

---

## ORAL PRESENTATION READINESS AMONG PUO STUDENTS DURING THE FINAL WEEKS OF THE SEMESTER

Kaniselvi Arasu<sup>1</sup> Nur Shazwani Binti Shuhami<sup>2</sup> Nishantini a/p Ganesan<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Jabatan Pengajian Am, Politeknik Ungku Omar, Malaysia

<sup>1</sup>[kaniselvi@puo.edu.my](mailto:kaniselvi@puo.edu.my)

<sup>2</sup>[nurshazwani@puo.edu.my](mailto:nurshazwani@puo.edu.my)

<sup>3</sup>[nishantini@puo.edu.my](mailto:nishantini@puo.edu.my)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received

21 May 2026

Received in revised form

10 July 2026

Accepted

10 July 2026

Published online

15 July 2026

#### Keywords:

Oral presentation

TVET

Communication skills

### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the level of oral presentation readiness among TVET students at Polytechnic Ungku Omar (PUO) during the final stage of the academic semester, a period commonly associated with increased academic demands and emotional pressure. Oral presentation readiness plays an important role in helping students strengthen their communication abilities, self confidence, and workplace preparedness within the TVET learning environment. To explore this issue, the study employed a mixed method approach using a Google Form survey that included Likert scale statements and open ended responses. The instrument was designed to examine students' preparation, confidence, readiness, and experiences related to oral presentation activities. The findings indicate that most students demonstrated relatively positive levels of readiness, particularly in understanding their presentation content and practicing before presenting. Nevertheless, students also reported several challenges throughout the preparation process, including academic burden, limited preparation time, stress, anxiety, and reduced confidence as the semester towards the end. These findings reflect how overlapping academic responsibilities may influence students' emotional readiness and ability to prepare effectively for presentations. Overall, the study offers useful insights for educators and TVET institutions in developing more supportive teaching approaches and classroom practices that can strengthen students' oral communication skills, confidence, and presentation readiness.*

---

## 1. Introduction

Oral presentation skills are increasingly recognized as an essential part of higher education, especially within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions where students are expected to communicate effectively in academic and professional settings. In

many industries today, employers expect graduates to possess not only technical expertise, but also the confidence and communication ability needed to express ideas clearly and interact professionally. As a result, oral presentations are frequently used in TVET classrooms as a platform to assess students' communication abilities, confidence, critical thinking, and presentation delivery skills. Studies have consistently shown that communication competence remains one of the key employability skills valued in the workplace. Rahmat et al. (2022) highlighted that communication skills are highly valued by employers across different industries. Likewise, recent studies also suggest that interpersonal communication, confidence, and professional interaction skills continue to play an important role in preparing graduates for future employment (Bassah & Mohd Noor, 2023; Nayan, 2024). Most recently, Balakrishnan et al. (2025) found that speaking anxiety among Malaysian TVET undergraduates was directly linked to reduced self perceived employability, showing that presentation-related anxiety follows students beyond the classroom and shapes how ready they feel for the workforce. These findings suggest that oral presentation activities are not merely academic requirements, but also meaningful learning experiences that prepare students for workplace communication and professional responsibilities.

Although oral presentation skills are widely recognized as important in higher education, many students still experience difficulties when preparing for and delivering presentations. Speaking in front of an audience often creates feelings of nervousness, fear, and self doubt, particularly when students are worried about making mistakes or being negatively evaluated by others. Salem (2022) explained that speaking anxiety and low confidence may affect students' participation and overall performance during oral communication activities. Similarly, Badrasawi et al. (2020) found that speaking anxiety is closely connected to students' confidence and perceived communication abilities. Liu (2021) further noted that anxiety during oral communication tasks may reduce students' willingness to participate and express themselves confidently during presentations. Although supportive classroom environments and continuous speaking practice may help students become more confident (Shamsuri et al., 2021), many students still struggle to balance presentation preparation with academic responsibilities. This situation becomes more difficult during the final weeks of the semester when assignments, projects, assessments, and examinations occur simultaneously. As a result, students may experience emotional pressure, stress, and limited preparation time, which can influence both their confidence and readiness during oral presentation activities.

