

## Presentation Skills of BSRI Scientists

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### ABSTRACT

The study was undertaken to find out the presentation skills of BSRI scientists. A total of 52 scientists were observed by the researchers during their research paper presentation at annual research programme review workshop, 2007. Item wise communication skills as well as overall presentation skills were measured and presented by using descriptive statistics, correlation matrix and regression analysis. It was found that in all six aspects, more than 80% scientists were belonged to the group of good communication skills. In terms of overall presentation, more than 78% scientists of BSRI was good, 5.77% was Excellent and 15.38% was poor. The range of presentation skills score were 8.00 to 16.00 with a mean and standard deviation of 12.06 and 1.69. Age and experience were negatively correlated with presentation skills. Brighter educational background influenced most (2.72%) on excellent presentation skills. A total of 4.6% variance was explained by four variables such as age, experience, educational qualification and educational background.

**Key words :** Presentation, skill, communication, scientists

### INTRODUCTION

Presentation in any seminar, symposium, workshop or any other public meeting is important. This can be made possible by practicing in the right way. Anyone can acquire this skill very nicely, which can ultimately make him/her becoming a popular communicator and/or presenter. For a good presentation, preparation of topic is important. After preparation of topic a rehearsal is necessary. The speaker must be careful about time limit. Because audience can absorb audio and visual aid if the speaker speaks 150-200 word per minute (Pal, 2001). Using accessories including audio and video is also important. Based on the venue, its size, shape, lighting, location of screen, mike, projector, furniture etc. making a necessary arrangement is also important. Controlling nerves is another important item. All most all the people feel nerves in front of public but some of them can control their nerves to a greater extent. One can control his/her nerve easily by practice. Use of communication technique, body language, sign language, gesture etc. can also express about the speakers mind, sincerity and confidence. Confidence of the speaker can help to improve his/her communication skills which ultimately improves presentation skills (Rogers in Shoemaker, 1971).

Scientific presentation itself a powerful art to convince the audience in favor of speakers argument. Scientists of BSRI present lot of papers with varying presentation skills. But no work has so far been conducted to assess the presentation skills of BSRI scientists. Thus this work was undertaken to assess the presentation skills of BSRI scientists with a view to analyze as well as improving their presentation skills.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted during the presentation of Annual Research Programme Review Workshop 2007. Data was collected by the researcher themselves by using pre-structured questionnaire. Covert procedure to data collection was used, so that the subjects were not be able to no that they were followed-up. During the presentation of Annual Research Programme Review Workshop 2007 all the scientists of BSRI presented their own research, which made possible to study their presentation skills. Thus all the scientists of BSRI were the population of the study.

After collection of data necessary correction, editing and statistical analyses were done by the researchers. Descriptive statistics was used to describe the presentation skills, Pearson's product moment correlation was conducted to find out any relationship between presentation skills and individual characteristic variables and multiple regressions was used to find out the total contributions of variables.

For measurement of variables, age and experiences were measured in terms of year. For educational qualification an increasing score was given for B.Sc. Ag; M.Sc Ag and Ph. D. Similarly, educational background was calculated by putting positive score on first class (3), second class (2) and third class (1) starting from Secondary School Certificate examination to M.Sc. A score of 2 was added if the speaker had a degree of Ph.D. Total presentation skills was measured by a given score of 20 on different criteria.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data were analyzed and categorized as per requirement of the study. As per Descriptive statistics age range of the scientists was from 27 to 55, mean was 41.4 and standard deviation was 8.80. Experiences of the respondents were from 2 to 32 years with a mean and standard deviation was 14.17 and 9.97 respectively. Educational qualifications of the respondents were from B. Sc, Ag (Hons.) to Ph. D. Educational background score were from 7.00 to 14. Similarly Presentation skills of the respondents were from 8.00 to 16.00 with a mean and standard deviation were 12.06 and 1.69 respectively (Table 1).

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics**

| Age                       | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | Std. Deviation |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
|                           | 27.00   | 55.00   | 41.44 | 8.80           |
| Experience                | 2.00    | 32.00   | 14.17 | 9.97           |
| Educational qualification | 1.00    | 3.00    | 2.12  | 0.55           |
| Educational background    | 7.00    | 14.00   | 10.23 | 1.65           |
| Presentation Skills       | 8.00    | 16.00   | 12.06 | 1.69           |

Item wise communication skills were analyzed and presented in Table 2. It is clearly observed from the Table that more than 86% scientists of BSRI can were able to present their topic nicely, 7.69% scientists were excellent and 5.77% scientists were poor. Deliberation included addressing, fluency and speed of presentation.



