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COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG ELEMENTARY PUPILS: A MULTIPLE REGRESSION APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Public speaking anxiety continues to affect the ability of students to communicate confidently in academic settings. This study aimed to examine the relationship between communication skills and public speaking anxiety among Grades 4 to 6 pupils at Mambalili Elementary School, involving 166 respondents through a quantitative research design. Using an adapted questionnaire, the study assessed four indicators of communication skill, namely: competence, body language, dignification, and discouragement and four indicators of anxiety, namely: trait, situation, context, and audience anxiety. Findings showed that students possessed high levels of communication skills, except for discouragement, described as low. Despite these strengths, all anxiety indicators were consistently high, indicating that public speaking remains a problem. A weak negative correlation was found between communication skills and anxiety, suggesting that better communication skills are related to lower anxiety, though other factors may also contribute. It was found that only discouragement significantly predict anxiety which highlighted that fear and lack of motivation increases the fear of students when speaking in public. These findings supported the Social Cognitive Theory of Bandura who argued the importance of self-efficacy in managing fear and building confidence. The study recommends implementing confidence-building strategies, guided speaking opportunities, and peer support to help reduce anxiety and improve student engagement in public communication. Future research may explore additional psychological and environmental factors that may influence public speaking experiences of students.

KEYWORDS: *Educational Administration, Communication Skills, Public Speaking Anxiety, Discouragement, Elementary Education, Quantitative Study*

1. INTRODUCTION

Public speaking anxiety is a common phenomenon that affects individuals across various cultures and age groups. It manifests as a physiological and psychological response to the anticipation or experience of public speaking. Symptoms may include physical sensations such as rapid heartbeat, sweating, trembling, and difficulty breathing, as well as cognitive symptoms like negative thoughts, fear of failure, and self-doubt (Plandano et al., 2023). Presenting in front of a group or a broader audience has traditionally been a communication and linguistic obstacle. Students avoid public speaking because of shame, trembling voices, racing heartbeats, discomfort, an inferiority complex, and a lack of confidence (Chang & Wei, 2023).

Different studies have explored public speaking anxiety both internationally and nationally. For instance in Kandal Province, Cambodia, Elementary English learners often experience public speaking anxiety because of language barriers, fear of making mistakes, and lack of preparation. They compare themselves to more fluent peers, which lowers their confidence and increases nervousness. Unexpected questions from teachers and fear of failure also added their stress (Kruy, 2023).

In the Philippines, studies have also documented the prevalence of public speaking anxiety among students. Classroom activities requiring speaking make students anxious (Ojanola, 2023). A study conducted by Armodia et al. (2018) at Don Manuel H. Gutierrez Elementary School investigated factors contributing to speaking anxiety among Grade 6 pupils. The research identified fear of negative feedback and communicative apprehension as significant contributors to the anxiety of students during public speaking activities. These findings emphasized the need of early interventions to build confidence and reduce anxiety in young learners.

On the other hand, this study was anchored on the Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (1977), in which theory views that learning results from the interactions of people with their surroundings (situational factors) and cognitive aspects. These elements have an impact on how the individuals involved behave. He highlighted how social experience, reciprocal determinism, and observational learning play all part in shaping human behavior, arguing that circumstances both actively shape and are shaped by individuals. This theory provided a thorough framework for comprehending human behavior and learning, making it applicable in various settings and fields. Because it focuses on how behavioral, contextual, and personal interact, Social Cognitive Theory is a flexible technique that may be used to explain and influence behavior in various contexts. In connection, it will help comprehend how people acquire communication abilities. Self-efficacy and

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observational learning are important factors in lowering public speaking fears.

In this study, it is theorized that communication skills can affect the public speaking anxiety of the pupils. There are four domains of communication skills: competence, discouragement, body language, and dignification. Each of these domains is important since this could make a difference in public speaking anxiety in terms of trait anxiety, context anxiety, audience anxiety, and situation anxiety. The researcher also believes that there is a significant relationship between communication skills and public speaking anxiety

Despite extensive research on public speaking anxiety, several research gaps remain. One area that requires further investigation is the specific factors that contribute to the development and maintenance of public speaking anxiety. However, no studies have been conducted in Mambalili Elementary School focusing on the effect of communication skills on the public speaking anxiety of the pupils.

