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**Florie May S. Gonzaga**  
Asst Professor,  
School of Arts and Sciences  
Aklan State University, Banga,  
Aklan, Philippines

## Stage Fright and Coping Mechanisms among Dance Troupe Members and Trainers in a State University: An Empirical Study

**Florie May S. Gonzaga**

### Abstract

This descriptive correlational study was purposely conducted to find out the Level of Stage Fright and its coping mechanisms among dance troupe members and trainers in a state university. The subjects were the 40 purposively selected dance troupe members and 20 purposively selected trainers from Aklan State University. To measure the stage fright of dance troupe members and trainers a questionnaire was adapted from Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults: The Sport Anxiety Scale-2. Another instrument was a researcher-made questionnaire used to determine the coping mechanisms of the dancers and trainers. The statistical tools employed to analyze the data were mean, standard deviation, rank, *t*-test, and Pearson's *r*. inferential statistics were set at .05 alpha level of significance. The findings revealed that the dance troupe members had a moderate degree of stage fright while the trainers had a slight degree of stage fright. Findings further revealed that the top coping mechanisms on stage fright of dance troupe members were, praying before the performance, motivation and confidence from other people, confidence shown by the trainer towards the presentation, memorization of the steps, visualization of the dance steps before performance, preparation for the performance, looking presentable to the audience, the group perfectly memorizes the dance steps, coming an hour before the performance, warming up before the performance, applause of the crowd on every highlight of the performance. On the other hand, the top coping mechanisms for trainers were, recalling the steps by imagining it backstage, praying before the performance, motivation and confidence of other people, performing well when the crowd is shouting and clapping, having continuous practice and rehearsals. It was noted that there was a significant difference in the degree of stage fright between the dance troupe members and trainers in a state university. The findings also showed that dancers possessed a greater degree of stage fright than trainers.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Dance Troupe Members, Coping Mechanisms, Stage Fright, Performance

### 1. Introduction

Stage fright affects millions of people. People feel fear in a state of anticipation. But the exaggerated symptoms of stage fright can be a disaster that leads to canceled performances, poor performances, and wrecked careers. Stage Fright includes nervousness, trembling, sweating, blushing, dry mouth, rapid heartbeat, breathlessness, diarrhea, and nausea (Woods, 2012), [36].

However, repetition can help dull the effects of stage fright. People continually exposed to public performances may become slightly immune to the crippling influence of stage fright.

Dancers recognized that some anxiety can be beneficial. As stress hormones pour into the blood, preparing the body for fight or flight sharpen the senses. Stress may provide an edge for a better performance (Woods, 2012) [36].

Fear or stage fright can offer some benefits to public performances. When people are nervous about a presentation they often spend more time with preparations and pay closer attention to rehearsals. Fear can also heighten the senses and make reflexes sharper.

As cited by Holland (1985) [14] specific fears of objects and situations may result from conditioning. These are learned fears, acquired through a history of interaction with the environment and with other people.

Since fear is learned through a conditioning process, the same process can be applied to unlearn fear. The idea is to pair the feared object or situation with some pleasant emotion or

### Correspondence

**Florie May S. Gonzaga**  
Asst Professor,  
School of Arts and Sciences  
Aklan State University, Banga,  
Aklan, Philippines

reaction so that the fear reaction will be replaced by enjoyment (Holland, 1985)<sup>[14]</sup>.

Remarkably enough, each person can condition fears through his/her own imagination. The process depends upon the ability to relax while imagining whatever is frightening. People can probably face in real life whatever that is frightening, and remain relaxed (Holland, 1985)<sup>[14]</sup>.

According to Kenrick, *et al.* (1999)<sup>[17]</sup>, the theory of social facilitation claims that the effects of performing in front of other people can be explained as a result from increased arousal. Their findings strongly suggest that self-reports of nervousness and tension can be taken as measures of arousal; therefore, the number and status of people in the audience is a predictor of stage fright, as well as a predictor of one's level of performance. Numerous studies support this theory of social facilitation, which means, the presence of others indeed improves well-mastered performance and hinders unmastered performance. Being around other people is arousing, and when one is aroused, he/she is likely to behave in well-learned, familiar ways.

