

Embodiment as a Means of Communication in Establishing a Reputation: A Literary Analysis of Wisdom from Proverbs 12:23

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Abstract: Research on reputation building indicates that an individual's reputation relies on the combination of integrity with their social surroundings, viewing reputation through the lens of social interactions of that person. Additionally, reputation formation is observed in how an individual prioritizes integrity, even when faced with challenging social conditions; reputation is shaped by the social visibility of one's past actions. Nonetheless, this study highlights that reputation goes beyond mere verbal communication and social engagement—it undeniably incorporates the physical aspect. This article explores the idea of building a reputation through embodiment, illustrating the significant role the body plays in shaping a person's reputation, examined through Proverbs 12:23. The research employs a literary analysis framework focused on the wisdom derived from Proverbs 12:23, utilizing figurative interpretation as a means of analysis. Various types accompany the interpretation in extracting the gist of Proverbs 12:23—related to embodiment for repute in non-verbal communication. Findings reveal that embodiment significantly influences one's societal reputation, integrity, and past conduct. The terms “cover” and “proclaim” suggest verbal expression and can be deduced from physical gestures. Therefore, verbal communication is seen as enhanced and substantiated by embodiment, significantly governing an individual's reputation.

Keywords: the book of Proverbs, embodiment, communication, reputation.

INTRODUCTION

Wisdom literature, found in the book of Proverbs, guides how individuals should navigate their lives in the world (Hill & Walton, 2018). Wisdom literature emphasizes how an individual receives wisdom from God (Zaluchu, 2019). A common motif found in Proverbs is that "reverence for the Lord is the foundation of wisdom." This essential understanding is crucial not just for practical achievements but also for a life of discernment. Wisdom is a divine blessing bestowed upon a person directly by God (Oden, n.d.; Sipahutar, 2020). A notable trait of wisdom literature is its ability to guide individuals in discovering more about themselves by examining or comparing themselves to others or particular ideas. Exploring the meaning of life through wisdom literature serves as a pathway for personal reflection and self-improvement, enabling individuals to evolve into exemplary figures within their communities and congregational life (Sualang & Easter, 2020).

Shifting focus from the significance and advantages of the wisdom literature insights noted earlier, it is essential to acknowledge reputation or good standing within social

relationships. Individuals should understand that having a good name is crucial, particularly when engaging and connecting with others, as it fosters acceptance within the community (Ritivoiu, 2015). According to Lori (2024), To guarantee that an individual acts in line with relevant standards, they can create guidelines referred to as behavioral norms or ethics. Exhibiting polite behavior, appearing courteous, speaking respectfully, and showing consideration for others are examples of actions that reflect a person's ethical stance in cultivating their reputation or positive image.

The previous discussion presented various instances of how this reputation develops through social integration when establishing a positive societal reputation. It highlights aligning ethical standards with community norms to craft a positive image. Additionally, how we convey ourselves through body language is an essential aspect of refining the integration of personal ethics and societal values. Our personal principles and social standards also express themselves through bodily movements with specific meanings (Glenberg, 2010).

According to Johnson (2017) *Embodiment* (body language) is a locus that can lead someone to recognize the meaning that other people emphasize. *Embodiment* (body language) shapes what and how a person experiences, thinks, intends, imagines, reasons, and communicates. As it is stated by Forger (2020), physicality is a locus that can bring someone to know Jesus, which shows that Jesus' words are a material entity that can impact other people. Sha (2019) Mentions that *embodiment* is also an arrangement that can bring someone a feeling of peace, as stated in the context of Sha's writings, where the *embodiment* of peace can be seen from the ministry of Jesus. *Embodiment* is a crucial and essential component of both language and materiality, and it is not just one element of materialism among many others (Bucholtz, 2017).