The urgency of studying public speaking anxiety is paramount. This pervasive fear significantly hinders academic, professional, and personal growth, limiting individuals' potential. Understanding the underlying causes and effective coping mechanisms is essential for developing targeted interventions. As such, this has become why the researcher is eager to conduct this Study in Mambalili Elementary School to determine which domain of communication skills greatly influences public speaking anxiety. Also, the result of this research will provide valuable insights into overcoming this debilitating condition, empowering individuals to confidently communicate and succeed in various aspects of life for all.

Statement of the Problem

The general objective of this study was to determine which communication skills domain significantly influences the public speaking anxiety of Mambalili Elementary School pupils.

Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of Communication Skills in terms of:
   1.1 competence;
   1.2 discouragement;
   1.3 body language; and
   1.4 dignification?
2. What is the level of Public Speaking Anxiety in terms of:
   2.1 trait anxiety;
   2.2 context anxiety;
   2.3 audience anxiety; and
   2.4 situation anxiety?
3. Is there a significant relationship between communication skills and public speaking anxiety?
4. Which among the domains of communication skills greatly influence public speaking anxiety?

2. METHODOLOGY

Reserch Design

This study utilized a descriptive research design that predicts the variance of one or more variables based on the variance of another variable. The study variables were independent and dependent. The correlation technique is a procedure in which subject scores in two variables are simply measured without manipulation to determine whether there is a significant relationship (McCombes, 2023). Since this study aimed to investigate which domain of communication skills significantly affects public speaking anxiety, the design is suitable.

A survey design was used for this quantitative descriptive research study to investigate the level and association between communication skills and public speaking anxiety among pupils of Mambalili Elementary School.

Research Respondents

This study was conducted in Mambalili Elementary School during the second semester of S.Y. 2024-2025. It is categorized as a medium-sized school of the Department of Education under the District of Bunawan, Division of Agusan del Sur, Region of Caraga. The respondents of this research study were 166 pupils from Grades 4 to 6 of Mambalili Elementary School enrolled during the S.Y. 2024-2025. A universal sampling technique was utilized so that all enrolled pupils in grades 4, 5 and 6 were being selected (Thomas, 2020).

The school is located at Barangay Mambalili a rural village in the Municipality of Bunawan, Agusan del Sur, Philippines. It's situated in the northeastern part of mindanao known foe its agricultural lands. It has a population as determined by the 2020 Census, was 3,349. This represents 7.05% of the total population of Bunawan. The majority of its locals belong to the Manobo Tribe, which is considered to be an indigenous people in Agusan del Sur. Part of these numbers are also Ilongo, Ilocano, and Maguindanaon people. Since Barangay Mambalili is part of the landlocked area of Agusan del Sur, the everyday livelihood in this area is rice and vegetable farming. Fishing freshwater fish is also considered as another source of income because it is near Agusan Marshland.

Research Instruments

The instruments that were used in this study consist of two parts. The first part was an adapted questionnaire on public speaking anxiety from the Study of Plandano, Otagan, Sumampong, Plandano et al. (2023), entitled "Public Speaking Anxiety among College Students at St. Paul University Surigao." The second part was another adapted questionnaire on communication skills by Pratama and Astuti (2020) entitled "Students' Communication Skills in Junior High School." The survey questionnaire of the current study will be designed to determine the relationship between these two factors and which domain among the indicators of communication skills greatly affected public speaking anxiety.

The first part consists of four indicators: competence, discouragement, body language, and dignification. From the indicators, the structure was composed of 13, 12, 5, and 6 statements, respectively.

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On the other hand, the second part was composed of four indicators, namely trait anxiety, context anxiety, audience anxiety, and situation anxiety. In trait anxiety, there are four statements: four statements for context anxiety, four statements for audience anxiety, and four statements for situation anxiety.

Moreover, the data gathered regarding communication skills and public speaking anxiety were obtained by adding scores in all statements. Then, the level of these variables was determined using the Likert scale, and the scoring and interpretation of communication skills and public speaking anxiety are shown below:

Interval	Descriptive Rating	Descriptive Interpretation
1.00 – 1.49	Very High	The pupils' Communication Skills are always observed.
1.5 – 2.49	High	The pupils' Communication Skills are oftentimes observed.
2.5 – 3.49	Low	The pupils' Communication Skills are sometimes observed.
3.5 – 4.00	Very Low	The pupils' Communication Skills are never observed.

