Qualitative Research on Obstacles and Hesitates of Healthcare Students Before Public Speaking for Supporting Health Promotion

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Public speaking ability is essential for healthcare students as educators and health promoters. However, students need more confidence in their ability to deliver education in public. Students also experience anxiety before becoming a public speaker. The study aims to identify common barriers that hinder students from feeling comfortable while speaking in public. The method used a phenomenological approach. Research location at Faletehan University, Indonesia. The sample in this study was 12 healthcare students to explore experiences related to barriers in preparing for public speaking. The technique used purposive sampling to select participants who have experienced difficulty or fear in public speaking. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Results show that through thematic analysis, it was observed that the participants encountered physical and psychological obstacles. The findings revealed six themes, including physical anxiety, traumatic experiences, lack of technical methods and practice, the importance of personal branding, self-actualization, and the impact of social media. Self-actualization, a deeper understanding of personal branding, and the combination of EFT techniques emerge as effective ways to address the obstacles and hesitations faced by healthcare students before public speaking. This research provides information on overcoming barriers and hesitations in health promotion practices carried out by students in the community. **Keywords:** Obstacles, Hesitate, Healthcare, Students, Public Speaking, Health Promotion
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1. INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is an essential skill for students (Amelia et al., 2022), playing an important role in the development of their communication skills (Jean-Pierre et al., 2023), which are integral to clinical practice and health education (McNatt, 2019). Public speaking is a vital aspect often regarded as a secondary component, yet it has profound significance in forming health students' professional competencies. The ability to speak in public is important in academic contexts, such as presentations and seminars, and also in professional clinical practice (Kormos & Julio, 2020). Healthcare students must be able to convey complex and often sensitive information to patients, patient's families, colleagues, and other healthcare professionals (Hannawa et al., 2022; Karnieli-Miller et al., 2022).

Public speaking is important to support a health promotion program (Isobel et al., 2021; Stellefson et al., 2020). Public speaking is often a significant challenge for healthcare students, where various issues arise as barriers to their communication effectiveness (Monteiro et al., 2024). One of the main problems

encountered is excessive anxiety, often caused by fear of making mistakes or being judged by the audience (Dansieh et al., 2021; Raja, 2017). This can stem from a lack of self-confidence and inexperience in public speaking. In addition, the difficulty in articulating complex medical information into language that a non-medical audience can understand is another barrier (Wang et al., 2020). Healthcare students also often have difficulty maintaining audience engagement, which can be affected by limitations in using body language and visual aids. Weaknesses in these aspects can reduce the effectiveness of message delivery and potentially lead to misunderstandings or ambiguity in communication (Agyapong et al., 2019). As a result, these issues affect students' academic performance and readiness to interact professionally in an actual healthcare setting.

Some factors that contribute to this difficulty include inexperience, lack of formal training in communication skills, and internal factors such as self-confidence and anxiety. Psychological factors such as anxiety and lack of confidence are often a significant barrier. Anxiety, especially concerning fear of judgment and failure, can hinder students' ability to communicate effectively (Stewart et al., 2017). In addition, more confidence is needed to convey health information clearly and appropriately. Educational factors, including a lack of formal training and practical experience in public speaking, also play an important role (Nazligul et al., 2017). A curriculum that needs to provide more opportunities for practice and feedback on oral communication skills can leave students underprepared. Students' social and cultural environments are also influential. For example, cultural norms or previous experience with exam-oriented education may limit students' openness to public speaking (Montes et al., 2019).

Effective public speaking skills enrich their educational experience and prepare healthcare students for effective professional interactions, which are crucial in patient management and teamwork in healthcare environments (Hinojo-Lucena et al., 2020). Practical public speaking skills substantially benefit healthcare students and are instrumental in their professional development (Montes et al., 2019). Proficiency in public speaking enhances communication effectiveness, which is crucial in conveying complex health information to patients and peers (Mörtberg et al., 2018). It helps explain complicated medical concepts in more understandable terminology, ensuring that important information is conveyed clearly and effectively.

