

Gender Capability of Elected Officials and Civic Leaders in Public Speaking

CECILIA D. ARONG

arongcecilia@yahoo.com

Southern Leyte State University

Southern Leyte State University

Sogod, Southern Leyte

Abstract - In Southern Leyte, thousands of elected/appointed male/female village officials and civic leaders give public speeches. Very few of them receive training in public speaking. Culture claims that male officials are better than female in decision making, running the village, leading an organization, settling disputes and giving public speeches as the father's decision in the family is final and his word is firm and executory. This study compares the speaking abilities of male and female village officials/civic leaders as to: manner of presenting speeches, self-confidence; thought organization, voice quality, eloquence, and audience impact. Officials/leaders of Sogod villages are trained in Public Speaking for ten consecutive Sundays at Mahayahay Public Stage. After every lecture, participants' speeches followed. During the culmination, every participant presented a public speech composed of opening remarks, welcome address, inspirational talk, closing remarks, introduction of guest speaker, interviewing, panel discussion, broadcast speech, necrological services and campaign speeches rated by three judges using pre-established criteria. Mann-Whitney Test, non-parametric test, used ordinal data to compare the male and female abilities in public speaking. Significant results showed that male and female officials have comparable manners of presenting speeches, self-confidence, thought organization, eloquence, voice quality, and audience impact.

Keywords - public speaking, village official, inspirational talk

INTRODUCTION

Thousands of village officials and civic leaders in Southern Leyte are involved in giving public speeches in line with their duties as officials and as leaders. However, most of these officials and leaders, whether elected or appointed, whether male or female, whether civic or religious, have not received formal trainings in public speaking. Oftentimes, village officials and leaders are invited as guest speakers or are requested to give various kinds of speeches which oftentimes are out of the topic or very far from the given task.

Culture claims that male speakers are better than female speakers; that male officials are better than female officials in decision making, running the village, leading an organization, settling disputes and giving public speeches as the father has the final decision in the family and the father's word is firm and executory.

In the present time, male and female officials possess equal voting power; hence, countless women emerge as elected and appointed government officials. Further, numerous women hold key positions in public and public firms. Therefore, the public speaking ability of female public officials and civic leaders must be developed in order to equal the public speaking ability of the male (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PDAC).

Arong (2007) notes that public speaking is very important to everyone especially to community leaders since they are looked up to as leaders with undisputed abilities in running the public affairs of the village. In the course of their being officials or leaders, sometimes they are forced or oftentimes requested to officially welcome guests and to give opening remarks, deliver welcome address, inspirational talks, introduce guest speakers, render closing remarks, keynote address during convocation, coronation, graduation, closing/promotional programs, caucus or formal or informal gatherings. Most of the times, they preside meetings or settle grievances.

Ehninger, et. al. (1982) explains that public communications have different general purposes. First is to entertain an audience, to help celebrate an event, to apologize for or justify some behavior, to pay

tribute to a distinguished individual, but these purposes can be basically informative or persuasive. The entertainer conveys information or views about the world while giving pleasure to others: the celebrant orients listeners to the significance of the event, the apologist tries to make his or her behavior more understandable and acceptable; and eulogists highlight in an informative and appreciative manner the key achievements of the person being praised.

Second is to inform. Its objective is to help the audience understand an idea or comprehend a concept or a process. To communicate an informative message successfully, a person relates his ideas to existing knowledge of the audience; organizes them so they are easy to follow and remember and presents enough concrete examples and specific data to raise understanding of the persons addressed.

Third is to persuade or to actuate. Its purpose is to influence listener beliefs or actions. A speaker must seek to influence the beliefs and attitudes of his listeners. Promoters and public relations experts attempt to create in the superiority of certain products, personages or institutions, lawyers seek to convince juries; members of the clergy exhort their congregations to lead nobler lives; politicians debate, campaign issues and strive to influence voters. The distinguishing feature of an actuating speech is that instead of stopping an attitude, he asks his listeners to demonstrate his feelings by behaving or acting in a specified way (Tanglao & Tan, 1976).

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to: improve the public speaking abilities of male and female public officials and civic leaders of the villages; compare the public speaking abilities of village officials and leaders.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Four approvals were sought before this study on public speaking was conducted, namely: 1) proposal of said training from the office of the Research, Development and Extension through the REREC; 2) office of the SLSU President; 3) Municipal Mayor to conduct such training in the villages; and 4) the five village captains.

This training for ten (10) consecutive Sundays was conducted at the Village Mahayahay Public Stage of Mahayahay, Sogod, Southern Leyte and was composed of lecture by the resource speaker and workshop of the participants. After every lecture session, a presentation of speeches of participants was done. There were 38 participants: 19 female and 19 male village officials and civic leaders of village Salvacion, Mahayahay, Maria Plana and Maac and other religious leaders of the villages.