This study was anchored on Bandura's, (1977) situationism theory under social learning theory, which states that people are influenced by situations, but different individuals are influenced by the same situations in different ways.

### Statement of the Problem and the Hypothesis

This study was conducted to determine the stage fright and coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers in a state university during the academic year 2012-2013.

Specifically this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the degree of stage fright of dance troupe members and trainers in a state university?
2. What are the coping mechanisms on stage fright of dance troupe members and trainers in a state university?
3. Is there a significant difference in the degree of stage fright between dance troupe members and trainers in a state university?
4. Is there a significant difference in the coping mechanisms between dance troupe members and trainers in a state university?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the degree of stage fright and coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers in a state university?

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

1. There is no significant difference in the degree of stage fright between dance troupe members and trainers in a state university.
2. There is no significant difference in the coping mechanisms between dance troupe members and trainers in a state university.
3. There is no significant relationship between the degree of stage fright and coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers in a state university.

### Significance of the Study

The study was conducted to determine the stage fright and coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers in a state university during the academic year 2012-2013.

The findings of this study may benefit the following:

**The parents:** They may also be benefited by the findings of this study for they will realize the vital role of the family and the home as an environment so powerful in influencing children acquire positive attitude, knowledge and skills

towards dance performances on stage. The obtained information from the investigation would assist the parents in providing their children adequate support in the different stage performances when stage fright arises.

**The dance troupe advisers/trainers:** Knowing the factors affecting the stage fright on stage performance, gain more knowledge in helping their performers overcome stage fright and build more self-confidence during performance.

**Dance troupe members:** Mechanisms from the results of this study, dance troupe members may know how to cope with their stage fright every time they perform in public.

**Researchers:** Results of this study may be made as reference of future researchers when they conduct studies related to stage fright. Furthermore, the findings of this research would be of great use to future researchers in the field of dance in designing training programs that could result in effective and efficient performance.

## 2. Review of Related Literature

### Stage Fright

It is possible to overcome the body's natural defense mechanism and to use the surge of adrenalin in a positive way to enhance instead of hindering a performance. It just takes some understanding and practice (Latham, 2012). Stage fright or performance anxiety is the anxiety, fear, or persistent phobia which may be aroused in an individual by the requirement to perform in front of an audience, whether actually or potentially (for example, when performing before a camera). In the context of public speaking, this may precede or accompany participation in any activity involving public self-presentation (Anshel 2008, in Jover & Barro 2010)<sup>[16]</sup>.

In some cases stage fright may be a part of a larger pattern of social phobia or social anxiety disorder, but many people experience stage fright without any wider problems. Quite often, stage fright arises in a mere anticipation of a performance, often a long time ahead. It has numerous manifestations: fluttering or pounding heart, tremor in the hands and legs, sweaty hands, diarrhea, facial nerve tics, dry mouth (Woods, 2012)<sup>[36]</sup>.

According to Cyphert (2005)<sup>[11]</sup>, when someone starts to feel the sensation of being scared or nervous they start to experience anxiety. Anxiety usually has physical symptoms that may include a racing heart, a dry mouth, a shaky voice, blushing, trembling, sweating, and nausea. It triggers the body to activate its sympathetic nervous system. This process takes place when the body releases adrenaline into the blood stream causing a chain of reactions to occur. This bodily response is known as the "fight or flight" syndrome, a naturally occurring process in the body done to protect itself from harm. The neck muscles contract, bringing the head down and shoulders up, while the back muscles draw the spine into a concave curve. This, in turn, pushes the pelvis forward and pulls the genitals up, slumping the body into a classic fetal position. In trying to resist this position, the body will begin to shake in places such as the legs and hands. Several other things happen besides this. Muscles in the body contract causing them to be tense and ready to attack. Second, blood vessels in the extremities constrict. This can leave a person with the feeling of cold fingers, toes, nose, and ears. Constricted blood vessels also gives the body extra blood flow to the vital organs.

In addition, those experiencing stage fright will have an increase in blood pressure, which supplies the body with more nutrients and oxygen in response to the *fight or flight* instincts. This, in return, causes the body to overheat and sweat.