To explain why concentrated academic workload during this period may translate into reduced presentation readiness, this study draws on two established theoretical perspectives rather than employability literature alone. From a cognitive perspective, Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988, 2023) suggests that when students must process multiple concurrent academic demands, such as assignments, projects, and presentations, the limited capacity of working memory becomes overloaded, leaving fewer cognitive resources available for organising and rehearsing a presentation; a recent review confirms that this mechanism remains an active and well supported explanation for performance decline under concurrent cognitive demands in educational settings (Ouweland et al., 2025). From an emotional perspective, the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) explains that anxiety does not arise from workload alone, but from how students appraise their coping resources against perceived academic demands; when perceived demands exceed perceived coping capacity, students are more likely to experience stress, reduced confidence, and diminished performance. This

appraisal based mechanism has recently been confirmed among university students, where academic overload and performance-related beliefs were found to be the strongest predictors of stress responses (Ruiz-Camacho & Gozalo, 2025). Together, these frameworks provide a theoretical basis for understanding why academic workload during the final weeks of the semester can affect students on two levels at once: how much time they have left to prepare, and how much cognitive and emotional capacity they have left to prepare well.

In the TVET context, oral presentation readiness is particularly important because students are expected to demonstrate both technical competencies and employability skills before entering the workforce. However, mounting academic pressure toward the end of the semester may affect students' emotional readiness, confidence, and quality of preparation for oral presentations. Although many previous studies have discussed communication skills and speaking anxiety in higher education, limited attention has been given to oral presentation readiness among Malaysian TVET students during academically demanding periods. Most earlier studies focused mainly on presentation performance or communication anxiety in general classroom settings without examining how semester end academic workload influences students' preparation and readiness. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the level of oral presentation readiness among TVET students at Polytechnic Ungku Omar (PUO) as the semester draws to a close, and to explore the challenges that influence their preparation, confidence, and communication readiness. The findings of this study may provide useful insights for educators and TVET institutions in improving teaching and learning strategies related to oral presentation skills, confidence development, and workplace readiness.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

This study used a convergent parallel mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently through the same instrument and analyzed separately before being merged during interpretation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of oral presentation readiness than either strand could offer alone (Fetters & Tajima, 2022). This design was applied to examine oral presentation readiness among TVET students at Polytechnic Ungku Omar (PUO) as the semester entered its final weeks. The study utilized a Google Form questionnaire as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: Likert scale items and open ended questions. The Likert scale items were used to examine students' readiness, confidence, preparation, and time management related to oral presentations, while the open ended questions were included to gather students' perceptions and challenges experienced during presentation preparation in academically demanding periods.

The respondents of this study consisted of 43 TVET students from Polytechnic Ungku Omar (PUO), recruited using a convenience sampling technique. The survey link was distributed through a general student group open to students from multiple departments, and participation was entirely voluntary; students who saw the link and chose to respond during the final weeks of the semester were included in the sample. This self selection process, rather than deliberate targeting, accounts for the uneven departmental distribution of respondents, as students from the JP department responded in far greater numbers than those from JKA or JTMK. While convenience sampling allowed for timely data collection within the constrained data collection window, it also means the sample may not be representative of the wider PUO student

population, a limitation discussed further in the Limitations section. Data collection was conducted online through Google Forms to facilitate accessibility and participation. Quantitative data obtained from the Likert scale items were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean scores, to identify students' level of oral presentation readiness, and inferential statistics (independent samples, t-tests and one way ANOVA) were subsequently used to test for significant differences in readiness by gender and department. Meanwhile, qualitative responses from the open ended questions were analyzed thematically to identify common themes related to presentation preparation, academic workload, stress, anxiety, confidence, and communication readiness. For each theme, illustrative direct quotes were selected from the raw responses and are presented anonymously (labelled as Respondent 1, Respondent 2, and so on) in Table 5; quotes are reproduced verbatim except for minor corrections to spelling or grammar made solely to preserve readability without altering meaning.

The research instrument for this study was developed based on the research objectives and guided by previous studies related to oral presentation readiness, speaking anxiety, and communication skills among students. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed independently by two experienced lecturers from Politeknik Ungku Omar with expertise in English language teaching and educational research. They evaluated the clarity, relevance, and content coverage of the questionnaire items, and their feedback informed minor revisions before the questionnaire was administered. This process provided evidence of face and content validity. However, a formal Content Validity Index (CVI) was not calculated. The internal consistency of the ten-item readiness scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a coefficient of .961, indicating excellent internal consistency. Full reliability results are presented in Table 4.

