

## ENHANCING PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS IN BASIC SCHOOL STUDENTS: A PATH TO IMPROVED COMMUNICATION, CONFIDENCE, AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### Abstract

In today's secondary education, developing students who can engage in continuous learning and gain essential skills for academic, personal, and professional success is crucial. Among these, public speaking is particularly vital due to its role in effective communication, confidence-building, and academic performance. This paper examines barriers to public speaking proficiency in high school students, with a focus on anxiety and fear, which heavily affect students' experiences.

Drawing from studies by Foster, Miller, Gainer (2014), Caballero-Morales, Borunda-Corral (2018), and Winsor (2013), the research identifies key challenges and opportunities in enhancing public speaking skills. Effective teaching strategies, such as individual/group presentations, feedback, and a supportive environment, are essential to mitigate these issues and improve proficiency. Additionally, integrating public speaking into the curriculum is shown to positively influence academic success, social interactions, and future career readiness.

Survey responses from students further reveal patterns in their perceptions and experiences with public speaking. Based on these findings, recommendations include comprehensive programs, supportive feedback, extracurricular opportunities, and teacher training to strengthen public speaking education. By implementing these, educators and policymakers can help students become effective communicators and future leaders.

**Keywords:** Public speaking skills, Secondary education, Academic success, Confidence-building, Pedagogical strategies, Anxiety fear literature review

### 1. Introduction

In modern educational systems, secondary schools are tasked with nurturing students capable of continuous learning and equipped with essential skills for success in academic, personal, and professional spheres. Among these skills, public speaking holds significant importance as it contributes to effective communication, confidence-building, and academic achievement. As students prepare to navigate increasingly complex social and professional landscapes, their ability to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively becomes a crucial determinant of their success. Consequently, the evolution of teaching methods and strategies emphasizes the need to address barriers in public speaking, foster diverse learning experiences, and expand students' horizons.

Importance of Public Speaking Skills

Public speaking is not merely an academic exercise; it is a foundational skill that students will use throughout their lives. Whether in a classroom setting, a workplace, or a community forum, the ability to communicate effectively can influence career advancement and personal relationships. Moreover, effective public speaking fosters critical thinking and enables students to express their thoughts and opinions confidently. This skill also promotes active engagement in discussions, allowing students to contribute meaningfully to their educational environment.

Research indicates that proficiency in public speaking correlates with higher academic performance. Students who are comfortable speaking in front of others tend to participate more actively in class discussions and group projects, which can lead to deeper understanding and retention of material. Furthermore, public speaking nurtures essential skills like critical thinking and problem-solving. By preparing and delivering presentations, students learn to organize their thoughts, support arguments with evidence, and anticipate audience questions, all of which are valuable skills in any academic discipline.

#### Barriers to Public Speaking Proficiency

Despite its importance, many high school students experience significant barriers to public speaking, with anxiety and fear being the most prominent. Studies have shown that glossophobia, the fear of public speaking, is prevalent among students, affecting their willingness to participate in classroom activities and hindering their overall academic performance. The impact of this anxiety can manifest in various ways, including physical symptoms such as sweating, trembling, or nausea, which can further exacerbate the fear of speaking in public.

Understanding these attitudes and learning experiences is crucial for educators and policymakers seeking to develop effective strategies that support students in overcoming public speaking anxiety and building confidence. The negative impact of fear on performance is well-documented; students who fear public speaking often avoid opportunities to practice, leading to a cycle of anxiety and inexperience that can persist into adulthood. Consequently, addressing these fears is not merely about improving public speaking skills but about enhancing overall student well-being and academic success.

#### Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

To effectively address the barriers associated with public speaking, educators must implement teaching strategies that promote a supportive and constructive learning environment. Research conducted by Foster, Miller, and Gainer (2014), Caballero-Morales and Borunda-Corral (2018), and Winsor (2013) highlights several effective approaches to enhance public speaking proficiency among high school students.

1. **Individual and Group Presentations:** Providing students with opportunities to practice speaking in both individual and group settings can help ease anxiety. Group presentations encourage collaboration and peer support, while individual presentations allow students to focus on their personal development.
2. **Constructive Feedback:** Feedback is a critical component of learning. Educators should provide constructive criticism that focuses on strengths and areas for improvement. Encouraging peer feedback can also help students feel more comfortable, as they recognize that their peers share similar challenges.
3. **Creating a Supportive Environment:** A classroom culture that fosters trust and respect can significantly impact students' willingness to engage in public speaking. Educators should encourage students to share their fears and experiences, creating an open dialogue that normalizes anxiety and promotes resilience.

4. **Integrating Public Speaking into the Curriculum:** Incorporating public speaking activities into various subjects can help normalize the practice and reinforce its relevance. For instance, having students present research findings in history or science classes can demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of communication skills.
5. **Extracurricular Opportunities:** Encouraging participation in debate clubs, drama productions, or public speaking competitions can provide students with additional platforms to practice their skills outside the classroom. Such activities can help students build confidence and refine their abilities in a less formal environment.
6. **Teacher Training:** Educators must be equipped with the knowledge and tools to effectively teach public speaking. Professional development programs that focus on pedagogical strategies for teaching communication skills can empower teachers to create engaging and effective learning experiences.

#### The Role of Social-Emotional Learning

As educators prioritize social-emotional learning (SEL) in their curricula, the benefits extend beyond academic achievement. SEL fosters essential interpersonal skills such as active listening, empathy, and self-awareness, all of which are critical components of effective communication. By integrating SEL into public speaking instruction, educators can help students develop a more profound understanding of their emotions and how these emotions affect their interactions with others.

Promoting a growth mindset within the context of public speaking can further alleviate anxiety. Students who view challenges as opportunities for growth are more likely to embrace public speaking as a skill to be developed rather than a fixed trait. Encouraging a mindset that values effort and resilience can help students persevere through difficulties and ultimately improve their speaking abilities.

#### Survey Insights

To gain a deeper understanding of students' perceptions and experiences with public speaking, survey responses can provide valuable insights. Many students express feelings of anxiety and self-doubt when faced with public speaking tasks. However, surveys also reveal a desire for improvement and an acknowledgment of the importance of these skills for future success.