Students often face significant barriers and challenges in public speaking (Herlitz et al., 2020). Psychological barriers, such as fear and anxiety of judgment or criticism, dominate this list of challenges. This anxiety can stem from fear of making mistakes when conveying medical information or concerns about the ability to communicate clearly in front of an audience (Ismana et al., 2023; Montes et al., 2019). These challenges are complicated by a lack of experience and formal training in public speaking skills. Many healthcare students do not get enough opportunities to practice and receive constructive feedback on their speaking abilities in an academic context. In addition, the difficulty in transforming complex medical information into messages that can be understood by a non-medical audience is also a major challenge.

Previous studies have often not deeply explored the psychosocial and contextual aspects of this issue (Kormos & Julio, 2020). Previous research suggests that there is a need to understand more deeply the subjective experiences of healthcare students, as well as effective strategies to overcome these barriers (Mörtberg et al., 2018). Different from previous research, the novelty of this research identifies and provides new insights and practical solutions to support health students in developing public speaking skills that are important for their future careers. The study aims to identify common barriers that hinder students from feeling comfortable while speaking in public.

2. METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to understand health students' subjective public speaking experiences. This approach was chosen because it allows in-depth research into individual perceptions, attitudes, and experiences, crucial in understanding barriers and reluctance in public speaking. The population of this study was health program students at Faletehan University, Indonesia. The sample used a purposive sampling technique to select participants who have experienced difficulty or fear in public speaking. The sample in this study amounted to 12 health students. Data was collected through in-depth interviews conducted face-to-face at Faletehan University. Interview questions were designed to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges in public speaking. In addition, observations and field notes were used to supplement the interview data.

Data obtained from the interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis. These steps included initial coding, theme identification, and thematic interpretation to generate a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. This study adhered to the ethical principles of research, including informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. Participants were given complete information about the study's purpose and procedures and were asked for written consent before participating. All data will be kept confidential and used only for this study. This study applied methodological triangulation, using multiple methods to collect data. The findings were validated by continuous reflection, discussion with the research team, and participant feedback. Peer review and supervision were conducted to increase the reliability of the research.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The total respondents in this study were 12 health students at Faletehan University, Indonesia. More than half of the respondents were female, namely 7 people (58.33%). Half of the respondents were nursing students, namely 6 people (50%). The author found 6 themes in this study, namely physical anxiety, traumatic experiences, lack of technical methods and practice, the importance of personal branding, self-actualization, and the impact of social media. Table 1 below shows the results of interviews related to these 6 themes.

Table 1
Results of Obstacles and Hesitates

Themes	Responders Code	Interview Results
Physical Anxiety	A1	I feel my hands shaking and my voice trembling whenever I start speaking in front of people.
	A4	My legs feel weak and I find it difficult to breathe when performing in front of the class.
	A8	My stomach often feels nauseous and my head is dizzy before a presentation.
	A10	I experience dry mouth and often forget my words in the middle of a presentation due to nervousness.
Traumatic Experiences	A3	I once lost my words and froze in front of many people. It was very embarrassing.
	A9	The harsh criticism from a lecturer in front of the class made me afraid to speak again.
	A11	The bad experience of being bullied for the way I spoke made me afraid to try again.
	A12	I felt like everyone was laughing at me when I made a mistake, and it kept haunting me.
Lack of Technical Methods and Practice	A5	I don't know the techniques to catch my breath or control my voice, which makes me stammer a lot.
	A7	We were never taught how to overcome nervousness or how to speak effectively.
	A8	I feel like I don't practice enough, especially in dealing with difficult questions from the audience.
	A9	The lack of practice opportunities makes me unsure of my own abilities.
The Importance of Personal Branding	A3	I realize the importance of speaking well to build my professional reputation.
	A4	For me, public speaking is a way of demonstrating expertise and credibility in my field.
	A8	I want people to remember me as someone who was competent and convincing.
	A10	The way I speak in front of a crowd can affect how my colleagues and patients see me.
Self-Actualization	A2	After successfully giving a good presentation, I feel more confident and capable.
	A6	Public speaking helps me find my voice and express my opinions.
	A10	I feel like I grow personally every time I overcome my fear of public speaking.
	A12	When I manage to convey my message clearly, it gives me a sense of accomplishment.
The Impact of Social Media	A1	Seeing my friends speak fluently on social media often makes me feel inadequate.
	A4	I try to learn from videos and tips on social media, but sometimes it adds pressure to be perfect.
	A8	Social media gives me inspiration to improve my speaking, but it also makes me feel like I need to compete.