On the other hand, the scoring and interpretation of data for public speaking anxiety is shown below:

Interval	Descriptive Rating	Descriptive Interpretation
1.00 – 1.49	Very High	The pupil's Public Speaking anxiety is always manifested.
1.5 – 2.49	High	The pupil's Public Speaking anxiety is oftentimes manifested.
2.5 – 3.49	Low	The pupil's Public Speaking anxiety is sometimes manifested.
3.5 – 4.00	Very Low	The pupil's Public Speaking anxiety is never manifested.

Validation of Instruments

A panel of expert validators was entrusted to review the adopted questionnaires before administering them to the research respondents. The researcher conducted a pilot test on her adopted questionnaires to test the instrument's validity. The pilot testing was conducted in a different school, at West Bunawan Central Elementary School. The researcher explained to the school principal and the respondents the importance of conducting the pilot testing and its significance in conducting this study.

Research Procedure

During the conduct of this study, the researcher prepared a letter of permission for the school principal and the Division of Agusan del Sur to allow her to conduct this study. The nature of the study was explained to them, and their utmost cooperation was highly appreciated. The researcher herself distributed and administered the research instruments to the students who were asked to answer the survey questionnaire.

The researcher translates each item into the pupils vernacular dialect during the conduct of the study so that they grasp the idea of statements correctly. The instruments were collected immediately to ensure the confidentiality of the responses. After the data collection, the researcher tallied, collated, tabulated, and submitted the data to the statistician for statistical treatment. The results were analyzed and interpreted using the four-point Likert scale.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The researcher organized the data in this study and classified based on the research design and the problems. The data was tallied and tabulated to facilitate the presentation and interpretation of the results. Statistical tools helped the researcher determine the research instrument's validity and reliability. The researcher used the ***mean*** as statistical tool to determine the level of communication skills and public speaking anxiety. ***Pearson r correlation*** was also used to determine the relationship between the variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient, also called Pearson's r, is a statistical calculation of the strength of two variables' relationships. In other words, it measures how dependent two variables are on each other. Using the application SPSS, the data was analyzed to get the null hypothesis and explain the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Finally, ***multiple regression analysis*** was used to estimate the relationship between two or more independent variables and one dependent variable (Bevans, 2023).

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought approval from the ethics review and validation of the questionnaires to ensure the integrity of the study process set by the Assumption College of Nabunturan Ethics Review Committee and to build trust between the researcher and the parties involved. After that, the data was collected for the study. The result of the survey were collected and tabulated subject for statistical treatment by the statistician. The consent forms signed by the participants for voluntary participation in the study were also secured first before they filled in the survey questionnaires. The participants were free to withdraw from participating in the study.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher upheld the ethical standards throughout the study and adressed the ***social value*** to determine which domains of communication skills significantly influence the public speaking anxiety of Mambalili Elementary School pupils. It sought to determine the level of communication skills of the pupils in terms of the following domains: competence, discouragement, body language, and dignification. As well as the level of public speaking anxiety of the pupils in terms of trait anxiety, context anxiety, audience anxiety and situation anxiety. The research findings were shared with the school and published in the online journal so that the other related research studies can be used as reference.

The researcher handed the ***Informed Consent Forms (ICF)*** to the selected participants. The researcher disclosed important information, such as the researcher's name and affiliation. It was also highlighted that participants' involvement is voluntary,

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and they may quit anytime they feel displeasure. The purpose of the study was described, as well as the methods being followed.

The researcher explained the entire process of conducting the survey and emphasis was done on the freedom to withdraw from participating in the study if they feel discomfort and was affected them in any areas. ***Risks, Benefits, and Safety*** were thoroughly explained to the participants the benefits of participating in the study. The survey was done at the participant's most convenient place and time.

In addition, the researcher strictly adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Participants' data was kept confidential. All research data from the material copies, such as survey questionnaires, were kept in locked files all the time and password-protected files for electronic files. Only the principal investigator had access to all the files. All the data were destroyed after the publication of the study.

The research study used a universal sampling method. All enrolled pupils in Mambalili Elementary School from grade 4 to grade 6 were the subject of this study. Participants were allowed to withdraw their participation and were given a token of appreciation for the time they had extended to conduct the study. The researcher informed the participants about the objectives of the study. The participants also had been provided copies of their answers to verify the reliability and validity of the gathered data. Also, the researcher possessed enough experience in conducting the research study during college and post graduate studies. The researcher is a graduate of Master of Arts in Education Major in Educational Administration at Assumption College of Nabunturan.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presented the study results that were collected and analyzed from the gathered data. The results were organized based on its research objectives, including its interpretation of patterns, relationships, and data. This part also presented the explanation with support from recent authors and citations.