There is a connection between *embodiment* (body language) and the active body, the negotiable body, and material symbols that influence the individual's cognitive expansion. According to Clark (2008) *Embodiment* (body language) is used with indexical verbal descriptions such as gestures towards particular objects. The active body is associated with unrestricted individual movement, where each movement can contribute to meaning as certain aspects of brain processing are taken over by the embodied agent's morphology, materials, and environment (Clark, 2008). It can be interpreted that all meaning and thought arise from ongoing bodily and social engagement with the environment, which is at once physical, interpersonal, and cultural and a means for realizing interaction and learning (Kasper & Kim, 2015).

According to Olohan (2021), one of the experts in translation studies mentions that the body is part of the material elements that make up the practice, along with other entities, because the body's appearance in doing and saying is significant for the implementation and continuation of the practice (Bianchi-Berthouze, 2013). According to Sugiharto (2022) One linguistic expert on embodiment (body language) says an individual's physical well-being can significantly impact the social norms they adhere to and their daily activities. The body continues to be a significant source of knowledge and a key instrument for assigning social roles. Therefore, the writer intends to explore the application of Proverbs chapter 12:23 in building a reputation through *embodiment*.

Next, several earlier studies are summarized below to explore which facets have been examined. The first pertains to research on how integrating integrity contributes to forming a

reputation based on Proverbs 22:1-2 (Sualang & Easter, 2020). The study results show that reputation depends on integrity and social circumstances. A study (2020) related to a good name from Proverbs 22:1 discusses how a good name is more than riches. The research results show that modernization has negatively influenced integrity in achieving a good name, so many people are more inclined to commit criminal practices to gain wealth rather than maintain a good name. Apart from that, studies on reputation also discuss the relationship between reputation and past behavior, and the research results show an influence of social visibility of past behavior on reputation (Anderson & Shirako, 2008). Ho (2022) Examines brave women's use of hands and bodies as described in Proverbs 31:10-31. Ho's research indicates that knowledge and wisdom are developed through a person's physical engagement with the world. However, the previously referenced studies have not explicitly covered how non-verbal integrity shapes an individual's reputation.

A study by Sualang & Easter (2020) It primarily focuses on interactions with the social environment when establishing a reputation and gives more importance to reciprocal communication without considering aspects of body language that reflect integrity. Odo et al., (2020) talks about the detrimental impact on integrity when trying to build a positive reputation, leading many individuals to be more inclined to engage in criminal activities for riches instead of preserving their good name and Anderson and Shirako (2008) Discusses past behavior that influences reputation. Ho (2022) Views *embodiment* (body language) as a method of interpreting through the lens of hands and body to perceive an individual's wisdom or knowledge. Consequently, earlier studies should be re-evaluated to explore aspects of non-verbal communication, encompassing body language, gazes, and vocal tone. This way, mannerisms, and physical gestures can serve as effective mediums that portray positive characteristics, even without verbal communication.

Johnson (2017) An expert in linguistics noted that embodiment, a kind of nonverbal communication, influences how individuals cultivate their reputation. This is because *embodiment* reflects one's true self, affecting one's experiences, thoughts, interpretations, creativity, reasoning, and communication. This research illustrates how one can live wisely according to Proverbs 12:23 by connecting *embodiment* with reputation building. The article clarifies that *embodiment* serves as a factor, in addition to factors like integrity, social setting, and history of behavior, in shaping a person's reputation.

METHOD

In this article, the writer aims to examine the Bible to uncover the significance of the verses under consideration, emphasizing that a solid foundation for accurate interpretation is essential for achieving the goals of this research (Tarigan, 2021). In this article, the research approach employed is exegetical research, which focuses on the Bible. There are various methods for interpreting a work of wisdom literature, including literal interpretation, contextual analysis, structural examination, and analyzing figurative language. First, literal interpretation is essential due to the complexity of Proverbs, which is concise, filled with wisdom, and frequently paradoxical. This method analyzes vital terms or phrases found in Proverbs 12:23. Second, understanding the context is crucial. The book of Proverbs contains wisdom principles tailored to its subjects, setting it apart from other literary works. The interpreter's consideration of the context between various topics is vital. Third, metric analysis necessitates awareness of