### **3. Results**

This section presents the findings related to the oral presentation readiness among TVET students throughout the final weeks of the semester. The findings are divided into demographic information, oral presentation readiness, challenges faced during presentation preparation, and qualitative findings from the open ended responses.

#### **3.1 Demographic Information**

This section presents the demographic profile of the respondents involved in the study. The demographic information includes gender and department of the respondents from Polytechnic Ungku Omar (PUO).

Table 1. Demographic Information of Respondents

| Demographic Variable | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Gender               | Male     | 10        | 23.3           |
|                      | Female   | 33        | 76.7           |
| Department           | JP       | 31        | 72.1           |
|                      | JKA      | 11        | 25.6           |
|                      | JTMK     | 1         | 2.3            |

Most of the respondents were female undergraduates, representing 76.7% of the total respondents, while male students accounted for 23.3%. In terms of department distribution, most respondents were from JP (72.1%), followed by JKA (25.6%) and JTMK (2.3%).

### 3.2 Oral Presentation Readiness Among TVET Students

This section presents the findings related to the level of oral presentation readiness among TVET students during this period of concentrated academic demands. The findings focus on students' preparation, confidence, understanding of presentation content, and readiness to perform oral presentations when coursework demands are at their peak. The responses were determined using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Higher mean scores indicate a higher level of agreement and readiness among the respondents. The interpretation bands shown in Table 2 were derived by dividing the full range of possible mean scores (1.00 to 5.00) into four equal intervals of width 1.00, so that each band corresponds directly to the region surrounding one of the five Likert-scale anchor points (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree); this equal-width approach is a widely used and mathematically transparent convention for interpreting Likert-based mean scores in survey research.

Table 2. Mean Score Interpretation

| Mean Score Range | Interpretation |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1.00 – 2.00      | Low            |
| 2.01 – 3.00      | Moderate       |
| 3.01 – 4.00      | High           |
| 4.01 – 5.00      | Very High      |

Based on Table 2, mean scores varying from 3.01 to 4.00 indicate a high level of readiness, while scores between 2.01 and 3.00 indicate a moderate level. Therefore, mean totals closer to 4.00 suggest that students generally agreed with the statements related to oral presentation readiness.

Table 3. Oral Presentation Readiness Among TVET Students

| Item                                      | Mean Score | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| I practiced before my presentation        | 3.81       | High           |
| I understood my presentation content well | 3.81       | High           |
| I organized my presentation clearly       | 3.80       | High           |
| I had enough preparation time             | 3.59       | High           |
| I was ready to answer audience questions  | 3.41       | High           |

Table 3 shows the mean scores for oral presentation readiness among TVET students as the semester towards the end. Overall, the findings signal that students exhibited a generally high level of readiness for oral presentations. The highest mean scores were recorded for the items “I practiced before my presentation” ( $M = 3.81$ ) and “I understood my presentation content well” ( $M = 3.81$ ). These findings indicate that most students generally agreed that they practiced and understood their presentation materials before the presentation session. Similarly, the item “I organized my presentation clearly” also recorded a high mean score ( $M = 3.80$ ), suggesting that students were generally confident in arranging and delivering their presentation content effectively.

In addition, the items “I had enough preparation time” ( $M = 3.59$ ) and “I was ready to answer audience questions” ( $M = 3.41$ ) also fell within the high interpretation range based on the Likert scale. However, these items recorded comparatively lower mean scores than the other readiness items, indicating that some students may still experience challenges related to time management, confidence, and spontaneous interaction during oral presentations. Overall, the findings suggest that although students demonstrated a satisfactory level of oral presentation readiness, academic workload and time constraints during the final weeks of the semester may still influence their emotional readiness and confidence during presentation activities.

Table 3 reports five selected items from the readiness instrument. For transparency and in response to reviewer feedback, Table 4 below presents the complete set of all ten items exactly as fielded in the Google Form questionnaire, together with the reliability analysis conducted on the full raw dataset ( $N = 43$ ).