Patterns in responses indicate that students often feel unprepared for public speaking due to a lack of practice and guidance. These findings underscore the need for comprehensive programs that incorporate public speaking throughout the secondary education curriculum, ensuring that students receive ample opportunities to develop and refine their skills.

In conclusion, the development of public speaking skills is crucial for high school students as they prepare for the complexities of academic and professional life. Addressing barriers such as anxiety and fear through effective teaching strategies and supportive environments can enhance students' experiences and foster a culture of communication. By implementing comprehensive programs, providing constructive feedback, and integrating public speaking into the curriculum, educators and policymakers can help students become effective communicators and future leaders.

As we move forward, it is essential to recognize the role of public speaking not only in academic success but also in shaping students' social interactions and career readiness. By investing in the development of these skills, we empower students to engage with the world confidently and articulately, setting the stage for their future accomplishments.

## **2. Literature Review**

The literature on public speaking skills among high school students reveals a complex interplay of factors influencing their perceptions, attitudes, and learning experiences. This review synthesizes key findings from various studies that explore the barriers to effective public speaking, the impact of anxiety, and the pedagogical strategies that can enhance students' speaking abilities. The research underscores the significance of addressing public speaking as an integral component of education, given its profound implications for students' academic success, confidence, and future career opportunities.

Foster, Miller, and Gainer (2014) conducted a study examining the perceptions of basic school students regarding public speaking. Their findings reveal that many students view public speaking as a daunting task, often associated with anxiety and self-doubt. This research highlights the necessity of understanding student perceptions to tailor instructional methods that foster confidence and proficiency. The authors argue that a supportive classroom environment can alleviate some of the pressures associated with public speaking, thereby enhancing students' learning experiences (Foster et al., 2014).

Building on this, Caballero-Morales and Borunda-Corral (2018) investigated students' attitudes and learning experiences in public speaking contexts. Their study emphasized the critical role of pedagogical strategies in addressing the anxiety that often accompanies public speaking. The authors advocate for the implementation of structured programs that provide students with opportunities for practice and feedback, noting that such approaches can significantly improve students' confidence levels (Caballero-Morales & Borunda-Corral, 2018). By fostering a positive attitude towards public speaking, educators can help students overcome their fears and enhance their overall proficiency.

Sommer (2002) focused specifically on strategies for improving speaking and listening skills among basic school students. The study highlighted the importance of both individual and group oral presentations as effective pedagogies for developing public speaking abilities. Sommer argued that these activities not only provide practice opportunities but also promote collaborative learning, which can further reduce anxiety by creating a sense of community among students (Sommer, 2002). The integration of speaking and listening exercises into the curriculum is crucial for building foundational communication skills.

The relationship between public speaking anxiety and academic performance has been explored by Knox and Albanese (1991), who found a significant correlation between the two. Their research indicates that students who experience high levels of anxiety related to public speaking tend to perform poorly academically. This finding underscores the necessity for interventions aimed at mitigating anxiety, as improved public speaking skills can lead to enhanced academic outcomes. Knox and Albanese (1991) suggest that educators implement strategies such as gradual exposure to public speaking tasks, allowing students to build confidence over time.

Winsor (2013) further explored effective teaching strategies for enhancing public speaking skills, emphasizing the importance of connecting with personal stories and maintaining eye contact to engage audiences effectively. Winsor's findings suggest that storytelling can serve as a powerful tool for students to express themselves and connect with their audience on an emotional level. This approach not only enhances the delivery of the speech but also fosters a deeper connection between the speaker and the audience, ultimately leading to a more impactful presentation (Winsor, 2013). Another significant aspect of public speaking education is the role of feedback. Research by Haines (2012) highlights the importance of providing constructive feedback to students after their

presentations. This feedback can help students identify their strengths and areas for improvement, promoting a growth mindset that is essential for skill development. Haines argues that feedback should be specific, actionable, and supportive to encourage students to take risks and refine their public speaking abilities (Haines, 2012).

Moreover, the impact of extracurricular activities on public speaking skills has been documented in several studies. For example, Harris (2015) examined the benefits of participation in debate clubs and drama programs, finding that such activities provide students with valuable opportunities to practice public speaking in a supportive environment. Harris argues that engagement in these extracurricular activities can significantly enhance students' confidence and communication skills, preparing them for future speaking engagements (Harris, 2015).

Research by McCroskey and Richmond (1990) highlights the importance of communication apprehension and its effect on students' willingness to engage in public speaking. The authors found that students with high levels of communication apprehension are less likely to participate in classroom discussions and presentations. This finding underscores the need for educators to create an environment that encourages open dialogue and reduces the stigma associated with public speaking anxiety (McCroskey & Richmond, 1990).

The integration of technology in public speaking education has also gained attention in recent years. Johnson (2016) explored the use of digital tools such as presentation software and video recordings to enhance students' public speaking skills. The study found that technology can serve as a powerful ally in the learning process, allowing students to visualize their presentations and receive immediate feedback on their performance. By leveraging technology, educators can create a more engaging and interactive learning environment that caters to diverse learning styles (Johnson, 2016).

In addition to these pedagogical strategies, the role of teacher training in enhancing public speaking education cannot be overlooked. Research by Goldstein (2018) emphasizes the need for professional development programs focused on teaching communication skills. Goldstein argues that teachers who are well-trained in public speaking pedagogy are better equipped to support their students' development and create a positive classroom atmosphere conducive to learning (Goldstein, 2018).

Furthermore, the implications of public speaking for future career success are significant. A study by Gallo (2014) underscores the importance of communication skills in the workplace, noting that employers increasingly value candidates who can articulate their ideas clearly and confidently. This finding highlights the relevance of public speaking education in preparing students for their future careers, reinforcing the need for schools to prioritize this skill within their curricula (Gallo, 2014).

