

Speaking Skills And Sharpening Softskills Through Public Speaking For The Zillennial Generation

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Abstract

This research entitled "Speaking Skills and Sharpening Softskills Through Public Speaking For The Zillennial Generation" is motivated by the phenomenon of communication anxiety that is often felt by the Millennials who try to deal with the fear of speaking in public. The purpose of this study is to find out the factors that a person is afraid of doing public speaking and the correct technique of practicing public speaking. The method used by the author is descriptive research with the selection of informants from the student of the zillennial generation. The results of the study stated that there were 57.50% of the zillennial generation had communication anxiety, but if they did public speaking training, 55.27% were able to understand and master the material and needed further training.

Keywords: Speaking , Zillennial Generation, Softskills

Introduction

Communication is a form of speaking activity carried out between humans as a basic activity in everyday life, both verbally and nonverbally. In addition to exchanging information, communication is carried out to convey knowledge that can be done by individuals to the public as an audience that requires certain knowledge (Wakhyudi, 2019). One of the soft skills that can be honed is speaking in public or often referred to as public speaking (Asriandhini et al., 2020). Public speaking is the ability to speak in front of an audience as a capability that must be possessed by everyone, including children (Tarigan, 1988).

This is because public speaking is included in the communication science group as the basis for interaction carried out by humans to achieve certain goals. Charles Bonar Sirait (2008) a leading public speaker stated that public speaking is an art that combines knowledge with the abilities possessed by a person. An individual as a public speaker brings a wealth of knowledge that will be conveyed to the audience while conveying it with interesting facial expressions and gestures so that the audience is entertained and able to convince the listeners.

Public speaking is divided into two focuses, namely verbal including words spoken orally and non-verbally by utilizing body gestures and facial expressions (Adha, 2016). Literally,

public speaking is used to convey information to others in the form of presentations, speeches, master of ceremonies, and others (Zahrah, et al. 2022).

Until now, public speaking is one of the absolute skills needed in the global era due to the demands of the times and technology that force humans to compete to improve their quality (Girsang, 2018). In improving the existence of self-quality, a person is able to improve their speaking skills that are informative, interesting and influential through public speaking including delivering information and good communication techniques (Puspita, 2017).

In previous research, Rulita, et al. (2023) explained that one of the factors that can make it easier for someone to do public speaking is by increasing self-confidence or self-efficacy. The results of the study stated that individuals find it difficult to do public speaking due to nervous factors in speaking, difficulty starting interactions, difficulty getting close to others, not being adaptive, lacking self-confidence, and stage fright. Therefore, self-confidence greatly influences daily life because it can improve public speaking skills.

Then in further research, Burgoon (in Muslimin, 2016:43), stated that 10-20% of the population in the United States experiences high communication anxiety. Likewise, Wigati and Nurhayati (2021) stated that communication anxiety affects individual behavior and interactions including the use of social media as a medium for interaction by 19%, which means that the millennial generation prefers virtual communication rather than face-to-face, so it can be concluded that changes in the communication behavior of the millennial generation which have an impact on the difficulty of communicating directly are caused by the use of smartphones, so that the interactions carried out are passive and less focused on carrying out social interactions (Zis, et al. 2020).

The importance of public speaking as a need to improve individual public communication skills, public speaking training is the most effective solution to do, because it helps individuals build self-confidence and overcome excessive anxiety. This was stated by Wafiroh (2021) that effective communication is communication that is supported by several aspects such as mastery of material, self-confidence, managing situations, managing audiences and providing an attractive appearance.

From the current situation analysis, researchers observed the issue of changes in the communication behavior of Gen Z which is not going well. Seeing the reality in the field, there is a communication disorder that can eliminate the meaning of communication itself. This has an impact on the human social interaction system which has an impact on the lack of ability to communicate because they feel afraid when they get the opportunity to speak in front of an audience. This is considered something that is most avoided for reasons of nervousness, lack of

confidence, and others so that training is needed so that they are able to compete competitively through the soft skills they have, namely public speaking.

Literature Review

Basis of Thought

Gen Z or the digital era population was born with modern technology, they spend their free time using smartphones and the internet and lock themselves up more to play online than going out of the house and interacting with others (Qurniawati & Nurohman, 2018). It is undeniable that technological advances can make it easier for humans to access online-based information, so that long-distance communication feels easier to do than traditional communication using posts that require a fairly long time span because of the considerable distance (Zahrah, 2022). In this case, of course, it greatly affects the communication behavior of Gen Z in carrying out social interactions, one of which is inviting communication anxiety in speaking directly and decreasing their self-confidence.

Public speaking in terms consists of the word "public" which means the general public, and the word "speaking" means speaking or giving a speech (Echols & Sadily, 2003). Public speaking according to Amy Slagel in the book *21st Century Communication* by William F Eadie, explains that

"Public Speaking is a form of communication that seeks an outcome: public speakers seek not simply to express themselves but to have an effect on their listeners" (2009: 194)

It is concluded that Public speaking is said to be successful if the content of the message delivered is able to influence the audience. Public speaking is a difficult communication method because it is not only speaking in front of many people, but also how to make the audience understand the content of the message delivered.

In its history, public speaking is known as the art of speaking, in Greek it is called "rhet" which is a person skilled in speaking (Zahrah, 2022). This continues to develop and produces several understandings from experts, such as those conveyed by Arsjad (1988: 23) that speaking ability is the ability to pronounce sentences to express, state, convey thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Then Ahmadi (1990: 18) expressed his opinion regarding the nature of speaking skills. According to him, speaking skills are essentially the skills of producing a flow of articulation sound systems to convey will, needs, feelings, and desires to others.