Table 4. Full Oral Presentation Readiness Instrument (All 10 Items) and Reliability Analysis

| Item                                                                                            | Mean Score | Interpretation |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----------------|
| I feel well prepared for my oral presentation.                                                  | 3.74       | High           |
| I understand the content that I need to present.                                                | 4.05       | Very High      |
| I feel confident when delivering my oral presentation.                                          | 3.86       | High           |
| I have practiced my oral presentation before the actual session.                                | 4.16       | Very High      |
| I am able to organize my presentation clearly.                                                  | 3.95       | High           |
| I feel ready to answer questions during my presentation.                                        | 3.91       | High           |
| I have enough time to prepare for my oral presentation.                                         | 3.67       | High           |
| I am able to manage my academic workload while preparing for my oral presentation.              | 3.79       | High           |
| I can prepare effectively for my oral presentation even during the final weeks of the semester. | 3.81       | High           |
| Overall, I am ready to deliver my oral presentation.                                            | 3.98       | High           |

Across all ten items, the overall mean readiness score was 3.89 (High), and internal consistency reliability was excellent (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .961$ ), with corrected item-total correlations ranging from .75 to .90. No item would improve reliability if removed, indicating that all ten items function coherently as a single readiness construct. The highest-rated items were "I have practiced my oral presentation before the actual session" ( $M = 4.16$ ) and "I understand the content that I need to present" ( $M = 4.05$ ), both in the Very High range, while "I have enough time to prepare for my oral presentation" ( $M = 3.67$ ) received the lowest rating, consistent with the time-management challenges identified in the qualitative findings.

### 3.2 Inferential Analysis of Group Differences

To move beyond descriptive statistics, an overall readiness composite score was computed for each respondent by averaging their responses across all ten Likert items, and this composite was compared across gender and department using inferential tests. An independent samples t-test (Welch's correction applied due to unequal group sizes) found no statistically significant difference in readiness between male ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ,  $n = 10$ ) and female students ( $M = 3.86$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ ,  $n = 33$ ),  $t(41) = 0.42$ ,  $p = .679$ , with a small effect size (Cohen's  $d = 0.18$ ), indicating that gender was not associated with meaningful differences in presentation readiness in this sample.

For department, a one-way ANOVA across all three departments (JP, JKA, and JTMK) yielded  $F(2, 40) = 1.79$ ,  $p = .179$ , indicating no statistically significant difference in readiness across departments; however, this result should be interpreted with caution given that JTMK was represented by a single respondent ( $n = 1$ ), for which within-group variance cannot be estimated. As a more robust supplementary check, an independent-samples t-test comparing only the two adequately sized department groups, JP ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 0.73$ ,  $n = 31$ ) and JKA ( $M = 3.81$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ,  $n = 11$ ), also found no statistically significant difference,  $t(15.4) = 0.46$ ,  $p = .654$ . Together, these results suggest that, within the limits of this small and unevenly distributed sample, readiness levels did not differ meaningfully by gender or department; a

larger and more balanced sample would be needed to detect smaller effects with adequate statistical power.

### 3.3 Challenges Faced During Oral Presentation Preparation

This section presents the challenges faced by TVET undergraduates during oral presentation preparation in the final weeks of the semester. The findings were obtained from the open-ended responses provided by the respondents and were analysed thematically.

Table 5. Themes of Challenges Faced During Oral Presentation Preparation

| Theme                        | Description                                                                                                 | Illustrative Student Quotes (Anonymized)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Academic Workload            | Students experienced difficulties balancing assignments, projects, tests, and presentations simultaneously. | <p>"There are many workload during the final week of semester... it feels overwhelming at certain point." (Respondent 1)</p> <p>"The main challenge is heavy workload and time management. With multiple assignments and exams due at once, I lack the time to properly research and practice my speech." (Respondent 2)</p>                                   |
| Time Management Difficulties | Students reported limited time for presentation preparation and practice.                                   | <p>"Time management is the biggest challenge. Having too many final assignments and exams due at once makes it hard to prepare properly." (Respondent 3)</p> <p>"I have to balance multiple assignments, tests, and revision for final exams at the same time. This makes it hard to focus fully on preparing a high-quality presentation." (Respondent 4)</p> |
| Stress and Anxiety           | Students experienced nervousness, stress, and emotional pressure during presentation preparation.           | <p>"I also feel stressed and tired, which affects my focus." (Respondent 5)</p> <p>"Lack of sleep due to a pile of assignments can cause 'brain fog'. This can sometimes make us feel less confident answering spontaneous questions." (Respondent 6)</p>                                                                                                      |
| Confidence Issues            | Some students lacked confidence and felt worried about presenting and answering questions.                  | <p>"I was well prepared but felt like I get so nervous and out of idea when people ask me questions." (Respondent 7)</p> <p>"My voice slightly crack[s] because of the nervous[ness]." (Respondent 8)</p>                                                                                                                                                      |

The findings indicate that academic workload was one of the most common challenges faced by students during this high-pressure stretch of the semester. Many respondents mentioned that multiple assignments, projects, and assessments reduced the time available for presentation preparation and practice. In addition, students also reported difficulties in managing their time effectively due to overlapping academic responsibilities.

