2013; Kuhnke, 2016).

Another stage of the model in the study is the movement stage. At this stage, it should ensure that the actions of the sales personnel create a request for help in the customer and come to the conclusion that they are reliable. Yıldız and Akdeniz R (2019) included the importance of trust in the personal selling process in their study. This makes it necessary to use body language correctly. In particular, the person who communicates face-to-face with the customer should use body language well. For this reason, the success of sales in accommodation businesses depends on the effective use of body language by the sales personnel. Moreover, with this sale, the customer will be satisfied and the accommodation business will generate income.

Another stage in the model proposed in the study is the stance stage. According to the results of the study, the personal zone distance in the field of tourism should be determined according to the culture of the customer. For example, the Japanese are used to crowds, while some cultures prefer to keep their distance. Another result obtained in the study is that the personnel should analyze the feedbacks well during the sales process. This result is similar to the studies of Parıltı and Öztürk (2002), Yıldız and Akdeniz Ar (2019). In addition, this result is the last stage of the model proposed in the study. In line with the results obtained in the study and the proposed model, the following can be suggested regarding the responsibilities of hotel businesses, sales personnel and educational institutions:

Especially the skills of the employees in the tourism sector are effective in ensuring customer satisfaction. For this reason, in-service training on the use of body language should be given to all tourism employees, especially accommodation establishments. Body language related to different cultures should also be included in these trainings. Responsibilities of sales personnel; It consists of learning the signs related to body language to be used at all stages of the sales process, applying this information consciously, observing and analyzing the body language of the customers, gaining confidence by showing that he understands the customer according to body language observations. It would be beneficial to apply courses on subjects such as nonverbal communication and culture to the students in universities that train personnel to be employed in hotel businesses. Accordingly, the need for qualified personnel, which is one of the most important needs of the tourism sector, will be met through these trainings.

In the general study, it was concluded how important body language is in realizing a successful sale, and it is expected that this study will guide and form a basis for similar studies in the related literature.

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