Mc Shane and Von Glinow (2008) even firmly stated that around three-quarters of us experience fear or nervousness on stage (stage fright). Included in this category is the fear of giving a speech in public (public speaking). Therefore, Public Speaking is a competency that combines four main elements of education: science includes conceptual competencies that are

scientific in nature, skills, arts provide intuition and feeling abilities, and the soul of a moral guardian so that every thought, word, deed and behavior.

Someone who studies public speaking will continue to practice how to speak and increase knowledge such as reading, writing scripts of the material to be delivered. Wrench stated that there are benefits in doing public speaking, namely, improving skills, critical thinking, perfecting communication skills verbally and non-verbally, and being able to overcome the fear of speaking in front of an audience (2020).

Lestari, et al (2023) stated that there are four components of successful public speaking, including:

1) Physical, using body language such as smiling at the audience and an upright posture that will make participants look confident

2) Visual using PowerPoint consisting of images, audio, graphics and tables

3) Effective eye contact is needed to create an impressive and powerful presentation. This increases the speaker's credibility, engagement with the audience, illustrates self-confidence and allows the speaker to get feedback from the audience

4) Story, the core of speaking and determines communication between the speaker and the audience. In composing a story, the speaker needs thorough preparation, one of which is choosing the subject to be discussed. For that, the speaker can consider two things. First, choose a subject that is interesting to him, this will make it easier for the speaker to prepare the presentation. Second, choose a subject that is very interesting to the audience because basically the purpose of public speaking is to bring the audience into it (Zahrah, 2023).

Methods

The method used in this study is qualitative descriptive. Researchers examine as much data as possible regarding public speaking for the zilenial generation. Determination of informants is based on purposive sampling techniques, namely selective sample selection because the characteristics of the subjects are different, researchers want to include accurate and weighty data from the informants obtained (Arikunto, 2006). In collecting data, researchers use in-depth interview techniques, observation and documentation (Moleong, 2017). Meanwhile, in data collection carried out by researchers using the method proposed by Sugiyono, including:

1. Data reduction

Data reduction is the activity of selecting and collecting data that focuses on important things about the research problem, then the data will be narrowed down to provide a clear picture, in order to make it easier for researchers to collect previous data.

2. Data Presentation

Presenting data from the results of information collection in the form of charts, concepts, tables, abbreviations that are arranged, at this stage researchers begin to draw conclusions and take action in the form of narrative text.

3. Drawing Conclusions

The final stage is drawing conclusions by verifying the data in the form of patterns, configurations, and explanations obtained containing valid and factual words in the form of narrative text (2013, pp. 247-252).

Results and Discussion

Public speaking skills must be mastered by everyone, especially the millennial generation. In carrying out effective public speaking, skills are needed through regular education and training in order to be able to master the techniques and materials to be delivered, so efforts are needed to hone public speaking as a soft skill that can be utilized by the millennial generation such as making presentations, speeches, or working so that the capacity of the audience as a communicator is able to convey important ideas that lie in the technique or method of communication used.

From several previous studies, researchers have obtained data that the millennial generation finds it very difficult to do public speaking due to several factors, first, excessive anxiety due to fear of being evaluated, boring delivery methods and awareness of being the center of attention. Second, lack of self-confidence due to having bad experiences, the presentation venue makes the communicator uncomfortable, differences in ethnicity and religion, and having a bad perspective. Third, lack of experience and discussions with experts (Zahrah, 2020).

However, many factors have been found that someone finds it difficult to do public speaking due to lack of emotional regulation. In the 2021 study, there were 400 students as research subjects covering the ages of 18-25 years stating that the majority of subjects had communication anxiety of 57.50%. Someone who experiences communication anxiety will feel very worried, anxious, and afraid when they have to talk to other people, so they will look for and rely on communication media that can be done non-verbally or in writing for their access to communicate (Nurhayati & Wigati, 2021).

To hone public speaking, special training is needed by experts or by doing independent training by diligently reading, practicing positive thinking and speaking simultaneously, practicing creating texts and arranging the flow of texts in intonation and language, finally asking experts or relatives whether the training carried out is sufficient or needs to be evaluated. This training certainly has intentions and objectives such as improving speaking skills, critical

thinking, improving self-quality, overcoming fear and as a place to improve soft skills in the world of work and higher education (Girsang, 2018).

Public speaking training can be carried out in three stages, the first is providing education regarding the importance of public speaking for life supported by material presented by experts. Public speaking materials are quite diverse, including choosing interesting topics, limiting topics, collecting and compiling materials, appearing confident and evaluating.

In order for information to be easily understood, children often have to practice the material. After providing briefings, the next step is to practice. Public speaking practices are divided into several stages, such as providing direction on how to open properly by exhaling slowly for a few seconds, then practicing the right gestures so that the audience is focused on the communicator starting from an upright body position, the position of the feet forming the letter "V" and the position of the hands parallel to the stomach (Girsang, 2018). As a result, the zillennial generation was able to hone public speaking as a soft skill by 55.27%, which means that they have the ability to understand and master the material (Sukifly et al., 2024) so that they need further training in building self-confidence.

Conclusion

The conclusion in this study examines how the zillennial generation hones public speaking as a soft skill, this is because the majority of the zillennial generation has emotional anxiety. Public speaking skills are considered very much needed by everyone for educational and work needs, so efforts are needed to improve them, one of which is through training either independently or from experts. Recommendations that can be made are to analyze and conduct interviews according to the literature review. It is hoped that further researchers will be able to explore public speaking material and evaluate it to be even better.

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