

Public Speaking Anxiety - A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis

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Abstract

Public speaking can be a fear-inducing and anxiety-provoking experience for individuals, potentially resulting in poor performance and missed educational, social, and professional opportunities. To provide applied practitioners with effective methodologies for the reduction of public speaking anxiety (PSA), this paper aims to systematically review and meta-analyse theoretically driven interventions related to reducing PSA. Following the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, a systematic review and meta-analysis examined articles from 1st January 2000 to 1st June 2023. Of the 1,293 articles identified, 26 studies with 2,253 participants met the inclusion criteria. Research was of a moderate to high methodological standard, with interventions varying in type, duration, and focus (e.g., symptom vs. source). The overall effect of psychological interventions for PSA across 42 interventions was $g = 1.17$ (95% CI = 0.88-1.45), with high heterogeneity. While this review provides support for the efficacy of psychological interventions in reducing anxiety related to public speaking, rigorous research is warranted to examine long-term efficacy, real-world implications, self-efficacy development, and individual differences in treatment assignment.

Keywords: public speaking anxiety, fear of public speaking, communication apprehension, presenting, systematic review