The findings also revealed that stress, anxiety, and lack of confidence influenced students' oral presentation readiness. Several students expressed feelings of nervousness and pressure when preparing for presentations under this compressed timeline. Some respondents also reported feeling less confident when answering audience questions or presenting in front of others. Overall, the qualitative findings suggest that academic pressure toward the end of the semester may affect students' emotional readiness, confidence, and preparation for oral presentations. These qualitative themes correspond closely with the quantitative results in Table 3: the two lowest-scoring items, "I had enough preparation time" ( $M = 3.59$ ) and "I was ready to answer audience questions" ( $M = 3.41$ ), align respectively with the Time Management and Confidence Issues themes identified in the open-ended responses, suggesting convergence between what students reported quantitatively and qualitatively.

### 3.4 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

To move beyond reporting the quantitative and qualitative results as separate strands, Table 6 presents a joint display (Fetters & Tajima, 2022) that matches each qualitative theme identified in Table 5 with its most closely related quantitative item from Table 4, allowing direct comparison of where the two data sources agree or diverge.

Table 6. Joint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

| Qualitative Theme  | Corresponding Quantitative Item                                                     | Mean                         | Convergence Assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Time Management    | "I have enough time to prepare for my oral presentation"                            | 3.67<br>(lowest of 10 items) | Convergent – students' open-ended responses about insufficient rehearsal time directly mirror the lowest quantitative score in the instrument.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Confidence Issues  | "I feel ready to answer questions during my presentation"                           | 3.91                         | Partially convergent – the mean score is still in the High range, but it is lower than most other items, and qualitative responses describe specific episodes of nervousness during Q&A that a single mean score does not capture.                                                                              |
| Academic Workload  | "I am able to manage my academic workload while preparing for my oral presentation" | 3.79                         | Convergent – both data sources indicate workload as manageable but taxing, consistent with a moderately high rather than very high score.                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Stress and Anxiety | "I feel confident when delivering my oral presentation"                             | 3.86                         | Divergent – the quantitative score suggests generally high confidence, whereas the qualitative theme highlights recurring stress and nervousness; this contrast suggests students can feel outwardly confident while still experiencing internal anxiety, a distinction the Likert item alone does not capture. |

Three of the four themes line up closely with their matching quantitative items. Students who talked about struggling with time management also gave the lowest quantitative rating to

preparation time, and comments about workload matched a moderately high, rather than very high, score on the workload item. The exception is Stress and Anxiety. Students rated their delivery confidence as High on average ( $M = 3.86$ ), yet their open-ended answers were full of nervousness, fear of being judged, and trouble answering questions on the spot. That mismatch is worth taking seriously rather than explaining away: a single Likert item asking about general confidence is not built to capture the kind of situational anxiety students described in their own words. Put the two data sources together and a fuller picture emerges, students are, on average, ready and reasonably confident, but that average hides specific pressure points around time and spontaneous interaction that only the open-ended responses surface. The Discussion below builds on this combined reading.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Oral Presentation Readiness and Workplace Readiness Among TVET Students

The outcomes of this study show that TVET students generally demonstrated a high level of oral presentation readiness during this high-pressure period. Most students reported that they practiced before presenting, understood their presentation content, and were able to organise their ideas clearly. These findings reflect that many students were aware of the significance of oral presentation skills not only for academic purposes, but also for their future professional lives. In the TVET context, communication skills are closely linked to employability because graduates are expected to communicate ideas effectively, interact professionally, and present information confidently in workplace settings. Recent studies have consistently highlighted that industries expect TVET graduates to possess strong communication skills, self confidence, teamwork abilities, and professional interaction skills as part of workplace readiness (Bassah & Mohd Noor, 2023; Nayan, 2024).