Breathing will increase so that the body can obtain the desired amount of oxygen for the muscles and organs. Pupils will dilate giving someone the inability to view any notes they have in close proximity, however, long range vision is improved making the speaker more aware of their audience's facial expressions and nonverbal cues in response to the speaker's performance. Lastly, the digestive system shuts down to prepare for producing energy for an immediate emergency response. This can leave the body with the effects of dry mouth, nausea, or butterflies (Cyphert, 2005) [11].

**Levels of stage fright:** According to Redman (2012) [27], stage fright can happen to anyone who has to make a public appearance, perform or speak before others. Stage fright can even hit someone who is going in for a one-on-one interview. The term *stage fright* applies to all levels of nervousness, from butterflies in the stomach to abject terror.

There are several levels of stage fright in which a person may encounter from preparation to performance proper.

**Butterflies in the stomach:** The most minor of stage fright levels, the butterflies in the stomach describe the nervous feeling that a performer gets just before the performance. Some artists say this low level of anxiety is actually a positive, motivating factor as it demonstrates they care about performing well. This stage is typically characterized by worry over the performance and a restlessness that may lead to pacing, tapping one's foot or wringing one's hands.

**Knocking knees:** This more moderate level of stage fright begins to take on more physical symptoms. The person suffering this level of stage fright may find himself trembling, palms sweating, experiencing nausea, his heart rate increasing, and his knees and legs getting weak. A musician might experience dry mouth. This level of stage fright can often interfere with performances because of the physical effects. If not curbed at this point, stage fright can grow into the later and more severe levels.

**Anxiety attack:** The third level of stage fright is quite serious and can affect the performance of the individual experiencing it and everyone around her. It is characterized by panicky thoughts, a cold sweat, a severe headache, vomiting and an inability to focus. A person suffering an anxiety attack may have difficulty breathing and be unable to perform until the anxiety attack passes.

**Frozen in terror:** The final stage of stage fright is that of abject terror. The person is unable to move and often unable to speak. The performer may faint or simply disassociate psychologically from his surroundings. This level of stage fright usually is brought on by a severe phobia and may require psychological or medical intervention to overcome.

**Anxiety:** Anxiety is an emotional state in which people feel uneasy, apprehensive, or fearful. People usually experience anxiety about events they cannot control or predict, or about events that seem threatening or dangerous. For example, dancers performing on stage feel anxious because they predict what would the audience may react to their performance.

**Purpose of the Study and Research Design**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the degree of stage fright and the coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers in a state university during the school year 2012-2013.

The descriptive survey method was used in the study. This method presents facts concerning the nature and status of the phenomenon studied: a group of persons, a number of objects, a set of conditions, a class events, a system of thought, or any kind of phenomenon one may wish to study (Morris, 1991).

Researchers tend to have high regard as to the value of the descriptive survey data as bases for inference in solving practical problems representing field conditions, because the conclusion are drawn from the real or actual survey of the situation.

**3. Method**

**Participants:** The respondents of the study were the 40 purposively selected dance troupe members and 20 purposively selected trainers from Aklan State University.

An equal member of representatives, ten (10) dance troupe members, and five (5) trainers, were taken from each of the following campuses: College of Technology (CIT), Kalibo, Aklan, College of Fisheries and Marine Sciences (CFMS), New Washington Aklan, College of Hospitality and Rural Resource Management (CHARRM) Ibajay, Aklan, and Aklan State University Main Campus, Banga, Aklan.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the subjects.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the Respondents

| Category | N  | %   |
|----------|----|-----|
| Dancers  | 40 | 100 |
| Trainers | 20 | 100 |

**Data gathering instrument:** After a thorough review of various materials and literature relevant to the present study, the 25-item Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults: The Sport Anxiety Scale-2 (Smith *et al.*, 2006) [29], was chosen to measure the degree of stage fright. On the other hand, the researcher personally constructed a questionnaire for coping mechanisms. This was submitted to a panel of experts, that includes a psychologist, a PE teacher, and a dancer/choreographer for validation. The items assessed as very relevant and relevant were retained while the items found not relevant by the jury were eliminated. Fairly relevant items were revised and improved based on the jurors' suggestions and recommendations.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested among the 40 dance troupe members and 20 trainers from another school. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (as cited in Tuazon, 2006) [32], coefficient reliability of greater or equal to .70 indicates high reliability. Hence the adapted questionnaire from Measurement of Multidimensional Sport Performance Anxiety in Children and Adults: Sport Anxiety Scale-2 (Smith, *et al.*, 2006) [29] (r=.79) and the research made questionnaire (r=.88), are reliable instruments to measure stage fright and coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers.