Table 1. Level of the Pupil's Communication Skills.

Indicators	Mean	Description
Competence	2.3	High
Discouragement	2.5	Low
Body Language	2.4	High
Dignification	2.2	High
Overall	**2.4**	**High**

Presented in Table 1 is the level of communication skills, with an overall mean score of 2.3, categorized as high. The data showed that indicators such as *competence* got a mean of 2.3, *body language* got a mean of 2.4, and *dignification* got a mean of 2.2, categorized as high, while discouragement got a mean of 2.5, categorized as low. The overall results highlighted that the participants demonstrated high communication skills. This indicates that students' communication skills were always observed, as evident in their proficient use of competence, body language, and dignification in communication. These factors contribute to their ability to effectively relay messages and demonstrate clarity, confidence, and engagement. It was also found that discouragement might lead to a problem in communication, which might affect students' confidence in their abilities.

According to Sumaiya et al. (2022), communication skills are shaped by technical knowledge and a person's psychological and emotional state. Feelings of discouragement might lead to self-doubt and hesitation, which might affect the ability to express ideas clearly and confidently. Effective communication requires emotional resilience, as confidence and a positive mindset contribute significantly to properly articulating ideas. Alhassan and Baafi (2022) found that students who possess strong communication skills demonstrate greater self-assurance in public speaking and tend to perform better academically. However, Tushar and Sarang (2019) pointed out that a lack of consistent practice and encouragement in communication leads to fear and anxiety, especially during public speaking situations. This can affect the participation of students in class and their willingness to express themselves.

Table 2. Level of Public Speaking Anxiety

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Trait Anxiety	2.4	High
Context Anxiety	2.2	High
Audience Anxiety	2.2	High
Situation Anxiety	2.4	High
Overall	**2.3**	**High**

Presented in Table 11 is the level of public speaking anxiety with an overall mean score of 2.3, categorized as **high**. The data showed that indicators such as Trait Anxiety and Situation Anxiety both obtained a mean of 2.4, while Context Anxiety

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and Audience Anxiety both received a mean of 2.2, categorized as high. The overall results indicate that public speaking anxiety among the participants is **oftentimes manifested.** This data reveals that the participants frequently experience public speaking anxiety, which suggests it could significantly affect their comfort and confidence when speaking in public settings.

The result of this study supports the findings of Martiningsih et al. (2024) who explains that even though students frequently experience anxiety, this does not necessarily mean they are incapable of delivering speeches but rather highlights the emotional struggle involved in public speaking. Their research showed that students actively employed various coping strategies to manage anxiety, with relaxation being the most preferred at 83.2%, followed by preparation (80.1%), peer seeking (80%), and positive thinking (78.2%). These strategies suggest that while public speaking anxiety is commonly experienced, students have developed adaptive techniques to reduce its impact and enhance their ability to perform public speaking tasks despite their recurring nervousness. As cited by Mills (2019), there is a considerable number of young learners who experience discomfort and apprehension when required to speak in public, and this limits their active participation in classroom discussions and public events. As suggested by Dwyer et al. (2018), creating supportive classroom environments that normalize mistakes and encourage practice can help decrease fear and build student confidence over time.

Table 3. Relationships Between Communication Skills and Public Speaking Anxiety

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value	Interpretation	Decision
Communication Skills Public Speaking Anxiety	-0.235	0.002	Low Negative Correlation	Reject the Null Hypothesis

The test of the relationship in Table 12 revealed that the correlation coefficient between communication skills and public speaking anxiety is -0.235, with a p-value of 0.002, hence rejecting the null hypothesis. The study revealed a low negative correlation between communication skills and public speaking anxiety. This suggests that as students' communication skills improve, their public speaking anxiety decreases. Conversely, lower communication skills are often associated with higher levels of anxiety when speaking in public.

This result aligns with the Social Cognitive Theory of Bandura (1977), which highlights the role of self-efficacy in shaping behavior; as learners build their communication competence and gain more exposure to speaking situations, their confidence grows, which slowly reduces their feelings of anxiety. However, the lower strength of the relationship implies that other factors beyond communication skills may also influence the level of public speaking anxiety.