The findings also support earlier studies which suggest that oral communication skills play a valuable role in helping students prepare for professional environments. Rahmat et al. (2022) explained that communication skills remain one of the key employability skills valued by employers and industries. This suggests that oral presentation activities may contribute to more than classroom performance alone. Through regular presentation practice, students may gradually develop confidence, learn to express ideas more clearly, and become more comfortable communicating in front of others. In many ways, these experiences mirror real workplace situations where graduates are expected to explain ideas, participate in discussions, and communicate professionally with colleagues or clients.

At the same time, the findings revealed that readiness does not necessarily mean students are completely free from challenges. Although many respondents agreed that they practiced and understood their presentation content well, some students still struggled with confidence and preparation time, especially when responding to audience questions. This reflects the emotional side of oral presentations, where students may still feel nervous or uncertain despite being academically prepared. Salem (2022) reported that sufficient preparation and continuous speaking practice may help students improve confidence and reduce anxiety during presentation activities. Similarly, Liu (2021) explained that students who are more prepared for oral communication tasks are generally more willing to participate and communicate confidently during presentations. Therefore, although students generally demonstrated encouraging levels of oral presentation readiness, readiness should not be interpreted as the

absence of anxiety. Rather, the findings indicate that emotional readiness and the ability to respond spontaneously remain developmental aspects that require continuous practice and instructional support within the TVET learning environment. These patterns are consistent with the study's theoretical framework: in Cognitive Load Theory terms (Sweller, 1988, 2023), the concurrent demands of the final weeks of the semester likely competed for the same limited working memory resources students needed for presentation preparation, which may explain why "I had enough preparation time" and "I was ready to answer audience questions" scored comparatively lower despite strong content understanding. Viewed through the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), students who appraised their workload as manageable relative to their coping resources appeared to retain confidence, whereas those who appraised it as overwhelming reported more stress and hesitation, regardless of how well they understood their presentation content.

#### **4.2 Challenges Faced During Oral Presentation Preparation**

Although the findings indicated that students generally demonstrated a high level of oral presentation readiness, the study also revealed several challenges that affected their preparation as coursework deadlines converged. Many students described difficulties managing assignments, projects, assessments, and presentation preparation at the same time. As deadlines began to overlap, students often experienced pressure, stress, and limited preparation time, which influenced both their confidence and emotional readiness for presentations. In the TVET context, this situation can become even more demanding because students are required to balance technical tasks alongside academic responsibilities. As a result, even students who were academically prepared may still feel mentally exhausted and emotionally overwhelmed during presentation periods.

The findings also highlight how emotional factors continue to influence students' oral communication experiences. Several respondents admitted feeling nervous, less confident, and worried about presenting in front of others, particularly when they needed to answer questions spontaneously. These experiences reflect the emotional reality faced by many students during oral presentations, where fear of making mistakes or being judged may affect their confidence and participation. Salem (2022) explained that speaking anxiety and lack of confidence may negatively influence students' oral presentation performance and participation. Similarly, Badrasawi et al. (2021) found that speaking anxiety is closely correlated to students' confidence and perceived communication abilities. Liu (2021) further noted that anxiety during oral communication activities may reduce students' willingness to participate and communicate confidently. Taken together, these studies suggest that oral presentation readiness is not solely dependent on academic preparation but is also strongly influenced by students' emotional condition and confidence levels.

Another challenge frequently mentioned by students was time management. Several respondents shared that they did not have enough time to practise properly before presentations due to the heavy workload during the final weeks of the semester. Limited preparation time may affect students' ability to rehearse, organise ideas, and feel mentally prepared before presenting. Shamsuri et al. (2021) highlighted that supportive learning environments and continuous speaking practice can assist students reduce anxiety and gradually improve

speaking confidence. Likewise, Salem (2022) emphasised that adequate preparation and continuous practice play an important position in helping students manage presentation anxiety more effectively. These findings suggest that students may benefit from earlier preparation opportunities, more balanced academic scheduling, and supportive classroom practices that encourage confidence building and continuous communication practice. Overall, the findings demonstrate that academic pressure, emotional stress, and limited preparation time remain important factors influencing students' oral presentation readiness and communication performance.