The respondents of the study were asked to indicate their responses to the items in the questionnaire by checking the box of their choices.

The following responses and values were used for the questionnaire on stage fright:

|       |              |
|-------|--------------|
| Value | Responses    |
| 4     | Very much    |
| 3     | Pretty much  |
| 2     | A little bit |
| 1     | Not at all   |

To facilitate statistical analysis and interpretation, the equivalent numerical weights were given equivalent descriptions:

| Scale     | Description                     |
|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 3.36-4.0  | Very High degree of Nervousness |
| 2.51-3.35 | High Degree of Nervousness      |
| 1.76-2.50 | Moderate Degree of Nervousness  |
| 1.00-1.75 | Slight Degree of Nervousness    |

The following values and responses were used for the questionnaire in coping mechanism:

| Value | Responses      |
|-------|----------------|
| 3     | Always used    |
| 2     | Sometimes used |
| 1     | Never used     |

To facilitate statistical analysis and interpretation, the equivalent numerical weights were given equivalent descriptions:

| Scale     | Description    |
|-----------|----------------|
| 2.34-3.00 | always used    |
| 1.67-2.33 | sometimes used |
| 1.00-1.66 | Never used     |

**Procedure.** The researcher first secured permission from the president of Aklan State University to conduct the study among dance troupe members and trainers. After permission was granted, the researchers gathered the selected respondents and oriented them of the purpose and procedure of the study. Different terminologies were defined to give the respondents a clear interpretation of the study. After orientation, each member and trainer were given time to answer the questionnaire. Accomplished questionnaires were gathered, tallied and computed for statistical analysis and interpretation using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Software.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

The data gathered for the present study were subjected to the following statistics.

*Mean.* The mean was used to determine the degree of stage fright and coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers.

*Rank.* Rank was used to determine the top preferred coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers.

*t-test.* To determine the significant difference of the degree of stage fright and the preferred coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers, *t-test* was used.

*Pearson's r.* To determine the significant relationship between the degree of stage fright and coping mechanisms, Pearson's *r* was employed.

The significance level was set at .05 alpha for all inferential test.

**4. Results and Discussion**  
**Descriptive Data Analysis**

This section presents the descriptive data gathered on the degree of stage fright and the preferred coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers of Aklan State University during the school year 2012-2013.

**Degree of stage fright of dance troupe members and trainers:** Table 2 shows that dance troupe members had moderate degree of stage fright while trainers had a slight degree. This was revealed by the respective means of 1.76 and 1.52.

The results obviously revealed that dancers encountered greater degree of stage fright than the trainers. This could be due to the excitement which develops anxiety thus producing uncomfortable social situation in different ways. Kaur (2010) stated that stage fright is experienced mostly by newer performer's however more experienced performers can get it from time to time. More exposure on dance performances may be of great help to the dancers and trainers. But dancers tend to have a high degree of stage fright as they are the one being exposed to public appearance during performances. They also focus on many situations and circumstances around them compared to their trainers.

**Table 2:** Degree of Stage Fright among Dance Troupe Members and Trainers

| Category | M    | Description                     |
|----------|------|---------------------------------|
| Dancers  | 1.76 | Moderate Degree of stage fright |
| Trainers | 1.52 | Slight Degree of stage fright   |

  

| Scale     | Description                      |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 3.36-4.0  | Very high degree of stage fright |
| 2.51-3.35 | High degree of stage fright      |
| 1.76-2.50 | Moderate degree of stage fright  |
| 1.00-1.75 | Slight degree of stage fright    |

**Coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers:**

The coping mechanism of dance troupe members and trainers as an entire group is shown in Table 3.