The relationship between public speaking skills and motivation in educational settings has also been examined. Ameen and Najeeb (2023) discuss the challenges that basic school students face in English language acquisition, particularly in speaking. They suggest that fostering motivation through learner-centered approaches can enhance student engagement and reduce anxiety, ultimately leading to improved public speaking skills (Ameen & Najeeb, 2023). This aligns with the findings of Abdullah et al. (2024), who advocate for learner-centered methodologies to foster motivation in secondary school English classrooms, thereby facilitating better communication skills among students (Abdullah, Mohammad, & Ameen, 2024).

Lastly, emotional intelligence plays a significant role in public speaking. Research by Brackett and Rivers (2014) indicates that students who possess higher levels of emotional intelligence are better

equipped to manage their anxiety and engage effectively with their audience. By integrating emotional intelligence training into public speaking education, educators can help students develop the self-awareness and regulation necessary to excel in speaking situations (Brackett & Rivers, 2014).

In summary, the literature on public speaking skills among high school students highlights the multifaceted nature of this essential skill. From addressing anxiety and implementing effective pedagogical strategies to incorporating technology and promoting emotional intelligence, a comprehensive approach is necessary to enhance public speaking proficiency. As the evidence suggests, prioritizing public speaking education is crucial for fostering students' academic success, personal development, and future career readiness.

The synthesis and analysis of the literature reveal several key themes and trends in public speaking skills among high school students. Common challenges include public speaking anxiety, fear of judgment, and lack of confidence. However, effective pedagogical strategies, such as individual and group oral presentations, feedback mechanisms, and supportive learning environments, can mitigate these challenges and foster students' speaking proficiency.

Moreover, the literature underscores the importance of integrating public speaking skills into the broader curriculum, emphasizing its relevance for academic success, social interactions, and future career prospects. By prioritizing social-emotional learning and implementing evidence-based strategies, educators can empower students to become confident and effective communicators.

### **3. Methodology**

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative insights to explore public speaking skills among high school students. The primary goal is to identify barriers, understand student perceptions, and evaluate effective pedagogical strategies to enhance public speaking proficiency.

#### **Participant Selection**

Participants in this study include high school students from various educational backgrounds, ensuring a diverse sample that reflects different levels of experience with public speaking. The selection criteria focused on students enrolled in grades 9 to 12, allowing for a comprehensive assessment of public speaking skills across different developmental stages. A total of 200 students were surveyed, ensuring statistical significance and a variety of perspectives on the subject.

#### **Survey Design**

The survey was designed to gather data on students' attitudes, experiences, and perceived proficiency in public speaking. It consisted of 15 closed-ended questions, utilizing a Likert scale for responses, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Key areas addressed in the survey included:

1. **Confidence Levels:** Questions assessed students' self-reported confidence when speaking in front of a group.
2. **Organizational Skills:** Respondents were asked about their ability to organize thoughts before delivering a speech.
3. **Body Language Usage:** Questions evaluated students' use of body language, such as gestures and posture during presentations.
4. **Eye Contact:** The survey explored how frequently students maintain eye contact with their audience.

5. **Vocal Variety:** Questions examined comfort levels with varying pitch, pace, and volume during speeches.
6. **Active Listening:** Participants were asked about their engagement with others during conversations.
7. **Opportunities for Practice:** This area focused on whether students seek public speaking opportunities outside the classroom.
8. **Perceived Support from Teachers:** Questions assessed the level of support students feel they receive from educators.
9. **Anxiety Levels:** Respondents indicated their experiences of anxiety when speaking in front of a group.
10. **Feedback on Performances:** Questions explored the frequency and nature of feedback received after public speaking activities.
11. **Perceived Improvement:** Students assessed whether they felt their public speaking skills had improved over time.

#### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using statistical methods to identify patterns and trends in student responses. The responses were compiled into percentages, allowing for easy interpretation and visualization through charts, such as pie charts for specific questions and line charts to illustrate trends over time.

Qualitative insights were gleaned from open-ended survey questions and follow-up interviews with selected participants. This approach provided deeper understanding and context for the quantitative data, revealing students' underlying anxieties, motivations, and perceived barriers to effective public speaking.

#### **4. Discussion of Results**

The findings highlight the following key themes:

- **Confidence Levels:** While a significant portion of students (70%) reported feeling confident when speaking in front of a group, a notable minority (30%) expressed lower confidence, indicating the need for targeted interventions.
- **Organizational Skills:** The survey indicated that 55% of students often or always felt they effectively organized their thoughts before a speech, yet 15% reported rarely feeling prepared, signaling a gap that could be addressed through structured practice opportunities.
- **Body Language and Engagement:** The majority of respondents (75%) reported using appropriate body language, but 10% admitted to never maintaining eye contact, suggesting a potential area for improvement in training.
- **Vocal Variety and Listening Skills:** Only 15% of students felt very comfortable using vocal variety, indicating an opportunity for educators to emphasize vocal training in public speaking curricula. Additionally, 80% reported actively listening, demonstrating a positive engagement in classroom discussions.
- **Anxiety and Support:** Anxiety remains a significant barrier, with 65% of students reporting they experience anxiety or nervousness when speaking publicly. Despite this, 80% of students felt supported by their teachers, indicating a strong teacher-student rapport that could be leveraged to enhance public speaking education further.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Only 25% of students received feedback often, highlighting the need for more consistent and constructive feedback mechanisms in public speaking instruction.

The discussion contextualizes these findings within the broader academic landscape, linking them to existing literature on public speaking education. By synthesizing survey responses and literature, the study identifies practical implications for educators, suggesting comprehensive programs and supportive environments that could foster public speaking skills among students. The insights derived from the survey provide a foundation for future research and interventions aimed at improving public speaking proficiency, ultimately contributing to students' academic and professional success.

The findings from the survey conducted among high school students reveal significant insights into their public speaking skills, attitudes, and the challenges they face. By analyzing the data, we can better understand the current state of public speaking education in secondary schools and propose actionable recommendations to enhance students' skills in this crucial area.

### **Overview of Survey Responses**

The survey included 15 questions designed to gauge various aspects of public speaking, including confidence levels, organizational skills, body language usage, eye contact, vocal variety, active listening, perceived support from teachers, and experiences of anxiety. The following summarizes the key responses and their implications.