A11	Comments on social media about public speaking are sometimes scary and make me hesitate.

Table 1 shows that the interview results obtained four point statements of respondents in breakdown of each theme. On the physical anxiety theme there are four statements of obstacles and hesitations. On the traumatic experiences theme there are four statements of obstacles and hesitations. On the lack of technical methods and practice theme there are four statements of obstacles and hesitations. On the importance of personal branding theme there are four statements of obstacles and hesitations. On the self-actualization theme there are four statements of obstacles and hesitations. On the impact of social media theme there are four statements of obstacles and hesitations.

3.2. Discussion

Public speaking skills are a critical element in the education and professional practice of healthcare students, due to their importance in the clear and effective delivery of health information, empathic relationship building with patients, and knowledge sharing and collaboration with peers (Lindner et al., 2019). In this context, public speaking is not just about delivery techniques, but also about building trust, competence, and effective communication skills. Furthermore, in today's digital era, healthcare students need to be able to communicate not only in person but also through digital media. Therefore, integrating effective public speaking training in the health education curriculum is essential to thoroughly prepare them for future communication challenges and needs, both in professional and digital contexts (Bachmann et al., 2022; Glassman et al., 2016; Grieve et al., 2021).

Physical anxiety shows the prevalence of physical symptoms such as trembling, dry mouth, and nausea among health students when facing public speaking situations. These phenomena, described by respondents, indicate the presence of significant performance anxiety. These symptoms not only impede verbal communication skills but also affect the quality of delivery (Tsang, 2020). These findings confirm the need for effective intervention strategies, such as anxiety management training and relaxation techniques, to reduce the physical impact of anxiety in public speaking situations.

Traumatic experiences highlight the negative impact of previous adverse experiences in the context of public speaking. Respondents' stories of harsh criticism and public failure show how these experiences can create ongoing fear and hinder the development of further public speaking skills (Monteiro et al., 2024). This underscores the importance of creating a positive and supportive learning environment, where mistakes are seen as opportunities to learn and grow, rather than as embarrassing failures (Ibrahim & Devesh, 2019).

The lack of technical methods and practice in public speaking was one of the main themes. Students often felt that they did not receive enough training or practice in public speaking, as expressed by several respondents. These findings reinforce the need for more systematic integration of public speaking training in health education curricula, including opportunities for repeated practical exercises and receipt of constructive feedback to improve these skills (Gallego et al., 2020).

Health students recognized the importance of public speaking in building their professional image. Respondents emphasized that the ability to speak in public contributes to how they are perceived by peers and patients (Elsey et al., 2020). This suggests that public speaking is not only important for information communication but also as an important tool for personal branding in health careers.

Self-actualization emerged as a positive outcome of overcoming barriers in public speaking. Respondents reported feelings of accomplishment and increased self-confidence after successfully presenting (Monteiro et al., 2024). This suggests that, although challenging, public speaking can be an important means for healthcare students to achieve personal and professional growth.

The impact of social media illustrates how these platforms influence perceptions and pressures related to public speaking (Apriyanti et al., 2018; Haudi et al., 2022). Some respondents felt intimidated by representations of public speaking on social media, while others found inspiration and learning resources from it. These findings indicate that social media has a dual role as a source of pressure and learning opportunities in the context of public speaking.

4. CONCLUSION

This study identified and analyzed various aspects that influence health students in the context of public speaking. Key findings included the prevalence of physical anxiety, the impact of traumatic experiences, deficiencies in technical methods and practices, the importance of personal branding, self-actualization processes, and the influence of social media. Physical anxiety and traumatic experiences emerged as the main inhibiting factors, while recognition of the importance of personal branding and self-actualization highlighted the positive aspects of mastering public speaking.

Regarding the impact of public speaking on health students' professional development, educational institutions need to include more comprehensive public speaking training in their programs. Based on the findings, it is recommended that health education programs include a thorough public speaking training module that focuses on the technical aspects of speaking and on developing anxiety management skills

and self-confidence. Further research could also focus on developing assessment tools to measure the effectiveness of various public speaking training techniques. In addition, it is important to explore further how social media can be used positively as a learning tool for public speaking to support health promotion. This research provides information on overcoming barriers and hesitations in health promotion practices carried out by students in the community.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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