Of the twenty five items in coping mechanism the top ten which were always used were: Praying before the performance (*M* = 2.93, Rank 1), motivation and confidence shown by other people and feeling excited when the group is ready to perform on stage. (*M* = 2.83, Rank 2.5), visualization of the dance steps before performance and memorization of the step (*M* = 2.78, Rank 4.5), teachers, advisers and trainers encouragement (*M* = 2.77, Rank 6), well prepared for the performance (*M* = 2.75, Rank 7), confidence show by the trainers towards the presentation (*M* = 2.73, Rank 8), performing well as the crowds shout and clap (*M* = 2.70, Rank 9), group perfectly memorizes the dance steps (*M* = 2.67, Rank 10). The least five coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers were: confronting fellow dancers to reduce tension and stress (*M* = 2.45, Rank 21), seeing my families face that they are so proud of me dancing (*M* = 2.43, Rank 22), having enough rest and sleep (*M* = 2.39, Rank 23), relaxing before performing on stage (*M* = 2.32, Rank,24) and family is watching the performance (*M* = 2.18, Rank 25).

The data suggest that these top ten coping mechanisms were always used by the dance troupe members and trainers of Aklan State University to improve their stage fright performance. The various coping mechanism used by the dance troupe members and trainers were directly related to personality of individuals which play critical roles in developing a coping mechanism as indicated in the related literature.

**Table 3:** Rank of the Coping Mechanisms Used by Dance Troupe Members and Trainers

| Rank   | M    | Description    | Rank |
|--|------|----------------|------|
| <b>Top Coping Mechanisms</b>                                   |      |                |      |
| Praying before the performance.                                | 2.93 | Always used    | 1    |
| Motivation and confidence by other people.                     | 2.83 | Always used    | 2.5  |
| Feeling excited when the groups are ready to perform on stage. | 2.83 | Always used    | 2.5  |
| Visualization of the dance steps before performance.           | 2.78 | Always used    | 4.5  |
| Memorization of the step.                                      | 2.78 | Always used    | 4.5  |
| Teachers, adviser and trainers encouragement                   | 2.77 | Always used    | 6    |
| Well prepared for the performance.                             | 2.75 | Always used    | 7    |
| Confidence shown by the trainers towards the presentation.     | 2.73 | Always used    | 8    |
| Performing well on the crowds shout and clap.                  | 2.70 | Always used    | 9    |
| Group perfectly memorizes the dance steps.                     | 2.67 | Always used    | 10   |
| Encouragement of my partner to dance well.                     | 2.52 | Always used    |      |
| <b>Least Coping Mechanisms</b>                                 |      |                |      |
| Confronting fellow dancers to reduce tension and stress.       | 2.45 | Always used    | 21   |
| Seeing my family's face that they are so proud of me dancing.  | 2.43 | Always used    | 22   |
| Having enough rest and sleep.                                  | 2.39 | Always used    | 23   |
| Relaxing before performing on stage.                           | 2.32 | Sometimes used | 24   |
| Family is watching the performance.                            | 2.18 | Sometimes used | 25   |

Scale Description  
 2.34-3.00 Always Used  
 1.67-2.33 Sometimes Used  
 1.00-1.66 Never Used

**Coping mechanisms for dance troupe members:** Table 4 lists the coping mechanisms of dance troupe members. The following coping mechanisms were the top ten used by the dance troupe members: praying before the performance ( $M = 2.90$ , Rank 1), motivation and confidence from other people and excited when the groups are ready to perform on stage ( $M = 2.78$ , Rank 2.5), confidence shown by the trainer towards the presentation and memorization of the steps ( $M = 2.72$ , Rank 4.5), visualization of the dance steps before performance and teachers, adviser and trainers encouragement ( $M = 2.68$ , Rank 6.5), well prepared for the performance and looking

presentable to the audience ( $M = 2.65$ , Rank 8.5), crowd is shouting and clapping and the group perfectly memorizes the dance steps ( $M = 2.58$ , Rank 10.5). The least five coping mechanisms of dance troupe members were: several exposures on stage performances ( $M = 2.35$ , Rank 21), confronting fellow dancers having problems to reduce tension and stress ( $M = 2.32$ , Rank 22), proud faces of the family ( $M = 2.28$ , Rank 23), relaxing before performing on stage ( $M = 2.18$ , Rank 24), and family is watching the performance ( $M = 1.88$ , Rank 25).