basic structural patterns such as single lines, couplets, triplets, quatrains, and quintets for interpreting Proverbs. Fourth, the Book of Proverbs predominantly employs figurative language, and this study will focus on interpreting figurative parallelism, particularly antithetical parallelism. This type of parallelism reveals opposing meanings between the first and second lines. Notably, aside from extolling wise behaviors and denouncing foolishness, it illustrates a stark contrast (Sualang, n.d.). In examining the parallelism of the antithesis from the book of Proverbs 12:23, the interpretation focuses on the verbs "hide knowledge" and "call out ignorance." Using figurative words with the character of antithesis parallelism is a style of language that contrasts (Boiliu, 2020) to see how it relates to the concept of *embodiment* (body language) in building reputation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Elements of Embodiment

Given that the body's presentation in both actions and speech is crucial for initiating and ongoing practice, the body is integral to the tangible components encompassing practice (Olohan, 2021). According to Witte (2023) How individuals perceive, think, intend, and act is shaped by how their body subconsciously moves and engages directly with its social, cultural, and material surroundings. This indicates that our body connects with the brain, reacting to every action and motion expressed through movement, sight, sound, and gaze, allowing understanding and meaning-making. *Embodiment*, or body language, can be seen as a trait of natural social interaction or behavior that varies depending on specific contexts and situations. For instance, a look is a form of *embodiment*, reflecting relationships and conveying meaning (Nevile et al., 2014; Sigurdson, 2016). Many social and material contexts influence language, such as body movements, glances, hands, and tone of speech, all summarized in an *embodiment*. (Sigurdson, 2016)The meaning and thought contained are the awareness that perception arises in action, especially in an organism's interaction with its environment (Canagarajah, 2024). In addition, Clark states that there is a relationship between embodiment and the active body, the negotiable body, and material symbols, which impact a person's cognitive breadth. (Clark, 2008). An active body results from a brain response, which is realized through *embodiment* (body language) to express something. Indexical verbal descriptions, such as gestures towards specific objects, are used with embodied ones (Richardson & Stokoe, 2014).

Embodiment takes over some brain tasks performed morphologically (Meier et al., 2012). Embodiment relates to a person's free movement, where every action can convey significance. The embodied being's shape, materials, and surroundings influence cognitive processing (Clark, 2008). Additionally, it relates to inhabited interactions where the human body often has inappropriate characteristics, such as adults having to learn to use their initially unresponsive hands, arms, and legs to achieve their goals. Active sensing, or trying to make sense of something, is another part of *embodiment*.

Regarding the negotiable concept of the body in *embodiment* (Body Language), the human mind and body are essentially open to profound and transformative restructuring, where the physical and mental body can be incorporated into the system of thinking and acting (Clark, 2008). Additionally, *embodiment* (body language) is also related to material symbols, which consider language a form of cognitive support that allows humans to think and act. *Embodiment* influences behavior not because it contributes to inner mental representations but because of its

nature as a symbol that gives a new purpose to attention and a new source of control over action (Clark, 2008).

All meaning and understanding stem from our continuous physical and social interactions with the environment. These physical, personal, and cultural interactions serve as a way to connect and learn (Kasper & Kim, 2015). Consequently, the focus is on experience rather than knowledge resulting from a particular type of cognition. According to Atkinson (2010) A person's knowledge arises from their physical actions and learning experiences. This aligns with Atkinson's statement that comprehending the mind involves examining it through the body, and grasping the embodied mind requires exploring it in the context of the world. *Embodiment* (body language) can be expressed through nonverbal physical actions, including posture, head gestures, eye contact, facial expressions, and overall body movements (Hall, 2019). This shows that the body and mind are not two different things in the *embodiment* (body language), which forms the nature of meaning itself (Hall, 2019). The body is a manifestation of the mind in the form of *embodiment* (body language). According to Meiring (2015) The body and bodily experience are sites of knowledge and a guiding principle in theological anthropology. The living body is dynamic with its context, biology, and ecology, whereas bodily experience is a language. Bodily action is a form of communication where semiotics work freely to express external meaning through speech, instructions, gaze, and touch. For instance, a look from one person can trigger a spoken remark that results in a behavior (Kress, 2010). Proverbs 12:23 guides personal conduct, highlighting how facial gestures, tone, and posture can communicate intentions from one's mind, preventing the arrogance linked to one's status or the desire for approval from others. Essentially, the author emphasizes the importance of both verbal and non-verbal behaviors in shaping a person's reputation. This insight into reputation serves as a valuable lesson in character development. Therefore, these two verses merit thorough exploration, allowing readers and writers to analyze how reputation influences interactions within their social context. *Embodiments, including facial expressions, vocal tone, physical movements, and eye contact, extend* inner thoughts, demonstrating how such manifestations elicit reactions from others, which may include remarks or further considerations.

