



Public speaking training for empowering Muslim women: an overview from Teratai Village, addressing speaking anxiety and building confidence

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ABSTRACT

The low level of participation of Muslim women in community and development activities has prompted the Teratai Village Government to maximize the potential of women by organizing public speaking training. The government claims this training is crucial because many women are unwilling to participate in public sector affairs due to nervousness and a lack of confidence when speaking in front of a large audience. This research examined two aspects: the urgency of public speaking to empower Muslim women in Teratai Village and ways to overcome nervousness and lack of confidence during public speaking. The research method used was qualitative research. The findings of this study confirm the following three points: First, public speaking skills are indeed an important soft skill, as they are closely related to the contribution of Muslim women to various community activities. Second, the public speaking training organized by the village government is a manifestation of their efforts to empower Muslim women in the area. Third, nervousness and lack of confidence when speaking in front of a large audience can be overcome through practicing speeches, which is one of the components of the public speaking training conducted by the village government.

Keywords: Public speaking; empowering Muslim women; village government

1. INTRODUCTION

The Teratai Village government is committed to maximizing the potential of Muslim women in its area by involving them in various community activities. This commitment is expected to encourage the level of participation of women in Teratai Village, which has been considered very low. In pursuit of this goal, the village

government has organized a unique public speaking training program for Muslim women aimed at helping them overcome anxiety and boost their confidence when they speak in front of large audiences. Additionally, the village government collaborates with various stakeholders to provide platforms and opportunities for women to actively participate in village development and decision-making in the public sector. These measures are expected to provide a tangible boost for Muslim women in Teratai Village to be more active and influential in various aspects of community life and village development.

According to records from the Directorate General of Population and Civil Registration, Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, as of June 30, 2021, the population of Indonesia amounted to 272.23 million people, comprising 137.52 million males and 134.71 million females (Kusnandar, 2021). The potential of women in this country should be effectively managed by empowering them in various development fields. The success of development is closely tied to the active participation of women (Rahmawati, 2020). Neglecting women by excluding them from community activities is equivalent to disregarding half of their potential within society (Hanapi, 2015). The Minister of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency (Minister of PPN/Bappenas) emphasizes that women are valuable assets, potentials, and important investments for this nation, and they can contribute according to their abilities (*Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Pembangunan Manusia dan Kebudayaan*, 2019).

This is in line with the commitment of the Teratai Village government, which continuously strives for women in its area to become active participants in development. According to Sofiani (2013), women's participation in development can be realized when they are placed as actors in the development process. Women's participation in community activities and development will positively impact in improving the area's quality of life and social services. It is also noted that the village government is making continuous efforts to involve the full participation of women in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development activities in the area. The village government is also working towards maximizing women's workgroups to support women in skill development, entrepreneurship, and leadership. Therefore, women in Teratai Village can actively contribute to driving sustainable and inclusive development.

With the spirit of inclusivity and gender equality, Islam elevates women as individuals with a crucial role in building a strong and just society. Islam highly values women and gives them the freedom to choose occupations that are in accordance with their nature. In the view of Islam, women are likened to strong pillars that form the foundation of a nation. Therefore, we must understand that the nation will prosper and thrive when women are provided with proper protection, opportunities, and recognition. As expressed by Solehuddin Wahib (2020), women have rights and responsibilities that are inseparable from their roles in the family, society, and the nation. In this context, we need to appreciate the roles and contributions of women in building an outstanding and dignified generation for the nation.

The significant role of Muslim women in religious and societal life can be realized in various ways. For instance, women knowledgeable in religious matters can propagate their religious knowledge to other women. Similarly, women who excel in specific fields can contribute to empowering society by disseminating the knowledge they possess while adhering to the boundaries set by Islamic law (Widaningsih, 2020). The Teratai Village government strongly desires that Muslim women continue to contribute to empowering the community, including by establishing study circles or religious study groups in the village. According to Widaningsih (2020), the presence of *majelis taklim*, *taman pengajian*, and other preaching activities requires the involvement of Muslim women with religious knowledge and communication skills. In line with this, Suarmini et al. (2018) argue that empowering women is an effort by the government to enhance the quality of women so that they can take on roles in various sectors of national development. According to Masturin (2015), women have equal rights with men in public sectors such as politics, economy, and preaching. Furthermore, Muhsinah Sulaiman (2019) believes that competency development training for women is carried out to optimize their roles in implementing Islamic law.