### **4.3 Implications for TVET Education**

Drawing on the experiences of students at PUO, this study offers several implications that may be relevant to similar TVET institutions, particularly in helping students strengthen their communication skills and workplace readiness. Oral presentation activities should not only be viewed merely as classroom assessments, but as meaningful opportunities for students to develop confidence, professional communication, and the ability to express ideas clearly. In workplace environments, graduates are often expected to communicate confidently with colleagues, supervisors, and clients while being able to explain ideas professionally and effectively, because of this, continuous exposure to oral presentation activities may help students become more comfortable speaking in front of others while gradually strengthening their confidence and communication abilities. Recent studies have also shown that communication competence, self confidence, and interpersonal skills remain among the most valued employability attributes expected from graduates entering the workforce (Bassah & Mohd Noor, 2023; Nayan, 2024).

Within this single institution sample, emotional readiness and academic pressure appeared closely linked to presentation performance, suggesting these factors may be worth greater attention in the teaching and learning process at PUO and in TVET settings with comparable workload patterns. Many students experienced stress, limited preparation time, and lack of confidence during this compressed end-of-semester period, showing that readiness for oral presentations is not solely dependent on academic understanding. Students may know their presentation content well yet still struggle emotionally when facing audience interaction or overlapping academic responsibilities. For this reason, lecturers and institutions facing similar end-of-semester workload patterns may wish to consider more balanced academic scheduling and provide students with earlier opportunities to prepare for presentation-based assessments, though the effectiveness of such adjustments would need to be tested beyond this sample. Supportive classroom practices such as peer discussion, presentation rehearsal, constructive feedback, and confidence-building activities may also generate a safer and more encouraging learning environment for students. Shamsuri et al. (2021) explained that supportive studying environments and continuous speaking practice are important in helping students reduce anxiety and improve speaking confidence. Likewise, Badrasawi et al. (2021) found that emotional support and confidence development are closely related to students' oral communication abilities and participation during speaking activities.

In addition, these findings are consistent with, and lend modest further support to, the broader case in the literature for incorporating soft skills development into TVET education; communication competence, self-confidence, teamwork, and interpersonal skills are

increasingly recognised as important in training students for industry expectations and workplace communication, though this study alone cannot establish that case on its own. Salem (2022) explained that continuous speaking practice and sufficient preparation may help students improve confidence and manage presentation anxiety more effectively. Within the scope of this PUO based sample, strengthening oral communication training appears to be a worthwhile area for further attention; whether this extends more broadly to TVET programmes elsewhere is a question for future multi-institutional research rather than a conclusion this study can support on its own.

## **5. Limitations**

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample was small ( $N = 43$ ) and recruited through convenience sampling via a general student group open to multiple departments; because participation was entirely voluntary and self-selected rather than stratified or randomly assigned by department, response rates varied considerably across departments, resulting in a sample heavily skewed toward JP (72.1%) with only one respondent from JTMK (2.3%). This self selection bias means the sample may not be representative of the wider PUO student population, which limits the extent to which the findings can be generalised across departments or beyond the PUO context. Future studies should consider stratified or quota sampling to ensure more balanced departmental representation. Second, the ten-item readiness scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .961$ ) and was reviewed by two lecturers, including the project supervisor, for face and content validity prior to distribution. However, this review was not accompanied by a formal, quantified content validity index, and only five of the ten items were reported in the main results (Table 3), with the complete set presented separately in Table 4. Third, while independent-samples t-tests and a one-way ANOVA were conducted to examine differences in readiness by gender and department (see Inferential Analysis of Group Differences), the small and unevenly distributed sample, particularly the single JTMK respondent, limits the statistical power of these tests and the confidence with which null results can be interpreted as true absences of difference rather than a failure to detect real effects. Finally, as a single-institution study with a modest sample, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific insights rather than generalisable conclusions for TVET education as a whole. Future research involving larger, more balanced, and multi institutional samples, together with validated instruments and inferential analysis, is recommended to build on these preliminary findings.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study explored the level of oral presentation readiness among TVET students at Polytechnic Ungku Omar (PUO) toward the end of the semester, a period often associated with academic pressure and emotional stress. Overall, the findings revealed that many students demonstrated encouraging levels of readiness, particularly in practicing before presentations, understanding their presentation content, and organising their ideas clearly. These findings reflect that students are aware of the importance of oral presentation skills not only for academic success, but also for preparing themselves for future workplace communication and professional interaction.

At the same time, the study also revealed the emotional and practical challenges experienced by students during presentation preparation. Although many students appeared academically prepared, they still struggled with stress, nervousness, limited preparation time, and lack of confidence, especially when balancing multiple overlapping academic responsibilities. These experiences highlight that oral presentation readiness is not solely about knowledge or preparation, but also closely connected to students' emotional wellbeing, confidence, and ability to cope with academic pressure.