**Table 4:** Rank of Coping Mechanisms Used by Dance Troupe Members

| Rank  | M    | Description    | Rank |
|---|------|----------------|------|
| <b>Top Coping Mechanisms</b>  |      |                |      |
| Praying before the performance.   | 2.90 | Always used    | 1    |
| Motivation and confidence from other people.                                    | 2.78 | Always used    | 2.5  |
| Excited when the groups are ready to perform on stage.                          | 2.78 | Always used    | 2.5  |
| Confidence shown by the trainer towards the presentation                        | 2.72 | Always used    | 4.5  |
| Memorization of the steps.  | 2.72 | Always used    | 4.5  |
| Visualization of the dance steps before performance.                            | 2.68 | Always used    | 6.5  |
| Teachers, adviser and trainers encouragement                                    | 2.68 | Always used    | 6.5  |
| Well prepared for the performance.  | 2.65 | Always used    | 8.5  |
| Looking presentable to the audience.  | 2.65 | Always used    | 8.5  |
| Crowd is shouting and clapping.   | 2.58 | Always used    | 10.5 |
| <b>Least Coping Mechanisms</b>  |      |                |      |
| Many exposures on stage performances.   | 2.35 | Always used    | 21   |
| Confronting fellow dancers when there is a problem to reduce tension and stress | 2.32 | Always used    | 22   |
| Proud faces of the families   | 2.28 | Sometimes used | 23   |
| Relaxing before performing on stage.  | 2.18 | Sometimes used | 24   |
| Family is watching the performance  | 1.88 | Sometimes used | 25   |

Scale Description  
 2.34-3.00 Always used  
 1.67-2.33 Sometimes used  
 1.00-1.66 Never used

**Coping mechanism of dance troupe trainers:** Table 5 presents, the top 10 coping mechanisms used by the trainers: recalling the steps by imagining it backstage and praying before the performance ( $M = 3.00$ , Rank 1.5), encouraging dancers to perform well, motivation and confidence of other people, performing well when the crowd is shouting and clapping, having continuous practice and rehearsal, group are

ready to perform on stage, crowd giving applause on every highlight performed by the dancers and focusing on the performance of the dancers ( $M = 2.95$ , Rank 6), memorizing the sequence of the step, memorization of the step and ready to perform ( $M = 2.90$ , Rank 10.5). The least five coping mechanisms of the trainers were: dancers warming up before performance and arriving early to get ready for the

performance ( $M = 2.65$ , Rank 21.5), using imagery on the dance before the performance and adequate number of exposures by the dancers ( $M = 2.60$ , Rank 23.5), and enough rest and sleep ( $M = 2.35$ , Rank 25).

The data show that the dance troupe trainers still remind their dancers regarding the dance steps before they perform on stage.

Similarly, the dance troupe trainers lead the prayer for the dance troupe members before performing any activity as their coping mechanism to stage fright. This means that trainers believe in the guidance of the Divine Providence and that the Lord will answer their prayers. According to Portia (2004) [21], in order to cope with extreme anxiety, praying without ceasing and making sure that individuals are being taken care of are the best coping mechanism for fright.

Cumming (2009) [10] cited that, everyone gets nervous before performing, but it does not have to be debilitating. One should enjoy performance, perform better, and use each successful performance to launch to the next level in its career. So while waiting for the performance to start, it is best to recall the dance steps by performing while imagining in order to gain more confidence and relaxation of the body.