The public speaking training for women in Teratai Village was initiated to encourage their participation and enhance their quality and competence when engaging in various matters in the public sector. Public speaking training is crucial because many women are reluctant to participate in public sector affairs due to nervousness and need more confidence when speaking in front of a large audience. For example, when asked to deliver speeches, host events, or present questions or ideas at meetings organized by the village government, most women tend to refuse, citing nervousness and a lack of confidence. However, it is noteworthy that the women in Teratai Village, who are usually requested to speak, are those with a bachelor's degree background and are expected to perform well and be confident.

This research aims to delve deeper into two crucial aspects based on the previously revealed field facts. First is the importance of public speaking in empowering Muslim women in Teratai Village. Second, effective strategies to overcome nervousness and lack of confidence when speaking in public. Through a comprehensive exploration of these two aspects, our understanding of the significance of public speaking skills in empowering Muslim women is expected to be enriched. In pursuit of this objective, this research offers valuable insights to strengthen the confidence and abilities of Muslim women to voice their ideas and aspirations confidently and influence positive change.

2. METHODS

This research employs a qualitative method to address the questions arising from the previously outlined phenomena. The two main questions posed are: 1) What is the urgency of public speaking to empower Muslim women in Teratai Village? 2) How can we overcome nervousness and lack of confidence when speaking in public? To answer these questions, data analysis is conducted based on the Manual Data Analysis Procedure (MDPA), which positions the researcher as the main instrument in the analysis process

without using additional tools. The analysis begins with collecting data from various informants, including the first, second, third, and subsequent informants, until reaching a state of saturation or significant information saturation (Bungin, 2020). With this approach, the research aims to provide a deep and detailed understanding of the urgency of public speaking skills in empowering Muslim women, as well as effective strategies to overcome the challenges of nervousness and a lack of confidence when speaking in public.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Importance of Public Speaking for the Empowerment of Muslim Women

The efforts made by the Teratai Village government to empower Muslim women include public speaking training. The government believes that this soft skill is an important asset that Muslim women should possess to contribute to community activities and development in the area actively. This aligns with Prajarto's opinion that public speaking is part of communication skills that can become a valuable asset for individuals in the future (Prajarto, 2010). Furthermore, public speaking is a skill that should be possessed by everyone involved in various sectors of life, such as religion, education, economy, and others (Talalu, 2022).

The idea to organize public speaking training arose because the government realized that the majority of Muslim women in Teratai Village are reluctant to actively engage in public sector affairs such as politics and preaching. The main reasons behind this are nervousness and a lack of self-confidence. Interestingly, these reasons are even expressed by women with bachelor's degrees, which, according to the government, should equip them with competent public speaking skills. Therefore, the government feels the need to address this issue by organizing public speaking training to provide the necessary understanding and skills to the Muslim women of Teratai Village, enabling them to overcome their nervousness and enhance their confidence in participating in the public sector.

The above information we have discussed refers to the results of interviews conducted with several research informants. The interview excerpts can be seen in the following table:

Informants	Feedbacks
11.KD:	"Indeed, public speaking is a crucial soft skill, especially when addressing large audiences. The general population, particularly Muslim women, should possess this skill. Ensuring their active participation in community activities and supporting the government's initiatives."
12.SD	"It is crucial, especially when activities require women's participation, speaking up, and expressing their opinions. Even in religious study groups, they need to speak up. Public speaking skills are a must. As a village official, people do not care, but I have to deliver speeches whenever there are mourning events or other occasions."

I1.KD:	"Many educated women in our village do not want to step forward and take the stage. That is why we initiated the public speaking training program."
I2.SD	"We designed the public speaking training program to encourage women to participate actively. Even in religious study gatherings and preaching sessions, it is primarily the mothers who attend. However, there are still some who are reluctant to speak up, even though they have completed their studies. This issue is even more prevalent among those who did not pursue higher education. That is why we established this training program. The government seeks positive change and aims for the betterment of the women in Teratai Village."
I8.P5	"As a bachelor's degree graduate, I have never had the opportunity to speak in front of a large audience again. I am truly grateful that the government has organized this training program. It allows me to sharpen my public speaking skills once more."