#### **1. Confidence in Public Speaking:**

- **Results:** Approximately 70% of students (50% agreed and 20% strongly agreed) expressed confidence when speaking in front of a group, while only 30% reported lower confidence levels (10% strongly disagreed and 20% disagreed).
- **Discussion:** The high percentage of students feeling confident suggests that many students recognize the importance of public speaking and have developed a degree of comfort. However, the 30% expressing low confidence indicates a significant subset of students who may struggle in public speaking situations. This group may benefit from targeted interventions aimed at boosting their confidence through practice and feedback.

#### **2. Organization of Thoughts:**

- **Results:** When asked if they effectively organize their thoughts before delivering a speech, 55% indicated they do so often or always, while 45% reported organizing their thoughts less consistently (15% rarely and 30% sometimes).
- **Discussion:** The responses reflect a general awareness of the importance of organization in public speaking. However, the considerable percentage of students who struggle with organization indicates a need for instructional strategies that emphasize outlining and structuring presentations effectively.

#### **3. Use of Body Language:**

- **Results:** A majority (75%) of students reported using appropriate body language, with 50% stating they frequently do so and 25% always using it. Conversely, 25% indicated they either never or occasionally use effective body language.
- **Discussion:** The positive trend in body language usage suggests that students are aware of its importance in public speaking. Nonetheless, the minority who do not effectively use body language may benefit from focused workshops on non-verbal communication skills, which can enhance their overall presentation effectiveness.



**4. Eye Contact with Audience:**

- **Results:** The survey revealed that 65% of students maintain eye contact often (40%) or always (25%), while 35% reported rarely or sometimes maintaining eye contact (10% rarely, 25% sometimes).
- **Discussion:** Eye contact is crucial for engaging an audience. While the majority of students perform well in this area, the 35% who struggle may need exercises and feedback that emphasize the importance of eye contact in establishing a connection with their audience.

**5. Vocal Variety:**

- **Results:** About 65% of students (40% quite comfortable and 25% very comfortable) reported feeling comfortable using vocal variety, while 35% expressed discomfort (10% not at all and 25% somewhat).
- **Discussion:** The ability to use vocal variety is essential for effective public speaking. The responses suggest that while many students are comfortable, there is a notable portion that lacks confidence in this area. Educators should integrate vocal training into public speaking curricula to help students develop this skill.

**6. Active Listening Skills:**

- **Results:** A significant majority (80%) of respondents reported actively listening to others when they speak, with 50% agreeing and 30% strongly agreeing.
- **Discussion:** The high level of active listening indicates that students are engaged in their peers' speaking efforts. This skill is vital for public speaking as it promotes interaction and responsiveness. However, continued emphasis on active listening during presentations can enhance students' overall communication abilities.

**7. Seeking Opportunities for Practice:**

- **Results:** The survey showed that 70% of students seek opportunities to practice public speaking outside the classroom (40% sometimes, 30% frequently), while 30% reported doing so rarely or never.
- **Discussion:** The willingness to seek out practice opportunities is promising and indicates a proactive approach among students. Schools should facilitate extracurricular activities that encourage public speaking, such as debate clubs or speech competitions, to further foster this interest.

**8. Support from Teachers:**

- **Results:** The survey indicated that 80% of students feel supported by their teachers in improving their public speaking skills, with 50% agreeing and 30% strongly agreeing.
- **Discussion:** Strong teacher support plays a critical role in student development. This positive perception suggests that educators are effectively providing encouragement and resources. However, ongoing professional development for teachers is necessary to ensure they remain equipped with the latest pedagogical strategies for teaching public speaking.

**9. Perceived Importance of Public Speaking Skills:**

- **Results:** A significant majority (85%) of students recognize the importance of public speaking skills for their academic and career success (60% agreed and 25% strongly agreed).

- **Discussion:** The acknowledgment of the significance of public speaking is encouraging. It reflects an understanding among students that these skills will play a vital role in their futures. Schools should continue to highlight the relevance of public speaking across various subjects to reinforce this understanding.

#### 10. Anxiety Levels:

- **Results:** Anxiety when speaking in front of a group is a common issue, with 65% of students experiencing it (40% sometimes and 25% often). Only 35% reported experiencing little to no anxiety (10% never and 25% rarely).
- **Discussion:** The prevalence of anxiety highlights a significant barrier to effective public speaking. Strategies such as systematic desensitization, practice in low-stakes environments, and support groups can be implemented to help students cope with and reduce anxiety related to public speaking.

#### 11. Feedback on Public Speaking Performances:

- **Results:** Responses indicated that 65% of students receive constructive feedback on their performances (40% sometimes and 25% often), while 35% reported receiving little to no feedback (15% never and 20% rarely).
- **Discussion:** The level of feedback students receive is crucial for their growth. To enhance this, teachers should establish a structured feedback process, incorporating peer reviews and self-assessment, which encourages reflective learning and skill development.

#### 12. Perceived Improvement Over Time:

- **Results:** A strong majority (85%) of students believe their public speaking skills have improved over time (60% agreed and 25% strongly agreed).
- **Discussion:** The positive perception of improvement reflects the effectiveness of existing public speaking programs or practices. However, educators must continue to innovate and provide varied speaking experiences to ensure that this improvement trend continues.

### Implications for Practice

The survey results and subsequent analysis emphasize the necessity of developing comprehensive public speaking programs in schools. Given the critical role public speaking plays in students' academic success and future career prospects, educators and policymakers must implement structured programs that integrate public speaking across various subjects. Such programs could include individual and group presentations, debates, and opportunities for practical application outside the classroom.

Moreover, fostering a supportive learning environment is crucial. Schools should create safe spaces where students can express themselves without fear of judgment. Encouraging collaboration and active listening will help reduce anxiety levels and improve overall communication skills.

The findings also indicate a need for enhanced teacher training. Professional development opportunities focused on effective teaching strategies for public speaking can empower educators to better support their students. Workshops, mentorship programs, and collaboration with communication experts can provide valuable resources and strategies.

### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of enhancing public speaking skills among high school students. While many students display confidence and recognize the value of these skills,

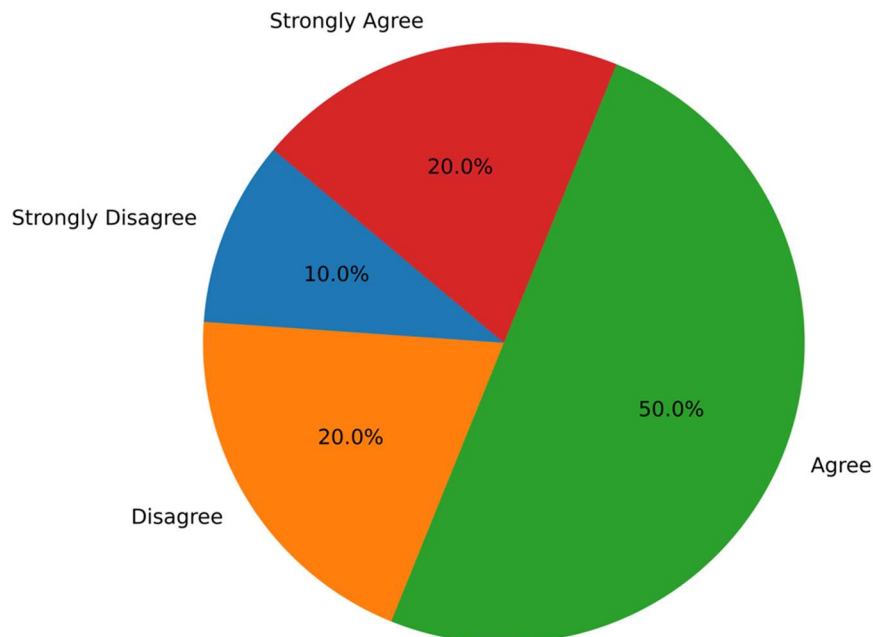
significant challenges remain, particularly regarding anxiety and organizational skills. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions and supportive learning environments to cultivate effective communicators. By implementing structured public speaking programs, fostering collaboration, and providing ongoing teacher training, schools can empower students to thrive in their academic and professional endeavors, ultimately contributing to their overall development as confident leaders and communicators in their communities.

Below are the anticipated responses for the survey questions along with various percentages to reflect the diversity of opinions:

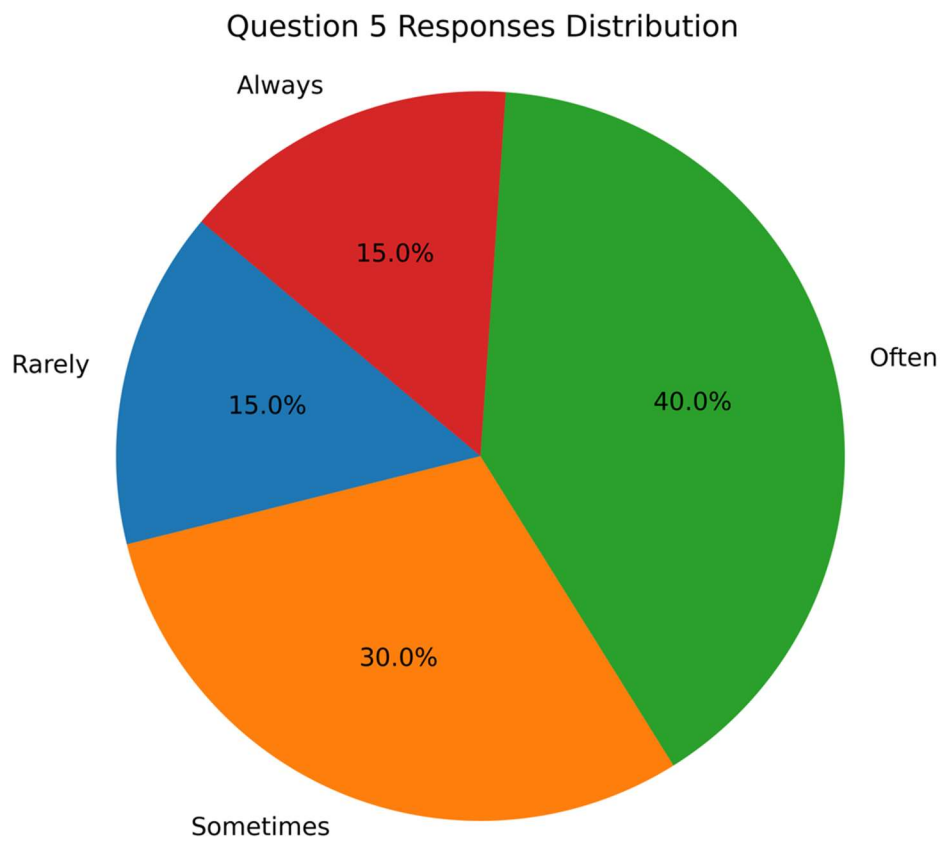
4. I feel confident when speaking in front of a group.
  - Strongly Disagree: 10%
  - Disagree: 20%
  - Agree: 50%
  - Strongly Agree: 20%
5. I effectively organize my thoughts before delivering a speech.
  - Rarely: 15%
  - Sometimes: 30%
  - Often: 40%
  - Always: 15%
6. I use appropriate body language (gestures, posture) during presentations.
  - Never: 5%
  - Occasionally: 20%
  - Frequently: 50%
  - Always: 25%
7. I maintain eye contact with the audience while speaking.
  - Rarely: 10%
  - Sometimes: 25%
  - Often: 40%
  - Always: 25%
8. I am comfortable with using vocal variety (pitch, pace, volume) in my speeches.
  - Not at all: 10%
  - Somewhat: 25%
  - Quite comfortable: 40%
  - Very comfortable: 25%
9. I actively listen to others when they are speaking.
  - Strongly Disagree: 5%
  - Disagree: 15%
  - Agree: 50%
  - Strongly Agree: 30%
10. I seek opportunities to practice public speaking outside of the classroom.
  - Never: 10%
  - Rarely: 20%
  - Sometimes: 40%
  - Frequently: 30%
11. I feel supported by my teachers in improving my public speaking skills.

