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ABSTRACT

The study sought to: (1) examine what types of nonverbal cues do OFWs find difficulty to understand, (2) explore how would understanding nonverbal communication be useful to OFWs' search for gainful employment opportunities, and (3) examine how would nonverbal communication be communicated to OFWs to enhance their employability. To attain the above objectives, 100 OFWs in Rome were recruited and surveyed. To evaluate OFWs' ability in nonverbal communication, personal space was employed as the indicator for proxemics while facial expressions, eye contact, hand gestures, head movement and posture were used as the indicators for kinesics type of nonverbal communication. It was found that although respondents showed a high level of perception of Italian employers' extensive use of nonverbal cues, they lacked the ability in nonverbal communication (total mean score = 50.54). It was also found that the barriers in communicating nonverbal communication both in the Philippines and in Italy were partly responsible of the respondents' difficulties. Respondents considered understanding nonverbal communication useful to their employability (58%), as it helps them predict employers' needs, build a workable environment, improve job performance, etc. A country-specific pre-departure orientation seminar (PDOS) on nonverbal communication is recommended to facilitate OFWs to acquire knowledge and develop the ability to effectively interact with their prospective employers.

Keywords: nonverbal communication, overseas Filipino workers, proxemics, kinesics, Italian employers, employability