Based on the interview results in the provided table, it can be concluded that public speaking is a crucial skill, especially for Muslim women in Teratai Village. Despite many of them having higher education backgrounds, there is still a reluctance to speak in public. In response, the village government has initiated a public speaking training program to encourage active participation among women in various activities. The program aims to address their nervousness and lack of confidence while providing the necessary understanding and skills for Muslim women in the village to contribute actively to the public sector.

We believe that this government initiative holds significant relevance to their efforts in educating Muslim women in the area about the fundamentals of public communication. Through this knowledge, these women will gain an understanding of communication strategies and the mental fortitude required to become influential speakers. In a previous study conducted by Anggraini et al. (2021), their findings indicated that mastering the basics of public communication and communication strategies and mental preparation are key elements for individuals to speak in front of a large audience. Therefore, through this public speaking training program, the government aims to provide essential tools for Muslim women in Teratai Village to overcome these barriers and assist them in developing strong and confident communication skills.

The participation of women in the training organized by the village government indicates their involvement in the development process. In line with this, *Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Pembangunan Manusia dan Kebudayaan* (2019) has revealed that women have demonstrated their participation in the development process. Therefore, the government and all relevant stakeholders can continue to provide ample opportunities for women to contribute optimally to the development process. The contribution of women as participants in activities like this showcases their enthusiasm

and positive response to the government's initiatives to encourage women's participation.

According to Indiworo (2016), women play a crucial role in various sectors, leveraging their inherent strengths such as diligence, meticulousness, perseverance, patience, honesty, resilience, a high sense of responsibility, strong determination, high spirits, and discipline. Muslim women also possess these strengths in Teratai Village. They serve as complementary factors to the government's efforts to empower women through public speaking training. With these strengths, the village government is optimistic that the training will provide a platform for women to hone their public speaking skills, facilitating their ability to express ideas when engaging in various public sector matters.



Figure 1. Public speaking at the Teratai Village Office Hall

Figure 1 illustrates the atmosphere of a public speaking training held at the Teratai Village Office Hall. The training was attended by 30 women from three hamlets (Podutuma et al.) in Teratai Village. The activity spanned three days and involved the Department of Community Empowerment and Village Affairs of Gorontalo Regency and the Department of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Gorontalo Regency. The training featured academic and professional speakers who provided insights on various topics, including presentation preparation and organization, hosting tips and online public speaking.

The involvement of various stakeholders in implementing this training program demonstrates a collaborative effort that benefits the community, particularly Muslim women in Teratai Village. Collaboration with different parties is necessary to successfully implement government programs (Butolo et al., 2014). The collaboration between the Teratai Village, the Government, the Department of Community Empowerment and Village Affairs of Gorontalo Regency, the Department of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Gorontalo Regency, as well as academic and professional speakers, is a tangible manifestation of the village government's efforts to maximize available resources for the successful execution of this program. This government initiative aligns

with one of the fundamental supporting principles of collaboration proposed by Linden, which states that collaboration is an effort to find solutions (Isakh et al., 2020).



Figure 2. Public speaking simulation by the Teratai Village Government

Figure 2 illustrates a simulation conducted during the public speaking training organized by the Teratai Village Government. In this simulation, participants were allowed to deliver a speech using the material structure they learned during the training. The objective of this simulation was to provide participants with hands-on experience in applying the knowledge they acquired and reinforce their understanding of the material. Through this simulation, participants were expected to better understand the concepts taught and feel more confident in applying them once the training concluded.