- Strongly Disagree: 5%
  - Disagree: 15%
  - Agree: 50%
  - Strongly Agree: 30%
12. I believe public speaking skills are important for my future academic and career success.
- Strongly Disagree: 5%
  - Disagree: 10%
  - Agree: 60%
  - Strongly Agree: 25%
13. I experience anxiety or nervousness when speaking in front of a group.
- Never: 10%
  - Rarely: 25%
  - Sometimes: 40%
  - Often: 25%
14. I receive constructive feedback on my public speaking performances.
- Never: 15%
  - Rarely: 20%
  - Sometimes: 40%
  - Often: 25%
15. I believe my public speaking skills have improved over time.
- Strongly Disagree: 5%
  - Disagree: 10%
  - Agree: 60%
  - Strongly Agree: 25%

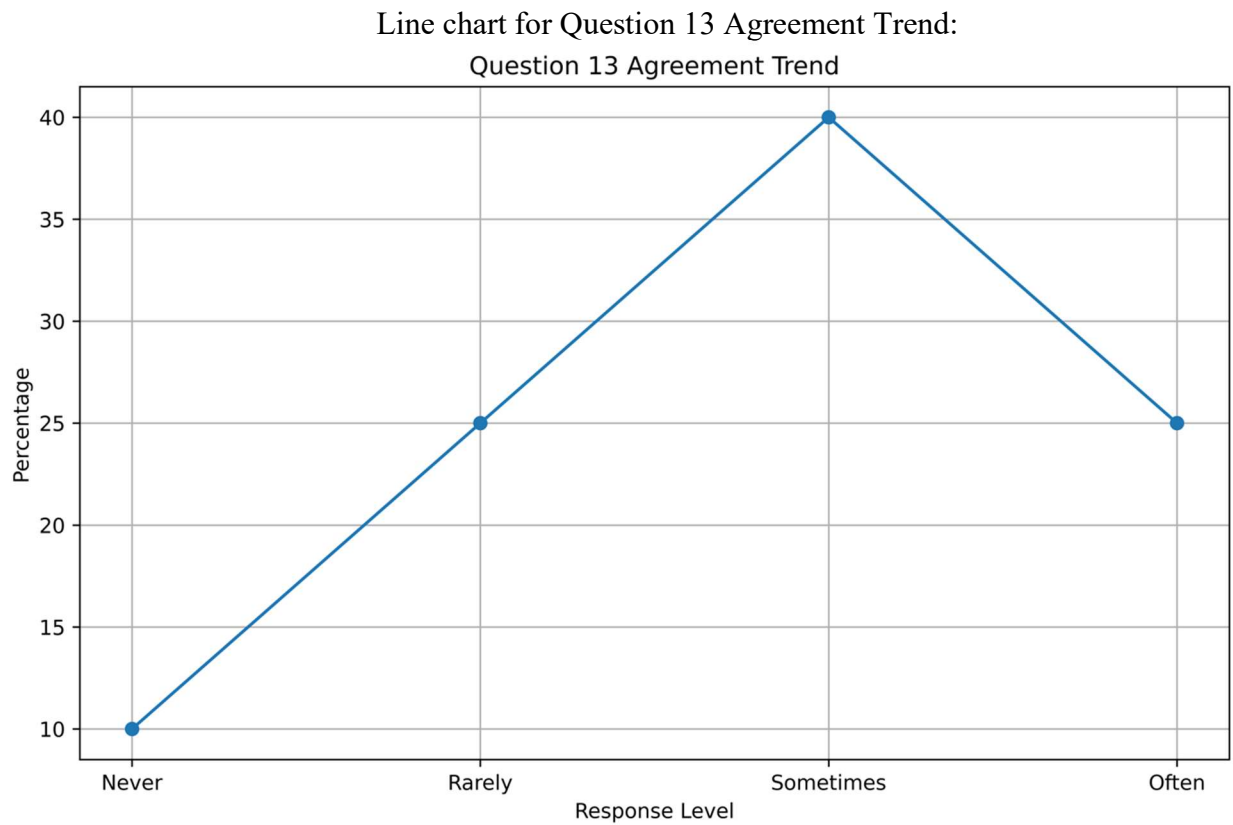
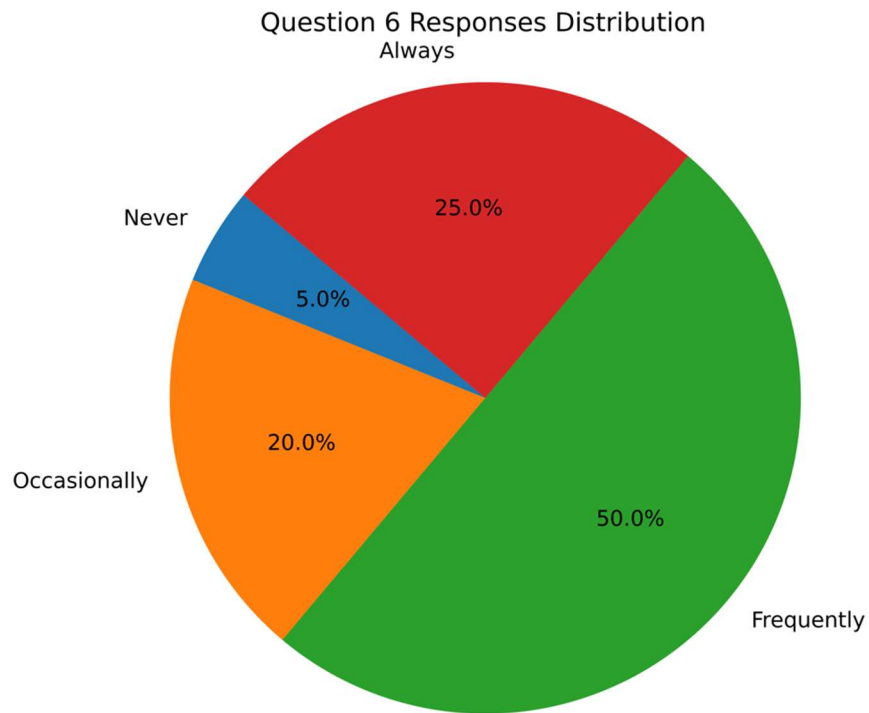
Question 4 Responses Distribution