**Table 2. Item-wise communication skills of BSRI scientists**

| Items                                           | Poor<br>(0-4) | Good<br>(5-7) | Excellent<br>(8-10) |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. Deliberation of the topic                    | 3<br>(5.77)   | 45<br>(86.54) | 4<br>(7.69)         |
| 2. Pronunciation                                | 3<br>(5.77)   | 40<br>(76.92) | 9<br>(17.31)        |
| 3. Use of body language, sign language, gesture | 5<br>(5.77)   | 42<br>(80.76) | 5<br>(9.62)         |
| 4. Use of audio aids                            | 6<br>(11.54)  | 42<br>(80.76) | 4<br>(7.69)         |
| 5. Use of visual aids                           | 1<br>(1.92)   | 41<br>(78.85) | 10<br>(19.23)       |
| 6. Confidence and nerve control abilities       | 7<br>(13.46)  | 37<br>(71.15) | 8<br>(15.39)        |

In terms of pronunciation, 70.92% scientists were good, 17.31% were excellent and 5.77% were poor. Pronunciation was measured in both Bangla or English whatever language they used for presentation.

Similarly, 80.76% scientists were good, 9.62% were excellent and 9.62% were poor in using body language, sign language, gesture or other way of communication. Body language could express the confidence of the speaker about his/her presentation.

About 81% scientists were found good user of audio equipment, 11.54% were poor and 7.69% were excellent user. Use of audio and video equipments should be handled always by the presenter itself. However, more than 19% scientists were found the excellent user of visual aid during their presentation. More than 78% were good user and about 2% were poor user. This is a positive aspect a BSRI scientists. All of them used computer assisted multimedia projector with PowerPoint software and most of the slides of PowerPoint were good and excellent. The proportion, contrast and balance were maintained correctly by most of the presenter. In using visual aid most of the presenter followed the basic principles cited by Andrews (1987) which were as follows.

1. Visual aids should be used to support an idea directly not just provide an effect.
2. The visuals should be as simple and clear as possible.
3. It should not in any way distract the audience from where its attention should be.
4. The speaker should practice visual before presentation.

Controlling nerve is another important aspect of any media person or speaker. Self-confidence about the presentation topic, in depth knowledge and mastery of the subject matter can also help the presenter becoming confident. Among the scientists of BSRI, more than 71% were good, 15.39% were excellent and 13.46% were poor in controlling their nerves during presentation (Table 2).

Overall presentation skills were also measured and presented in Table 3. This was measured differently and divided into 3 categories. It is also found that presentation quality of more than 78% scientists of BSRI were good and that of about 6% scientist were excellent. However the presentation quality of about 15% scientists were poor (score was within 1-10). In terms of overall presentation, the following weak points were marked.

1. Many people forgot to smile at start
2. Many speakers read the slide merely which was monotonous
3. Many speakers had breathing problem
4. Many of them felt nervous. Pal (2001) reported the similar problem and suggested some remedies. Drinking water can help to lubricate the systems.
5. Some of them needed operator(s) for using audio-visual aids.
6. Some of them used mixed language both Bangla and English.
7. Some speakers did not complete sentences or made wrong sentences.
8. Few presenters used too much colour to attract the audience.
9. One speaker was stopped for a long time, one talked too much and another one spoke from memorization.

**Table 3. Overall presentation skills of BSRI scientists**

| Quality of presentation   | Number of scientists | Percentage |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Poor quality (1-10)       | 8                    | 15.38      |
| Good quality (11-15)      | 41                   | 78.85      |
| Excellent quality (16-20) | 3                    | 5.77       |

Correlation matrix of different variables were also done and presented in Table 4. It was found that the relationship between age and service experience, age and educational qualification; educational qualification and experience and educational qualification and educational background were significantly calculated. Another important finding from this table was that age and experience correlated negatively with presentation skills. This means that new generation scientists were better in terms of presentation skills than that of their old colleagues.

**Table 4. Correlation matrix between variable**

| Age                       | Age    | Experience | Educational qualification | Educational background | Presentation Skills |
|---------------------------|--------|------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
|                           | 1.000  |            |                           |                        |                     |
| Experience                | .963** | 1.000      |                           |                        |                     |
| Educational qualification | .481** | .499**     | 1.000                     |                        |                     |
| Educational background    | .087   | .118       | .750**                    | 1.000                  |                     |
| Presentation Skills       | -.059  | -.057      | .120                      | .171                   | 1.000               |

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.



Percent contributions ( $R^2$  value) of different independent variables on presentation skills were also determined by using a regression analysis. The model was presented in Table 5 and percent contributions were presented together with standardized coefficients in Table 6. It was also found that educational background contributed 2.72% on presentation skills. This means those who have brighter results in his/her academic examinations can also perform better in presentation. Three other variables had minimum contributions and total contributions of these four variables were 4.6%. However the value was not significant.

**Table 5. Summary of Regression Model**

| R    | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics |      |                 |
|------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------|-----------------|
|      |          |                   |                            | R Square Change   | F    | Sig. F Change   |
| .193 | .037     | -.046             | 1.7222                     | .037              | .457 | Not significant |

**Table 6. Coefficients of variables**

|                           | Percent contribution (R Square $\times$ 100) | Standardized Coefficients Beta | t     | Sig. |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|------|
| (Constant)                |                                              |                                | 3.029 | .004 |
| Age                       | 0.60                                         | -.023                          | -.043 | .966 |
| Experience                | 0.68                                         | -.093                          | -.172 | .864 |
| Educational qualification | 0.62                                         | .090                           | .323  | .748 |
| Educational background    | 2.72                                         | .116                           | .475  | .637 |

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