Mastering public speaking skills effectively cannot be achieved through three-day training alone. The training serves as a starting point for acquiring strong public speaking skills. However, what happens after the training is equally crucial. If participants do not consistently apply the learned material, the training may not yield the desired results. Therefore, it is essential for Muslim women in Teratai Village to actively engage in various public sector activities after the training, enabling them to practice and strengthen the knowledge they have acquired continuously. By doing so, they can sustainably develop their public speaking skills and enhance their confidence in communicating in front of the public. Muslim women in Teratai Village have the opportunity to continuously practice their public speaking skills through active participation in regular religious study groups and gatherings. They can contribute as hosts, ask questions, express opinions, and engage in various roles in this context. Additionally, involving fellow women participants in these study groups can be part of the training process. Through casual conversations, they can assist each other in formulating words to be spoken in public. This helps improve verbal skills and enables individuals to feel more relaxed and comfortable communicating with others, including unfamiliar faces (Zulfikar, 2021). Such practice sessions can be implemented in various settings, not limited to routine activities organized by the community or the Teratai Village Government. By actively engaging in these practice sessions, Muslim women in Teratai Village will have broader opportunities to develop their public speaking skills and enhance their comfort and confidence in communicating.

Overcoming Nervousness and Lack of Confidence

The lack of self-confidence is one of the challenges Indonesian women face in fulfilling their roles as citizens and contributing to the nation's development (*Dewan Pertimbangan Presiden*, 2021). In this context, Muslim women in Teratai Village face similar challenges, especially in situations that require them to speak in front of a large audience. Therefore, public speaking skills are highly important, particularly in the modern era characterized by technological advancements that influence the lives of society, including Muslim women (Aisy et al., 2021).

The significance of public speaking skills for Muslim women in Teratai Village goes beyond the demands of an increasingly complex life; it also allows them to overcome self-doubt that may hinder their participation in the public sector. By acquiring strong public speaking skills, Muslim women in Teratai Village can become influential voices, make tangible contributions, and inspire societal change. Therefore, the government's initiative to organize public speaking training in Teratai Village is a fitting step in assisting Muslim women in overcoming these challenges and promoting their active participation in the nation's development.

Many people strive to avoid situations that require them to speak in front of a large audience due to a lack of self-confidence. This self-doubt often leads to nervousness and a blank mind, resulting in a negative experience and providing justification for avoiding future public speaking engagements (Aisy et al., 2021). Similarly, Muslim women in Teratai Village face the same challenges where nervousness and lack of confidence serve as their primary reasons for refusing to participate in government-organized activities that necessitate speaking in front of a large audience. Such conditions must be addressed. The public speaking training organized by the Teratai Village Government manifests their concern for addressing this issue. In doing so, the government not only assists in providing solutions to the challenges Muslim women face in public speaking but also helps them improve their quality of life (Aisy et al., 2021).

The nervousness and lack of confidence experienced by Muslim women in Teratai Village can be overcome through speech training. According to Saksomo, delivering speeches can cultivate self-confidence when speaking before a large audience. Through speeches, individuals can convey their ideas, thoughts, and concepts to others. Keraf states that the ability to deliver speeches is increasingly crucial in the present and future. Therefore, in education, public speaking skills receive significant attention as they are required in various societal activities, such as organizational events, celebrations of important occasions, and more (Manan, 2020).

The following table is a quotation from an interview with the research informant, summarizing various strategies taught during the public speaking training organized by the government of Teratai Village:

Informants	Feedbacks
I4.P1	"My friends and I were given public speaking lessons. We performed several times. The instructor said that by performing frequently and practicing often, we would become accustomed to speaking in front of many people. Delivering a speech would become more relaxed. I agree with what the instructor said, and I felt the improvement myself."
I6.P3	"We wrote and composed the speeches to be delivered. After that, we were asked to come forward and deliver the prepared speeches. By the fifth time, I felt accustomed to it."
I7.P4	"Practice is crucial. It is through practice that we become capable. Our performances were recorded using the camera feature on our mobile phones. We studied those videos to enhance our future performances."
I9.P6	"Indeed, practice is necessary. We need to improve our speaking skills for various events. I am committed to continuing to practice, not just during the training activities organized by the village government. During my practice sessions, I had a friend record my performances. Based on the recordings, I was able to identify areas for improvement in terms of my voice and body movements."

Referring to the interview excerpt above, the public speaking training participants shared their experiences participating in the public speaking lessons. In the training, they were allowed to perform multiple times. The instructor emphasized that with frequent appearances and diligent practice, they would become accustomed to speaking in front of a large audience and delivering speeches more comfortably. The participants agreed with the instructor's opinion and felt an improvement in their abilities.