Interpretation of Proverbs 12:23

To see more deeply the meaning and intent of *embodiment* (body language), we will first look at the meaning of verse 12:23 in the book of Proverbs as follows:

Table 1 Text and Translation of Hebrew

יְקַרֵּא	כְּסִילִים	וְלֵב	דָּעַת	כְּפֹה	עָרוּם	אָדָם
proclaims	But a foolish	heart	His knowledge (to himself)	conceals	A shrewd	Man
						אִוֵּל
						ת:
						Its folly

Non-verbal language can be shown through *embodiment* (body language), where even though someone does not speak directly, the body can imply a meaning that comes from the mind. This aligns with Forger's idea that embodiment is a locus that can lead someone to recognize the meaning that other people emphasize. There is a connection between *embodiment* (body language) and the active body, the negotiable body, and material symbols that influence the individual's cognitive expansion. The active body is associated with unrestricted individual movement, where each movement can contribute meaning as certain aspects of brain processing are taken over by the embodied agent's morphology, materials, and environment. The body is part of the material elements that make up the practice, along with other entities, because the appearance of the body in doing and saying is significant for the implementation and continuation of the practice (Olohan, 2021). Through *embodiment* (body language), a person's physical well-being can significantly impact their social norms and daily activities. The body continues to be a significant source of knowledge and a key instrument for assigning social roles (Sugiharto, 2022). The first verb that is emphasized in this text is כֹּסֵה (*kō·seh*), which means to conceal or not show. A person's reputation is not only shown by a person's verbal integrity and social environment, but body movements through *embodiment* (body language) show who and what a person thinks. If someone can hide what is in their mind, then someone does not explicitly show what they are thinking to others through this *embodiment*. In Proverbs 12:23b, it is noted that wise individuals tend to hide their spoken and unspoken intelligence. Even when words are not used, actions frequently suggest meaning. This is a typical tendency in which individuals subtly hide their awareness, but their body signals show they want to appear perceptive in order to gain admiration from others. The second verb that is emphasized in the text above is יִקְרָא (*yiq·rā*), which means to proclaim or announce. This term refers to an individual who speaks loudly and uses gestures to capture the interest of others, demonstrating their skills. יִקְרָא (*yiq·rā*) means calling not only in verbal form but also non-verbally, which is expressed in the form of *embodiment* (body language) so that the intention can be known.

In the context of the book of Proverbs 12:23, the writer notes that a wise person covers up his knowledge, which means that a person does not need to show his abilities verbally or non-verbally. The word "conceals" in Hebrew כֹּסֵה (*kō·seh*) means covering and is usually used for something concrete or visible. However, hiding knowledge in this context can also be done by remaining silent and through body movements that convey that a person is not showing others that he is wise. The context of the word "hiding" is not stating verbally or non-verbally about oneself to gain respect from others. Often, things like this make other people uncomfortable, and they tend not to respect that person because their motives are known.