**Table 5:** Means of the Coping Mechanisms of Dance Troupe Trainers

| Rank   | M    | Description | Rank   |
|--|------|-------------|--------|
| <b>Top Coping Mechanisms</b>                       |      |             |        |
| Imagining the steps backstage.                     | 3.00 | Always used | 1.5    |
| Praying before a performance.                      | 3.00 | Always used | 1.5    |
| Encouraging dancers to perform well.               | 2.95 | Always used | 6      |
| Motivation and confidence shown by other people.   | 2.95 | Always used | 6      |
| Crowd is shouting and clapping.                    | 2.95 | Always used | 6      |
| Having continuous practice and rehearsal.          | 2.95 | Always used | 6      |
| Group is ready to perform on stage.                | 2.95 | Always used | 6      |
| Crowd applauds on every highlight performed        | 2.95 | Always used | 6      |
| Focusing on the performance of the dancers.        | 2.95 | Always used | 6      |
| Memorization of the step.                          | 2.90 | Always used | 10.5   |
| Ready to perform.                                  | 2.90 | Always used | 10.5   |
| <b>Least Coping Mechanism</b>                      |      |             |        |
| Warming up before performance.                     | 2.65 | Always used | 21.5   |
| Arriving early to get ready for The performance.   | 2.65 | Always used | 21.5   |
| Using imagery on the dance before the performance. | 2.60 | Always used | 23.5.5 |
| Adequate number of exposures by the dancers.       | 2.60 | Always used | 23.5.5 |
| Enough rest and sleep.                             | 2.35 | Always used | 25     |

**Inferential Data Analysis**

**Difference in the degree of stage fright between the dance troupe members and trainers:** A significant difference existed in the stage fright between the dance troupe members and trainers  $t$ -value=2.15,  $df$ =58,  $p$ =.036.

This means that the degree of stage fright of the dance troupe members is greater than that of the trainers. According to

Woods (2012) [36] quite often, stage fright arises in a mere anticipation of a performance, often a long time ahead. This explains that dancers compared to trainers possessed a greater degree of stage fright because they are the main characters of the performance. Table 6 shows the data.

**Table 6:** t-test Results for the Difference in the Stage Fright between Dances.

| <b>Troupe Members and Trainers</b> |      |         |    |      |
|------------------------------------|------|---------|----|------|
| Category                           | M    | t-value | df | Sig. |
| Dancers                            | 1.76 | 2.15*   | 58 | .036 |
| Trainers                           | 1.52 |         |    |      |

\* $P < .05$

**Differences in the coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers:**

No significant difference existed in the coping mechanisms between the dance troupe members and trainers,  $t$ -value=.497,  $df$ =58,  $p$ =.62; thus the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that the coping mechanisms of the dance troupe members and trainers did not vary probably trainers and dancers focus mainly on the same coping mechanisms.

**Relationship between the degree of stage fright and coping mechanisms of dance troupe members and trainers:**

A significant relationship existed between the stage fright and coping mechanisms of the dance troupe members and trainers  $r$ =.348,  $p < .05$ . This means that stage fright and coping mechanisms are associated with each other. Stage fright and coping mechanisms are related to each other because coping mechanism depends on the degree of stage fright encountered. If the degree of stage fright is high then the tendency of coping mechanism will also differ. If the dancers or trainers feel the stage fright, then they give attention to what they feel in order that it will not worsen or affect their performance.

**5. Summary of the Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The findings of the present study were as follows:

1. The dance troupe members had a moderate degree of stage fright while the trainers had a slight degree of stage fright.
2. The top coping mechanisms on stage fright of dance troupe members were: praying before the performance, motivation and confidence from other people, excitement when the groups are ready to perform on stage, confidence shown by the trainer towards the presentation, memorization of the steps, visualization of the dance steps before performance, teachers, adviser and trainers' encouragement, preparation for the performance, looking presentable to the audience, crowd is shouting and clapping, the group perfectly memorizes the dance steps, coming an hour before the performance, big crowd watching the performance/show, warming up before the performance, encouragement of the partner to dance well, applause of the crowd on every highlight of the performance.

For trainers, the top coping mechanisms were: recalling the steps by imagining it backstage, praying before the performance, encouraging dancers to perform well, motivation and confidence of other people, performing well when the crowd is shouting and clapping, having continuous practice and rehearsal, group is ready to perform on stage, crowd giving applause on every highlight performed by the dancers, focusing on the performance of the dancers, memorizing the

sequence of the step, readiness to perform, memorization of the dance steps, focusing before and during the performance, applause of the crowd on every highlight of the performance, coming an hour before the performances, dancers family is watching the performance, eagerness to perform on stage, confidence shown by the dancers towards the presentation, support of the family/parents towards the presentation, having team building and open forum a week before the performance, dancers warming up before performance, arriving early to get ready for the performance, using imagery on the dance before the performance, adequate number of exposures by the dancers, enough rest and sleep.