Furthermore, they also learned how to write and structure speeches to be delivered. During the practice sessions, they were asked to come forward and deliver the prepared speeches. After doing so several times, they felt more accustomed and comfortable. The participants recognized the importance of practice in developing speaking skills. They recorded their performances using the camera feature on their phones and studied the recordings to enhance their future performances. In addition to the training activities organized by the village government, they were committed to continuous practice at various events. One participant even recorded their performance and used the recording to identify areas for improvement in their voice and body movements. From these quotations, it can be concluded that consistent practice and self-directed learning strategies are crucial in developing public speaking skills. The participants felt supported and observed significant improvement in their abilities after intensive training and practice.

The public speaking training program initiated by the village government of Teratai involves preparing and delivering speeches as a crucial aspect. This research reveals that practicing speech writing and delivery can help enhance the confidence of Muslim women in Teratai Village. Through the experience of delivering speeches repeatedly, participants feel more confident to perform in front of the public again. These findings

align with previous observations that highlight the effectiveness of speech training in boosting self-confidence, as demonstrated in studies involving elementary school children by Lili et al. (2022), teenagers as mentioned by Kusnadi et al. (2021), and mothers who are members of the PKK (Family Welfare Empowerment), as observed by Cahyaningtyas & Samsiyah (2022). Thus, speech training emerges as a widely applicable and beneficial strategy for enhancing self-confidence in public speaking, not only for Muslim women in Teratai Village but also for various age groups and backgrounds.

During the training sessions, Muslim women from Desa Teratai are trained to optimize their voice and gestures by utilizing the video recording feature on their mobile phones. Lately, the utilization of video recording has been widely applied in various public speaking training activities (Talalu, 2022). The recorded video results can serve as practical guidance for the participants to self-identify areas in their performances that need improvement. The utilization of video recording is also believed to be a solution for individuals who experience nervousness and a lack of confidence during public speaking (Templeton, 2010).

Practice plays a key role in overcoming nervousness and a lack of confidence. The experiences of Muslim women in Desa Teratai indicate that after delivering speeches in their fourth, fifth, and subsequent appearances, they feel more confident than in their initial attempts. The level of practice indeed influences one's fear of public speaking. Research conducted by Marani (2021) reveals that lack of practice causes anxiety when speaking in front of a large audience.

Therefore, Muslim women in Desa Teratai can overcome their fear of speaking in front of a large audience by increasing the frequency of practice. This practice is not limited to training sessions alone but can be incorporated into various opportunities. They can acquire the necessary skills and refine their public speaking abilities by continuously practicing.

Furthermore, practicing in real-life situations can also help boost self-confidence. For instance, they can try speaking in front of friends, family members, or members of discussion groups. By expanding the scope of practice, Muslim women in Teratai Village can become accustomed to speaking in front of unfamiliar individuals. This helps reduce nervousness and strengthens their overall self-confidence.

CONCLUSION

The government believes that public speaking skills are of great importance for Muslim women in Teratai Village because these skills are closely related to the level of women's participation in community activities, which has been low so far. The public speaking training organized by the village government is a manifestation of their concern and role in maximizing the potential of women, who can continue to contribute as agents of development. The nervousness and lack of confidence that have hindered women from participating in community activities can be overcome through training,

including speech training, which is one of the elements of the public speaking training organized by the village government.

Public speaking training will not be effective if it is conducted only once. Ideally, after the training, Muslim women participants should receive regular and ongoing mentoring. This follow-up is expected to enhance public speaking skills and, at the same time, create new tutors who can assist other women in improving this important soft skill. If this pattern is implemented continuously, it will be highly effective in realizing the government's hope that Muslim women can actively contribute to community activities and development in the region.

In addition to confirming the importance of public speaking for Muslim women in Teratai Village, this research is also limited to describing the role of training in overcoming the nervousness and lack of confidence experienced by Muslim women in facing public speaking. Specific training methods for addressing nervousness and lack of confidence have not been discussed. Therefore, the limitations of this research can be filled by further research findings related to this topic.

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