Additionally, verse 23b indicates that a fool's heart seeks out foolishness. The word "proclaims" in Hebrew יִקְרָא (*yiq·rā*) means to convey or announce. Conveying or announcing has the impression that someone wants other people to know what they are thinking in order to get other people's attention. The heart cannot speak, but from the attitude shown, people can see what is in a person's heart. Through *embodiment* (body language), a person has manifested what he thinks, and the meaning of shouting is realized through the body's actions, which are born from the mind. As stated earlier, the active body is associated with unrestricted individual movement, and each movement can contribute to meaning because certain aspects of brain processing are taken over by the embodied agent's morphology, materials, and environment (Clark, 2008). In context, the words "conceal" and "proclaims" in this verse are figures of speech

that show that the body plays a vital role in conveying something. Then, in context, this verse also states that a person does not need to tell other people that he knows to show his abilities. However, actions through embodiment explain who a person is in social life because each person has their perception of these actions.

Structurally, Stich (Line) A and Stich (line) B show antithetical parallelism, which is a structural characteristic of Proverbs 12:23. In other words, the main idea of Stich A, "A wise man conceals his knowledge," is contrasted with Stich B, "but the heart of a fool calls out foolishness." Antithetical parallelism shows the opposite meaning between the first and second rows. Apart from trying to praise the behavior of wise people and showing stupidity as something to be rejected, this form shows a very striking difference. The following table will discuss the intended structural analysis for the sentences above.

Table 2 Structure Analysis of Proverbs 12:23

Stich A- A prudent man conceals	(Frasa a)
knowledge	(Frasa b)
Stich B- but the heart of fools proclaims	(Frasa a')
foolishness	(Frasa be)

From the overview provided in the previous paragraph, the expression a-a' highlights the significance of how knowledgeable individuals uphold their favorable reputation by carefully managing their verbal and non-verbal communication in a social context. This interpretation underscores the importance of preserving one's good standing for acceptance within a specific community. Conversely, the expression b-b' refers to safeguarding one's reputation (Sha, 2019). What one knows or does not know stems from how an individual acts to uphold one is standing in the community, whether through speech or actions. The author of Proverbs illustrates this by highlighting the focus on "concealing knowledge" and "exposing ignorance" through both spoken and unspoken behaviors, presenting these as principles for wise living to preserve reputation, as seen in Proverbs 12:23.

The sentence of wisdom in Proverbs 12:23 is a sentence of wisdom that uses figurative language (Hill & Walton, 2018). Proverbs 12:23 uses figurative language that refers to addition or amplification. Antithetical parallelism shows the contradictory meaning between the first and second lines. Apart from praising wise people's behavior and showing stupidity as something to be rejected, this form shows a striking difference. (Sualang, n.d.). The phrase "concealing knowledge," repeated with "calling out ignorance," is an example of this figure of speech. The author of Proverbs explains the development of this thought to emphasize the individual's position in social life, so this teaching is very concerned about a person's honor and good name before many people. As previously stated, *embodiment* is the locus that allows a person to understand the meaning emphasized by another person. It shapes how a person experiences, thinks, intends, imagines, reasons, and communicates what they experience (Johnson, 2017). Therefore, the teaching of this proverb places great importance on a person maintaining his good name as a person who is respected by those around him by paying attention to his attitude and *embodiment*.

In daily life, having a solid reputation should be the top priority. The Book of Proverbs shares a brief tale about King Solomon, known for his wisdom, whose reputation went through

trials. Taking lessons from King Solomon, an individual is regarded favorably when judged on moral and ethical standards. As analyzed before, the character development depicted in the book of Proverbs provides a crucial insight into teaching others through our language and actions.