## 6. Conclusions

Based on the findings presented, the following conclusions were drawn:

The findings of the study revealed that dancers encountered a moderate degree of stage fright and slight degree of stage fright for trainers. This can be explained by the fact that since the dancers are the ones performing in front of the audience, they have greater responsibility over the success of the performance than their trainers. However, they did not show a high degree of stage fright because most of the respondents gained greater experience as trainers and dancers. Stage fright mellows down as experience to overcome this becomes effective. Most of the time, even well-trained dancers and renowned trainers still feel stage fright despite their experiences but only to a lesser extent due to a long exposure in competitions and performances. Woods (2012) [36] cited that repetition can help dull the effects of stage fright. People continually exposed to public performances may become slightly immune to the crippling influence of stage fright.

As to coping mechanisms, praying before the performance was found to be on top. As observed during competitions and performances, spiritual guidance through a prayer always gives the group a sense of confidence. Trainers often lead the prayer and dancers give their full concentration which somehow gives them focus on themselves. In the article *Stress Management, Relaxation and Time Management* (2012) [19, 30], prayer and meditation can reduce physical symptoms of stress and can help to cope with it. Recent studies had shown that prayers can decrease blood pressure for many people and can be a source for internal comfort. It can have other calming effects that are associated with reduced stress. It can also provide confidence to function more effectively.

A significant relationship was found between the degree of stage fright and coping mechanisms of dancers and trainers. It means that coping mechanisms depend mainly on the degree of stage fright. When the degree of stage fright changes, the coping mechanisms may also change. It is very evident among dance trainers and even dancers that at first, when stage fright starts to penetrate, they tend to give little attention to it. But when it starts to dominate them even other people could notice how they cope with it. Yerkes-Dodson law (Lefton & Brannon, 2003, in Apruebo, 2007) states that performance is best when stimulation or arousal is intermediate. If arousal is too low, performance suffers. Increasing the arousal level increases performance, but only up to a point.

## Implications

The conclusions led to some implications:

**For theory:** The findings of the study indicate that stage fright may occur to anyone whether performing on stage or just watching the performers on stage. This affirmed the theory of Bandura (1997) which states that people are influenced by

situations, but different individuals are influenced by the same situation in different ways. Dancers and trainers developed stage fright differently in the same situation, thus allowing them to build it accordingly and in addition, coping with it depends on how they perceive it would affect them. Zanjonc's (1965) theory of social facilitation also affirmed the results of this study. If dancers and trainers claim that the level of performing in front of other people results from increased arousal, the presence of others indeed improves performance. Consequently dancers tend to perform poorly on unmeted tasks when others are around.

**For practice:** According to J. Taylor & C. Taylor (as cited in Puljanan, 2011) [25], preparation leads to a high self-confidence and truly believing in their ability to perform their very best. Conversely, stage fright develops in all instances in the lives of dancers and trainers. It only differs on how they cope with it. Most dancers are afraid of committing errors during performance; however, they deal with it by recalling the steps through visual imagery and mental practice. Trainers, on the other hand, showed a relaxed state despite the butterflies in their stomach just to show to their dancers the feeling of confidence.

**Recommendations:** On the basis of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are advanced:

Trainers should still consider praying as an important factor to lessen the stage fright of their dancers. On the other hand dancers should always take time to pray as part of every training, preparation, and performance to develop more confidence and trust during and before any performance.

Parents should realize their role as a family and the home as an environment so powerful in influencing their children to acquire positive attitude, knowledge and skills towards building self-confidence as a performer. This will somehow adequately support their children when stage fright arises.

Dance trainers and advisers should possess a full understanding that stage fright evolves naturally and could be addressed by appropriate coping mechanisms. Proper and quality training and practice are recommended in order to lessen stage fright.

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