The lecture topics were: 1). Principle and Practices of Speechmaking; Kinds of Communication 2). Basic Elements of Speechmaking; Factors Affecting Speaker's Speech Skills/Competence Needed for Successful Speechmaking; Methods of Presenting Speech; Essential Steps in Speech Preparation 3). Purposes of Speech making; Organizing Speeches 4). Opening Remarks, Welcome Address, Inspirational Talk, Closing Remarks, Introducing a Guest Speaker; Speeches in Necrological Services, Emceeing, Interviewing, Broadcast Speech 5). Election Campaign Speeches; Candidate Forum 6). Conducting/ Presiding Meetings Using Parliamentary Procedures

A culmination program was presented at the end of the training where every participant presented a public speech graded by a group of three judges as to: manner of presenting speeches, self-confidence, thought organization, eloquence, and voice quality and audience impact. The public speeches composed of opening remarks, welcome address, inspirational talk, closing remarks, introducing guest speaker, interviewing, panel discussion, broadcast speech, necrological services and campaign speeches during a candidates' forum.

The judges filled- in the rater's form as to the manner of presenting speeches such as: extemporaneous, manuscript method, impromptu, memorized or a combination of two or three methods. Self-confidence of the speakers was rated as high self-confidence, average self-confidence, and lacking self-confidence. Thought organization of the speakers was rated as outstanding, very good, good, fair and poor. Eloquence in delivering speeches was rated as very eloquent, eloquent and fairly eloquent. Voice quality was rated as very loud and very clear, very loud but not clear, loud and clear, loud but not clear, and not loud nor clear. Audience impact was rated as very good, good, fair and poor.

The Mann-Whitney Test which is a non-parametric test was used. Ordinal data were used in comparing the male and female abilities in

public speaking.

Twenty participants were requested to fill-in the evaluation forms to assess the training's resources persons, instructional materials used, accommodation, snacks and knowledge gained by the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparison of Male and Female Officials/Leaders' Public Speaking Abilities

The male and female public officials and civic leaders were given chances to deliver public speeches during the ten sessions of the training. The abilities developed in public speaking were on the manner of presenting speeches, self-confidence, thought organization, eloquence, voice quality and audience impact.

Manner of Presenting Speeches

The manner of presenting speeches was extemporaneous, manuscript method, impromptu, memorized, or a combination of two or three methods. Table 1 shows that the mean rank of the 19 male speakers was 19.47 and the sum of ranks was 371.00. In testing the comparison of the manner of presenting speeches at the 0.01 and at the 0.05 level of significance, the result was not significant. This means that male and female officials have comparable manner of presenting speeches. There is no significant difference between male and female village officials and civic leaders as to the manner of presenting speeches.

Self-Confidence

Some speakers spoke with average self-confidence. Tables 1 and 1a show that male and female public officials and civic leaders do not differ significantly in their self-confidence. They have comparable self-confidence.

Thought Organization

Speakers' thought organization was rated as good. The comparability between male and female speakers on thought organization was significant. At .01% or .05% level of significance, .159 was greater than .01 or .05, hence male and female speakers had comparable thought organization. They did not differ in their thought organization.

Eloquence

Speakers' delivery of speeches was rated eloquent. Table 1 and 1a depict that male and female public officials/civic leaders have comparable eloquence for they do not differ significantly in this aspect.

Voice Quality

Speakers' voice quality was rated very loud. The two tables explain that whether male or female, they had similar voice quality.

Audience Impact

The audience impact was rated good. Male and female officials/civic leaders do not differ significantly in audience impact.

Table 1. Mean of male and female officials as to manner of presenting speeches, self-confidence, thought organization, eloquence, voice quality and audience impact.

SEX		N	Means
MANNER	Male	19	19.47
	Female	19	19.53
	Total	38	
SELF CONFIDENCE	Male	19	19.13
	Female	19	19.87
	Total	38	

THOUGHT ORG.	Male	19	21.97
	Female	19	17.03
	Total		
ELOQUENCE	Male	19	19.50
	Female	19	19.50
	Total	38	
VOICE QUALITY	Male	19	21.03
	Female	19	17.97
	Total	38	
AUDIENCE IMPACT	Male	19	21.74
	Female	19	17.26
	Total	38	

Table 1a. Mann-Whitney Test of the significance of comparison

	Manner	Self-Confidence	Thought Organization	Eloquence	Voice Quality	Audience Impact
Mann-Whitney U	180.000	173.500	133.500	180.500	151.500	138.000
Asymp. Sig. (.01%)	.988	.821	.159	1.000	.368	.192

CONCLUSION

The male and female public officials and civic leaders were comparable in their manner of presenting speeches, self-confidence, thought organization, eloquence, voice quality and audience impact. There is no gender differentiation in public speaking abilities.

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