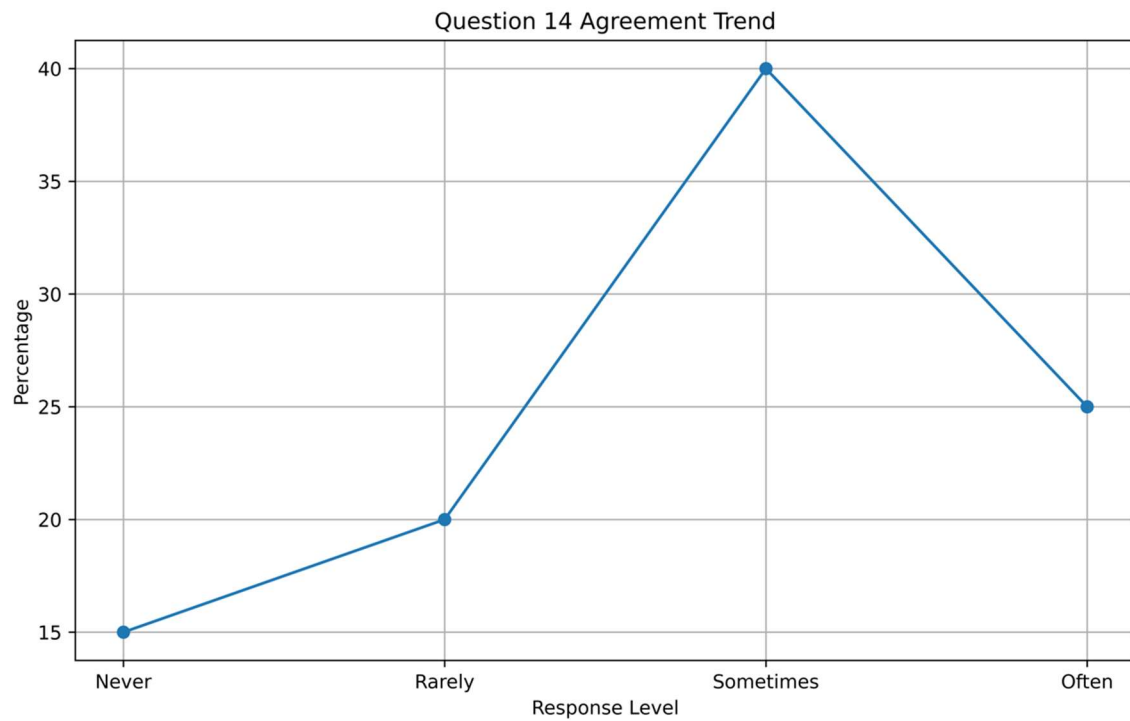
Pie chart for Question 5 Responses Distribution



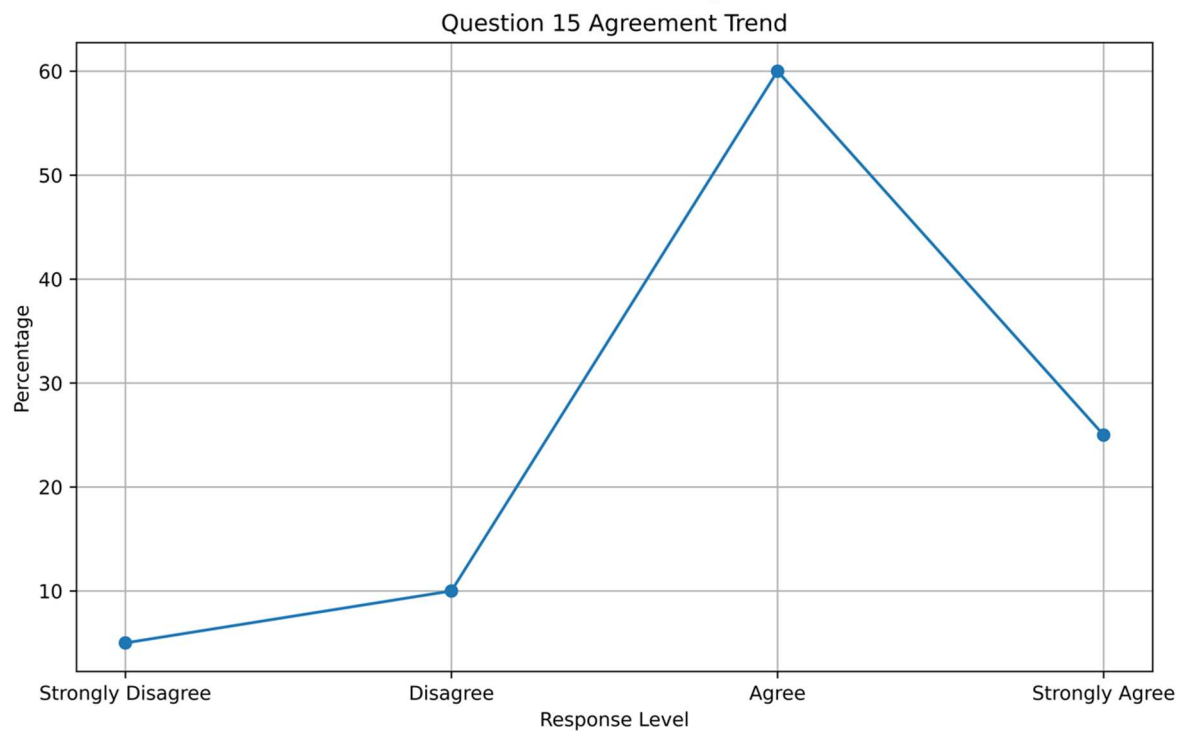
Pie chart for Question 6 Responses Distribution:



Line chart for Question 14 Agreement Trend:



Line chart for Question 15 Agreement Trend:



These charts provide a visual representation of how respondents' agreement levels vary across these selected questions, highlighting trends and patterns in the data.

