

Honning Presentation Skills - A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract: *Presentation skills play an integral role in students' academics and in professional context. Such skills are particularly important in the workplace, where good presentation skills can help employees to advance their careers and improve their performance. The chief purport of this study was to delineate the students' challenges in presentations with special emphasis on managing one's voice as well as body language, managing audience and managing material with special reference to gender, locality and the batch or course they belong to. The research employs a phenomenological approach which is qualitative and the cohort comprised 98 students pursuing their course at Yashoda Foundation, Secunderabad, Telangana State were chosen through Non - random Convenience Sampling. The instrument is self - developed keeping in view the objectives and hypothesis of the study on a four - point Likert scale. The data were analysed using frequencies, t - test and ANOVA. The results demonstrated that no significant relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing their voice, body language, audience and material with regard to gender, locality and batch they belong to. Implications as well as suggestions for further research were also portrayed.*

Keywords: Presentation skills, managing self, body language, audience, material, Phenomenological study

1. Introduction

The 21st Century places a great emphasis on good presentation skills. This is because they play an important role in convincing the people and enhancing relationship management among organizations.

Presentation skills can be defined as a set of abilities that enable an individual to: interact with the audience; transmit the messages with clarity; engage the audience in the presentation; and interpret and understand the mindsets of the listeners. These skills refine the way you put forward your messages and enhance your persuasive powers.

Scientific research has made it abundantly clear that a visual aid is one of the best tools for making sure that your message is engaging, memorable, and most importantly persuasive (Prezi, The Science of Effective Presentations).

Presentations are key activities, asserts Chivers B., Shooldred M., (2007) and might include:

- Group and individual presentations for a given topic as part of a module assessment.
- Seminar presentations giving a paper to an academic or your peers for the purpose of teaching or showing evidence of your understanding of the topic.
- Providing an overview of some research carried out by you or your group.
- Demonstrating the use of a piece of equipment or software such as PowerPoint to show that you have developed the essential skills to use it appropriately.
- Dissertation - related presentations and Vivas to demonstrate your ability to manage a research project.
- A job interview where you have been asked to present for several minutes on a given topic.

Benefits of Presentation skills are:

- Enriched written and verbal communication skills
- Enhanced confidence and self - image

- Boosted critical thinking and problem - solving capabilities
- Better motivational techniques
- Increased leadership skills
- Expanded time management, negotiation, and creativity.

Challenges Students Face in Presentations

- One of the most common issues that students face is related to the *anxiety or nervousness* of performing in front of an audience. This feeling of nervousness is something that the students might feel the moment they know they would have to perform in front of the public because they believe that doing an oral presentation is difficult or simply because they are just not confident. Additionally, classmate reaction and audience familiarity contributed to the anxiety of performing the presentation.
- Another issue is in the way students perceive their *language mastery*. Thinking that they do not have adequate language mastery is one of the common issues that the students face, which relates closely to their nervous feeling. Mastery can relate to the lack of language proficiency in general or something more specific, such as pronunciation, vocabulary and oral proficiency.
- Having adequate *preparation and practice* can also be challenging for students. Studies have found that some students believed they lacked practice or preparation prior to oral presentations.
- Poor body language* is another challenge. Audiences will quickly get bored by a speaker who simply stands behind a podium throughout the presentation. Similarly, they will easily be distracted by a speaker who fidgets nervously with their hands or makes awkward gestures. Stiff body language can detract from the speaker's message. Thus, it is important for speakers to move around the space to create energy and keep the audience interested.
- Not interacting with the audience*. It can be difficult to keep the audience's attention but one of the best ways to

do so is by making them part of the presentation. Find creative ways to interact with the audience.

2. The Study Area

Yashoda Foundation, a sister concern of Yashoda Hospitals, was established in 2011 to create opportunities to the orphans, underprivileged children and youth who need support. Yashoda Foundation became a vibrant and recognized social service - oriented entity by launching four skill development programs viz., ABHAYA, the Employment Linked Skill Development Training Program for orphan youth; AKSHARA, to support initiatives which aim at enhancing the academic performance of Orphan Children through various Tuition Support Programs; VARADHI, the Advocacy Program and Facilitation Centre for Orphan Rights and Issues; and MAA KUTUMBUM, to create organic linkages by building bonds among ABHAYA candidates in order to bring them into the fold of Yashoda family.

The training process begins with Foundation Course Programs to train the aspirants on various aspects like:

- Life skills such as self - confidence, positive thinking, communication skills, team building, decision - making, time management, Psychiatric counselling and personality development.
- Communicative English' has been designed for the aspirants to face the world with courage and confidence.
- Basic Computers Skills would be helpful for the aspirants at their workplace.
- The course duration is of 3 months and each batch starts with a minimum of 45 to 50 aspirants every month.

Objectives of the Study

The chief purport of this study was to delineate the students' challenges in presentations with special emphasis on managing one's voice as well as body language, managing audience and managing material with special reference to gender, locality and the batch or course they belong to.