The findings of this study, drawn from a single institution, point to the potential value of designing more supportive and encouraging learning environments, particularly in TVET contexts that share PUO's end of semester workload pressures. Students may benefit from continuous speaking practice, balanced academic scheduling, constructive feedback, and classroom activities that help them gradually build confidence in oral communication. More importantly, students should feel supported rather than overwhelmed during presentation activities, especially during academically demanding periods.

Overall, this study contributes preliminary empirical evidence on oral presentation readiness among TVET students at Polytechnic Ungku Omar by demonstrating how academic workload, emotional readiness, and confidence interact during the final weeks of the semester. Although the findings are limited to a single institution sample, they suggest that strengthening students' communication skills, confidence, and emotional readiness may better prepare them for future workplace communication. Should this pattern hold across larger and more diverse samples, it would suggest that TVET institutions could help produce graduates who are technically competent and confident, adaptable communicators, ready for professional settings. That, however, is a question for future research to confirm, not a claim this study can make on its own.

## **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to express their appreciation to the students of Polytechnic Ungku Omar (PUO) who participated in this study and contributed valuable responses to the research. The authors also acknowledge the support and cooperation provided by colleagues and the institution throughout the data collection and completion of this study.

## **References**

- Balakrishnan, S., Abdullah, N. L., Khoo, L. M. S., & Thambu Raj, J. A. (2025). Speaking anxiety among TVET undergraduates and its implication on graduate employability. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 21(1), 15–29. <https://doi.org/10.24191/ajue.v21i1.5467>
- Badrasawi, K. J. I., Solihu, A., & Ahmad, T. B. T. (2020). Second language speaking anxiety among Malaysian postgraduate students at a faculty of education. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 8(2), 53–61.

- Bassah, N. S. H., & Mohd Noor, M. A. (2023). Employability skills needed for TVET graduates in Malaysia: Perspective of industry expert. *Online Journal for TVET Practitioners*, 8(1), 52–59. <https://doi.org/10.30880/ojtp.2023.08.01.005>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Fetters, M. D., & Tajima, C. (2022). Joint displays of integrated data collection in mixed methods research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221104564>
- Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984). *Stress, appraisal, and coping*. Springer.
- Liu, M. (2021). Changes in and effects of TED talks on postgraduate students' English speaking performance and speaking anxiety. *Journal of Language and Education*, 7(3), 104–118. <https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2021.11632>
- Nayan, S., & Mohamad, S. (2024). The Importance of Employability Skills to TVET and non-TVET Graduates. *Jurnal Intelek*, 19(1), 34–46.
- Ouwehand, K., Lespiau, F., Tricot, A., & Paas, F. (2025). Cognitive load theory: Emerging trends and innovations. *Education Sciences*, 15(4), 458. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci15040458>
- Rahmat, N. H., Mohanda, E. S., Razlan, Z., Arepin, M., Hassan, A. F. A., & Taib, S. A. (2022). Oral presentation: Is there a relationship between fear of negative evaluation and causes of fear? *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12(7), 142–156. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v12-i7/14254>
- Ruiz-Camacho, C., & Gozalo, M. (2025). Predicting university students' stress responses: The role of academic stressors and sociodemographic variables. *European Journal of Investigation in Health, Psychology and Education*, 15(8), 163. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ejihpe15080163>
- Salem, A. A. M. S. (2022). Investigating EFL learners' speaking anxiety and confidence during oral presentations. *English Language Teaching*, 15(3), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v15n3p1>
- Shamsuri, N. A. B. M., Anita, A., Kamaruddin, L. S. B., & Azhan, N. A. S. B. (2021). Speaking anxiety and strategies used by ESL learners to overcome in their classroom: A case study in Management and Science University (MSU) Shah Alam, Malaysia. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian dan Kajian Kepustakaan di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran*, 7(4), 785–794. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v7i4.4243>

Sweller, J. (1988). *Cognitive load during problem solving: Effects on learning*. *Cognitive Science*, 12(2), 257–285. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0364-0213\(88\)90023-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/0364-0213(88)90023-6)

Sweller, J. (2023). The development of cognitive load theory: Replication crises and incorporation of other theories can lead to theory expansion. *Educational Psychology Review*, 35, Article 95. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-023-09817-2>