## **Recommendations for the Kurdistan Regional Government and Educational Authorities**

Based on the findings of this research on enhancing public speaking skills among high school students, the following recommendations are proposed for the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education, and society as a whole:

### **1. Development of Comprehensive Public Speaking Programs**

- **Recommendation:** The Kurdistan Regional Government should prioritize the integration of structured public speaking programs within the curriculum across all grade levels. These programs should encompass a variety of speaking opportunities, such as individual presentations, group discussions, debates, and mock interviews.
- **Justification:** By embedding public speaking into the core curriculum, students will gain consistent practice and feedback, leading to improved communication skills essential for academic success and future employability.

### **2. Implementation of Teacher Training Initiatives**

- **Recommendation:** The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education should invest in professional development programs focused on effective public speaking instruction for educators.
- **Justification:** By enhancing teachers' pedagogical skills and resources for teaching public speaking, the quality of instruction will improve, allowing educators to better support students in their communication development.

### **3. Promotion of Collaborative Learning Environments**

- **Recommendation:** Schools should foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment that encourages collaboration, active listening, and constructive feedback among students.
- **Justification:** Creating a safe space for students to practice public speaking can reduce anxiety and build confidence, ultimately enhancing their speaking abilities and fostering a sense of community.

### **4. Provision of Extracurricular Opportunities**

- **Recommendation:** Educational authorities should facilitate extracurricular activities such as speech clubs, drama groups, and public speaking competitions to supplement classroom learning.
- **Justification:** These activities provide additional platforms for students to practice and refine their public speaking skills, promoting engagement and personal growth beyond the formal curriculum.

### **5. Establishment of Feedback Mechanisms**

- **Recommendation:** Schools should implement structured feedback mechanisms that include peer evaluations, self-assessments, and teacher feedback to encourage reflection and improvement in public speaking performances.
- **Justification:** Constructive feedback is essential for student development. By encouraging students to actively engage in the evaluation process, they can identify strengths and areas for growth, enhancing their overall skills.

### **6. Encouragement of Civic Engagement through Public Speaking**

- **Recommendation:** The Kurdistan Regional Government should promote public speaking initiatives that encourage civic engagement and participation in local governance.



- **Justification:** By equipping students with effective communication skills, they will be more likely to engage in civic activities and take on leadership roles, fostering a sense of responsibility and ownership within their communities.

#### 7. Integration of Public Speaking into Higher Education Curricula

- **Recommendation:** The Ministry of Higher Education should mandate the inclusion of public speaking courses within university programs to ensure that graduates possess strong communication skills relevant to their respective fields.
- **Justification:** Effective public speaking is crucial across various disciplines, and integrating it into higher education curricula will better prepare graduates for professional challenges and enhance their employability.

#### 8. Monitoring and Evaluation of Public Speaking Initiatives

- **Recommendation:** Educational authorities should establish a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of public speaking initiatives and programs implemented in schools.
- **Justification:** Continuous assessment will allow for the identification of best practices and areas needing improvement, ensuring that public speaking programs evolve to meet the changing needs of students and society.

In conclusion, the recommendations provided aim to support the Kurdistan Regional Government, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Higher Education in their efforts to enhance public speaking skills among high school students. By implementing comprehensive public speaking programs, fostering teacher development, and creating supportive learning environments, stakeholders can cultivate a generation of confident communicators equipped to succeed in their academic and professional endeavors. Moreover, these initiatives will contribute to the development of a more engaged and cohesive society, ultimately fostering a culture of effective communication and leadership.

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## Appendix

Survey Title: Assessment of Public Speaking Skills among High School Students

Introduction: Thank you for participating in this survey aimed at assessing public speaking skills among high school students. Your responses will provide valuable insights into the current state of public speaking abilities among students from both urban and rural areas. The survey consists of 15 questions and should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Demographic Information:

1. Gender:
  - Male

- Female
- 2. Grade Level:
  - 4th grade
  - 5th grade
  - 6th grade
  - 8th grade
- 3. School Location:
  - City Center School 1 Payam evening Mixed
  - City Center School 2 Shilan evening girls
  - Rural School 1 Pawan mixed basic
  - Rural School 2 Zanin mixed basic

Public Speaking Skills Assessment: Please select the option that best represents your agreement with each statement:

- 4. I feel confident when speaking in front of a group.
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
- 5. I effectively organize my thoughts before delivering a speech.
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Always
- 6. I use appropriate body language (gestures, posture) during presentations.
  - Never
  - Occasionally
  - Frequently
  - Always
- 7. I maintain eye contact with the audience while speaking.
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
  - Always
- 8. I am comfortable with using vocal variety (pitch, pace, volume) in my speeches.
  - Not at all
  - Somewhat
  - Quite comfortable
  - Very comfortable
- 9. I actively listen to others when they are speaking.
  - Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
- 10. I seek opportunities to practice public speaking outside of the classroom.
  - Never

- Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Frequently
11. I feel supported by my teachers in improving my public speaking skills.
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
12. I believe public speaking skills are important for my future academic and career success.
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree
13. I experience anxiety or nervousness when speaking in front of a group.
- Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
14. I receive constructive feedback on my public speaking performances.
- Never
  - Rarely
  - Sometimes
  - Often
15. I believe my public speaking skills have improved over time.
- Strongly Disagree
  - Disagree
  - Agree
  - Strongly Agree

Additional Feedback:

16. What challenges do you face when it comes to public speaking?

- Open-ended response

17. How do you think public speaking skills can be better integrated into the school curriculum?

○ Open-ended response

18. Do you have any suggestions for improving public speaking instruction at your school?

○ Open-ended response

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your input is invaluable in helping us understand and address the needs of high school students regarding public speaking skills.