The Connection Between Proverbs 12:23 and the Aspects of Embodiment

Proverbs 12:23 advises how to behave so as not to be arrogant about building a reputation. In other words, the writer of Proverbs considers how one should behave, both verbally and nonverbally, about one's reputation. The words hiding knowledge and calling out ignorance indicate how someone uses *embodiment* to realize their reputation. Concealing is not only about the words themselves; it can also be understood through how body language reveals the intent and meaning behind those words. Similarly, it demonstrates foolishness when a person's actions, speech tone, and gaze reveal how they are exhibiting their lack of intelligence, even if it is not expressed verbally. In other words, the meaning of the words hiding or calling out can be seen as a whole from the *embodiment* carried out by a person because *embodiment* is an unrestricted individual movement where each movement can provide meaning. After all, certain aspects of brain processing are taken over by morphology, materials, and the environment. of the embodied agent. A person who is actively involved in an interaction has behavior. Therefore, *embodiment* is the idea that a person's perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and desires, i.e., ways of behaving, experiencing, and interacting, are shaped by an active agent with a particular body type. In other words, a person's body type influences behavior, experiences, and meanings (Overton et al., 2008).

Examining the context of Proverbs 12:23 reveals that a wise individual conceals wisdom, implying that one need not exhibit their skills, whether by words or actions. The term 'hide' typically refers to something tangible or observable. However, concealing knowledge can be done not only by remaining silent but also through body movements, which imply that a person is not showing others that he is wise because thoughts are channeled through body language or embodiment, which states what a person is thinking (Núñez-Pacheco & Loke, 2020). The context of the word hiding is not stating either verbally or non-verbally about oneself to gain respect from others. Often, things like this make other people uncomfortable, and they tend not to respect that person because their motives are known. This shows that body and mind are not two different things, and *embodiment* forms the nature of meaning (Tang et al., 2017). Bodily action is a form of communication where semiotics work freely to express external meaning through speech, instructions, gaze, and touch. In verse 23b, it is explained that a fool's heart calls for foolishness. The heart cannot speak, but through gestures or embodiment, people can see what is in a person's heart. *Embodiment* embodies what a person thinks, and the meaning of shouting is realized through bodily actions or *embodiment*.

Embodiment, or body language, signifies a hallmark of spontaneous social interaction and behaviors prevailing in specific situations. These social and physical settings shape linguistic expressions. The core meaning and thought highlight that awareness arises from actions, particularly how an organism interacts with its setting. Thus, one can deduce that a person's physical movements symbolize their thoughts. When an individual intends to conceal information or showcase ignorance, this intent manifests naturally through their body language, inherently linked to their social context. Consequently, besides upholding integrity and social

connections, an individual is responsible for managing their body language to cultivate a good reputation.

CONCLUSION

According to the insights from Proverbs 12:23, *embodiment* plays a crucial role in shaping a person's social image alongside their integrity. The term "hide" can be understood not just in words but also through physical gestures. For instance, if you verbally say no, those around you may discern the truth through your body language, which ultimately affects your reputation. This phenomenon can be illustrated through non-verbal cues (like posture, head movements, eye contact, facial expressions, and body motions) that convey internal meanings. *Embodiment* serves as a medium through which individuals interpret the significance that others convey. A link exists between *embodiment* (body language) and an active body, a negotiable body, and the material symbols that impact cognitive development in individuals. The active body is connected to free movement, where each gesture contributes to meaning, as different cognitive aspects are influenced by the forms, materials, and surroundings associated with the embodied person.

The body constitutes a crucial component of the material aspects involved in practice, along with other entities, because how the body is expressed through actions and speech plays a vital role in the execution and perseverance of that practice. The process of *embodiment* significantly affects a person's physical health, social standards, and everyday behaviors. Additionally, the body remains a crucial source of knowledge and an essential tool in assigning social roles. Studies indicate that one's reputation can be shaped by how effectively one manages one's body as an intermediary for social interactions. As a result, it is essential to maintain harmony between thoughts and speech so that others can recognize and evaluate a person's life positively through their body language or *embodiment*.

Studies on *embodiment* (nonverbal cues) about reputation development consistent with Proverbs 12:23 remain prevalent. These studies examine the roles of overall body movements in shaping an individual's reputation. Consequently, future investigations could take a more focused approach to *embodiment* (nonverbal communication), particularly regarding how eye contact and speech intonation contribute to building one's reputation in line with Proverbs 12:23.

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