A Qualitative Approach to Examine What Causes Individual College Students at NNMC to Fear Public Speaking as Reported by a Sample Gathered from Dialogue and Public Speaking Classes and the Effects on Academics

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Abstract

This exploratory study looks at the fear of public speaking. Public speaking is very difficult for many individuals. More specifically my focus is on NNMC College Students. The research question that I focused on is, "How much fear of public speaking will be expressed by college students and how can this effect their academics?" (Note: we don't have a causal analysis, it is exploratory) This is indeed a very important area to research; being able to speak in front of others is a part of success in our everyday lives, in terms of careers, purchasing, and academics.

Statement of the Problem

When it comes to giving speeches or even talking in class, many students let that fear get in their way. The result can cause some individuals to even fail a class, due to participation being a grade.

Theory

My theory for this research project is that when the students have a large amount of anxiety and feel tense, then academics are affected, and when students don't have anxiety and are not tense academics are not affected. In fact, some people may like and prefer public speaking.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses based on this theory are:
H01. If the size of the group (audience) is regarded as "too big" this will create a higher fear of public speaking academics will be affected.

H02. If the size of the group (audience) is regarded as "too big" this will create lower fear of public speaking therefore academics won't be affected.

H03. If the size of the group (audience) is not regarded as "too big" fear of public speaking will decrease.

H04. If the size of the group (audience) is not regarded as "too big" then academics won't be affected.

Data Collection & Methods

For my research, I gathered data from the college students at Northern New Mexico College (NNMC) more specifically from those students whom are taking public speaking classes and dialogue classes. The method I used to collect my data was a convenience selection of public speaking and dialogue classes held at NNMC. The best sampling selection is random selection because it is the most rigorous method and it is true because it yields unbiased results. The reason for this is because each person has the same chance of being selected. I chose to do a convenience sample selection method because the classes at NNMC are required, not elective, therefore I don't have self-selection bias.

Table III

Dependent Variable

How much does each apply to you when preparing for a public speech?

Answered: 44 Skipped: 0
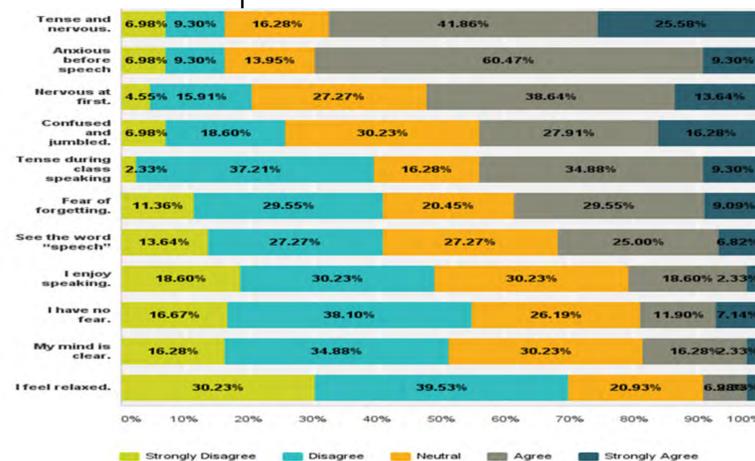
Data Analysis & Findings

The sample consisted of students from dialogue and public speaking classes. The data below represents how many students feel when they have to speak publicly. The weighted average is listed from highest to lowest. These are the items with the highest fear.

These results show that not very many students feel relaxed while giving a speech. In fact, by looking at the table you can see that many students are tens, nervous, and anxious when they have to give a speech. This supports hypothetically, at least for this data, that many students fear public speaking.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
While preparing for giving a speech, I feel tense and nervous.	6.98% 3	9.30% 4	16.28% 7	41.86% 18	25.58% 11	43	3.70
I get anxious when I think about a speech coming up	6.98% 3	9.30% 4	13.95% 6	60.47% 26	9.30% 4	43	3.56
Although I am nervous just before starting a speech, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable?	4.55% 2	15.91% 7	27.27% 12	38.64% 17	13.64% 6	44	3.41
My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I am giving a speech.	6.98% 3	18.60% 8	30.23% 13	27.91% 12	16.28% 7	43	3.28
When the instructor announces a speaking assignment in class, I can feel myself getting tense.	2.33% 1	37.21% 16	16.28% 7	34.88% 15	9.30% 4	43	3.12
I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say.	11.36% 5	29.55% 13	20.45% 9	29.55% 13	9.09% 4	44	2.95
I feel tense when I see the words "speech" and "public speech" on a course outline.	13.64% 6	27.27% 12	27.27% 12	25.00% 11	6.82% 3	44	2.84
I enjoy preparing for a speech.	18.60% 8	30.23% 13	30.23% 13	18.60% 8	2.33% 1	43	2.56
I have no fear of giving a speech.	16.67% 7	38.10% 16	26.19% 11	11.90% 5	7.14% 3	42	2.55
My mind is clear when giving a speech.	16.28% 7	34.88% 15	30.23% 13	16.28% 7	2.33% 1	43	2.53
I feel relaxed while giving a speech.	30.23% 13	39.53% 17	20.93% 9	6.98% 3	2.33% 1	43	2.12

Data Analysis & Findings *cont'd*

The analysis method in which is being used here is univariate distributions. The reason univariate dispersion is being used is because this is the first descriptive stages of the research. The bar graph below represents how the students, at Northern New Mexico College enrolled in dialogue and public speaking class, feel when preparing for a public speech. The dependent variable in this research is fear of public speaking. The Bar graph below consists of eleven statements which are on the left-hand corner. Each of the percentages are color coated. The green stands for those students that strongly disagreed with the statement, the light blue stands for the students that disagreed, the orange stands for the students that feel natural, the grey stand for the students that agreed with the statement, and the dark blue stands for those students that strongly agree with the statement.

Conclusions

My findings showed that as an exploratory researcher, I am forced to except the null hypothesis which is there is no relationship between the fear of public speaking and dropping out of the class or taking a bad grade. However, the respondent did express a fair amount of anxiety which fit the research of public speaking. For future research we would first obtain a larger sample size, and next look at specific assignments within the curriculum to determine whether some assignments raise anxiety while some lower it, and to perhaps see whether specific assignments create more likelihood of dropping the class I accepted the null hypothesis because I didn't have enough sample seize nor enough time to gather more data in order for my data to reach significance. As an exploratory researcher accepting the null is acceptable because of lack of experience and insight with dealing with research. My results were exploratory, not confirmatory.

Ethics

This research is Adhere to The National Research Act created by the National Commission for the Protection of human subjects of Behavioral Research that utilizes three key principles: Respect for persons, Beneficence, and Justice. The survey was given to those who voluntarily accepted to participate. The participants were informed of the confidentiality process.

References

Babbie, E. R. (2016). *Practice of Social Research*, Eral Babbie (14th ed..). Boston, MA Cengage learning.

Acknowledgements