Hypotheses of the Study

HO₁: 'No significant relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing one's voice, body language, audience and material with special reference to gender.

HO₂: 'No significant relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing one's voice, body language, audience and material with special reference to locality.

HO₃: 'No significant relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing one's voice, body language, audience and material with special reference to batch or course of study.

3. Literature Review

Elizabeth Bankowski (2010) focused on training students in skills essential to making oral presentations based on original and independent research work as part of their English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. The results showed an increase in the successful use of research related skills and a great improvement in their ability to present their findings in English. Students appeared to have a better grasp of their subject matter, to be more at ease, less reliant on their notes, and better able to address their audiences directly. Students'

oral presentations not only illustrated a greater ability of students to use appropriate formats and structures in English but also a willingness and ability to adopt new methods of learning.

Susan Troncoso Skidmore, John R. Slate, and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzii (2010) in an editorial provided helpful evidence - based guidelines to help beginning researchers and scholars refine their presentation skills. Presented a detailed information to readers regarding the components of a quality professional presentation for a variety of presentation media and audience types, design principles for slide show presentations, and general dress and demeanour guidelines.

Daniela N. Ilieva – Koleva (2014) examined different traditional and unconventional methods for enhancing and perfecting presentation skills. It provides suggestions on how to structure a presentation, what type of verbal language to include, and pays significant attention to body language during presentations, as well as to the relation between the presenter and the audience.

In a book on '*Presentation Skills for Scientists and Engineers: The Slide Master*', **Jean - Philippe Dionne (2021)** provides concise and effective tips spanning all relevant areas to deliver engaging scientific presentations. Common errors often seen in scientific presentations are highlighted along with tips on how to interact with audiences and keep them engaged. This will be a valuable resource for scientists in all areas of chemistry and materials science as well as engineers who wish to elevate their scientific presentations.

Clarke, M. A., et al (2022) Studied healthcare professionals' presentation skills and identify barriers to improving. It was reported that respondents used bullet points and text the most (74%), and videos the least in their presentations (51%). When assessing respondents' perceptions of their current presentation skills, they rated themselves the lowest as a storyteller (median = 6/10) and as an overall presenter (median = 6/10). The biggest barrier reported was "lack of training on best practices" (58%). Respondents reported "interested in improving" and "enhance opportunities" as their main motivations for improving presentation skills. Four themes emerged from the open - ended survey items: Practical tips and best practices, Ability to communicate effectively, Professional development, and Practice opportunities.

Suroto et al (2023) conducted research using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) and a mapping approach, a process of identifying, categorizing, analyzing, evaluating, and interpreting articles that have been indexed in a well - known databases within a timeframe of 2012 - 2022. The literature review in this study was reviewed based on the Scopus databases as the primary source. The results indicate that teacher evaluation, peer evaluation, self - assessment, team assessment, and formative tests can be used effectively for evaluating online presentations using video, live online meetings, online platforms, social media, and game - based applications. .

Le Thi Hong Tuyen (2023) evaluated the difficulties which prevent students from making good presentations. It shows that students usually have problems with their body language, language barriers, time pressure, technical troubles and lack of confidence. The study also suggests some possible

solutions for both students and teachers to improve students' presentation skills.

Tareen, H., Haand, M. T., & Muhammadi, A. (2023) examined the difficulties of oral presentation EFL learners encountered, strategies used to make oral presentation well and the perceived role of lecturer in improving EFL learners' oral presentation skills. The results of the study revealed that learners had a problem with oral fluency, accuracy and pronunciation during oral presentation, feel frightened when a lot of people are watching them, afraid of being assessed by their classmates in front of the class, having low self - confidence.

Naelufah, D. R., Dalika, F. N., Hazawa, I., & Zulfa, S. (2023) investigated the perceptions of English education students about oral presentations and classroom assignments using PowerPoint. The result indicated that most students' perceptions were positive towards oral presentations using PowerPoint, which served as an assignment. Also, it highlights that oral presentations can enhance students' understanding and retention if the slides contain only important points, interesting pictures, or animation rather than full text.

From the above perspective it is clear that there are umpteen studies documented and still research is on its way to find out various means to equip the prospective candidates for effective presentation. Moreover, research on the efficacy of honing presentation skills seem to be in embryonic stage at the foundation level.

4. Research Methodology

This research was aimed to explore the students' challenges in presentations with special emphasis on managing one's voice as well as body language, managing audience and managing material. This research was conducted under a qualitative research approach and phenomenological design. The cohort comprised 98 students pursuing their course at **Yashoda Foundation, Secunderabad, Telangana State** were chosen through non - random convenience sampling. The instrument is self - developed keeping in view the objectives and hypothesis of the study on a four - point Likert scale, never to always. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. Part - A was to illicit demographic details such as gender, location and batch they are pursuing. Part - B consists of 32 statements spread over managing one's voice as well as body language. Managing audience and managing material. To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot testing was conducted on ten (10) students who were the representatives

of the target population of this study before it was administered to all the participants for the full data collection. The quantitative analysis of the collected data from the pilot testing computed by the SPSS resulted in the Cronbach's alpha of.834, which means that the instrument was significantly reliable to employ for the whole data collection of this research. Two weeks after the pilot testing, the questionnaire was electronically distributed to all the participants. After the data collection, all the Likert - scale questionnaire items were quantitatively analysed using frequencies, t - test and ANOVA. .

5. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Showing the demographic details of the sample

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Female	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
Locality	Rural	48	49.0	49.0	49.0
	Urban	39	39.8	39.8	88.8
	Semi - urban	11	11.2	11.2	100.0
Batch	120	28	28.6	28.6	28.6
	121	32	32.7	32.7	61.2
	122	38	38.3	38.8	100.0

It can be deduced from the given table, more than half of the sample (55.0%) were female students and the residual sample (45.0%) were male students chosen for the present study.

As per locality is concerned, a good majority of the sample (49.0%) were from rural, followed by another (39.8%) were from urban areas and a meagre sample (11.2%) were from semi - urban areas.

With regard to batches, a good sample (38.3%) were from 122 batch, another (32.7%) and (28.6%) were from 120 batch.

Table 2: Showing the gender of the sample
t - test

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2 - tailed)
Gender	Male	45	89.73	5.154	-.556	96	.579
	Female	53	90.28	4.626	-.551	89.390	.583

An independent t - test is used to test the hypothesis. The calculated p - value is insignificant at 0.05 level i. e., (.579 < 0.05). The null hypothesis framed - 'No significant relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing one's voice, body language, audience and material with special reference to gender. Therefore, the null hypothesis is **accepted**.

Table 3: Showing the locality of the sample

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Rural	48	90.52	5.379	.776	88.96	92.08	76	102
Urban	39	89.67	4.754	.761	88.13	91.21	76	102
semi - urban	11	89.18	2.136	.644	87.75	90.62	85	92
Total	98	90.03	4.858	.491	89.06	91.00	76	102

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24.626	2	12.313	.517	.598
Within Groups	2264.282	95	23.835		
Total	2288.908	97			

It can be deduced from the given ANOVA table the perceptions of students with regard to presentation skills. Since the table value of F (2.61) is > Calculated F - value (.517) which is significant at 0.05 level 'No significant

relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing one's voice, body language, audience and material with special reference to locality. Therefore, the null hypothesis is **accepted**

Table 4: Showing the batch of the sample

Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
120 Batch	28	90.61	5.195	.982	88.59	92.62	76	102
121 Batch	32	91.22	4.492	.794	89.60	92.84	82	102
122 Batch	38	88.61	4.659	.756	87.07	90.14	76	100
Total	98	90.03	4.858	.491	89.06	91.00	76	102

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	131.682	2	65.841	2.900	.060
Within Groups	2157.226	95	22.708		
Total	2288.908	97			

It can be deduced from the given ANOVA table the perceptions of students with regard to presentation skills. Since the table value of F (2.61) is > Calculated F - value (2.900) which is significant at 0.05 level . 'No significant relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing one's voice, body language, audience and material with special reference to batch/course. . Therefore, the null hypothesis is **accepted**.

6. Principal Findings of the Study

- 1) More than half of the sample (55.0%) were female students, a good majority of the sample (49.0%) were from rural and a good number of respondents (38.3%) were from 122 batch.
- 2) It was revealed from the study that no significant relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing one's voice, body language, audience and material with special reference to gender.
- 3) The study demonstrated that 'No significant relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing one's voice, body language, audience and material with special reference to locality.
- 4) The current study illustrated that no significant relationship exists between presentation skills of students and managing one's voice, body language, audience and material with special reference to batch or course.

7. Implications of the Study

This investigation offers both theoretical and pedagogical implications for students, teachers as well as for the implementing authorities.

This research pointed out that *students* thought presentations were inefficient due to non - integration of technology judiciously and not knowing the audience fully, proper use of body language and voice modulation. These can overcome

through thorough practice and rehearsal. They can introduce the subject with fascinating stories or case studies.

A significant implication the study illustrates that *teachers* need to set a conducive situation to lower students' anxiety in presentations. Furthermore, considering a crucial role of teachers in improving presentation skills, this study also discovered that teacher has to show learners videos of good speakers for enhancing their presentation skills and lecturer has to give learners freedom to choose their own topics that lower their anxiety.

The findings of this phenomenological study also provide evidence that can inform educational policies, *curriculum modifications*, and instructional practices to hone the presentation skills of students.

8. Conclusion

Presentations communicate the message in an interesting, succinct and clear way. Presentations are important to a company or an organization because good presentations improve communications within the organization/ company, which improves morale and reduces stress. Presenting is a skill that requires a great deal of preparation and practice. This study, as stated earlier, focused on managing one's voice, body language, audience and material. Young researchers interested in this topic can address delimitations of this study in the future to enhance rigor, validity, and generalizability, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the problem under investigation.

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