As supported by the study of Hembree (2019), students who perceive themselves as competent communicators are less likely to experience anxiety when faced with public speaking challenges. Conversely, students with lower communication skills are more likely to experience higher levels of anxiety when speaking in public. This finding is consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory which emphasizes the role of self-efficacy in influencing behavior and emotional responses. As learners gradually enhance their communication abilities and gain exposure to diverse speaking situations, they develop a stronger sense of self-efficacy, which helps reduce feelings of anxiety over time. However, the weak strength of the relationship also suggests that while communication competence plays a role, other factors such as self-confidence, audience perception, and prior speaking experiences may significantly affect public speaking anxiety. Furthermore, Sharma and Singh (2022) emphasized that strong communication skills help students navigate social interactions more effectively, reducing anxiety even outside academic settings. As argued by Brown and Kincaid (2018), the involvement of students in communication-rich activities such as public speaking develop resilience against social anxiety.

Table 4. Regression Analysis on the influence of the domains of Communication Skills to the Public Speaking Anxiety of Students

	t-value	p-value	Decision
(Constant)			
Competence	1.083	0.280	Failed to reject Ho
Discouragement	2.274	0.024	Reject Ho
Body	0.312	0.756	Failed to reject Ho
Dignification	0.335	0.738	Failed to reject Ho

Presented in Table 13 is the regression analysis showing the influence of the different domains of communication skills on the public speaking anxiety of students. Among the domains, only *Discouragement* showed a statistically significant influence, with a t-value of 2.274 and a p-value of 0.024; hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that discouragement in communication significantly contributes to the public speaking anxiety of students. On the other hand, *Competence* obtained a t-value of 1.083 and a p-value of 0.280, *Body* yielded a t-value of 0.312 with a p-value of 0.756, and *Dignification* recorded a t-value of 0.335 and a p-value of 0.738. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis for these domains. This result highlights that *Discouragement* stands out as the only domain with a

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meaningful impact on the anxiety experienced by students in public speaking contexts.

The result of this study closely aligned with the findings of Kroeper et al. (2024), who found that perceiving the classroom culture as more fixed-minded was associated with increased psychological distress later. It was also revealed that students who experienced higher psychological distress early in the semester were more likely to perceive their classroom environment as fixed-minded over time. These findings suggest that a fixed mindset can contribute to feelings of discouragement and heightened anxiety. On the other hand, a study by Denker et al. (2022) found that course modality does not significantly impact the participation of students, interest, or perceptions of rapport. Their study revealed that student communication plays a role in engagement outcomes. This suggests that fostering a growth mindset, where problems are viewed as opportunities for improvement, might improve student engagement and resilience. According to Sumaiya et al. (2022), communication skills are not only dependent on technical proficiency but it is also shaped by the emotional and psychological feelings of learners. Feelings of discouragement can lead to self-doubt and hesitation which made learners difficulty in confidently expressing themselves. Similarly, Sweeney and Hinton (2021) found that previous failures or perceived inadequacies often discourage elementary pupils from engaging in speaking tasks, increasing their anxiety when faced with similar situations in the future.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Based on the results, it can be concluded that the students demonstrated a high level of communication skills and a high level of public speaking anxiety. A low negative correlation was found between communication skills and public speaking anxiety which indicate that better communication skills are associated with lower anxiety levels, although other factors may also influence anxiety. Regression analysis further revealed that among the domains of communication skills, only discouragement had a significant effect on public speaking anxiety, suggesting that feelings of discouragement heighten students' anxiety when speaking in public. These results emphasize the need to address discouragement to help reduce students' public speaking anxiety and enhance their communication level.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. To address the low scores in discouragement, teachers may integrate activities aimed at building confidence and emotional resilience of students. These can include role-playing scenarios, structured debates, and reflective writing exercises, which provide safe and supportive environments for students to practice self-expression. Such activities might help minimize the negative impact of discouragement on communication skills by fostering self-assurance, promoting peer support, and allowing students to process and overcome fear constructively. Teachers may also establish clear guidelines and strategies to promote supportive and respectful classroom environment.
2. School administrators and leaders might implement programs or workshops focused on public speaking and anxiety management and use techniques such as relaxation, preparation, and peer support to help students effectively manage their fears.
3. Guidance counsellors might also provide psychological support and interventions, such as growth mindset training and cognitive-behavioural strategies.
4. Students might actively practice self-regulation techniques, such as positive thinking and preparation, to improve their ability to manage public speaking anxiety and develop a more confident communication style.
5. Future researchers might conduct another study related to psychological and social factors that influence public speaking anxiety and communication skills, as well as examine interventions in their communication-related tasks.

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