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The Development of a Performance Anxiety Scale for Theatre Actor

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Abstract: Anxiety is the main barrier for an actor to give a perfect performance that determines the show's overall quality. However, there have been no studies examining performance anxiety in theatre actors, especially in Indonesia. This study aims to develop a psychological scale that measures the actor's performance anxiety level. The following five steps are carried out: (a) preparing the items based on the performance-only type of social anxiety; (b) checking content validity using Aiken's V method; (c) conducting a trial scale; (d) testing reliability using Cronbach's alpha; and (e) selecting items. One hundred sixty-three (163) theatre actors were given the Performance Anxiety Scale for Theatre Actors, which consists of 44 items. The analysis showed that Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.953 out of 38 passed items ($r \geq 0.30$). Thus, the developed Performance Anxiety Scale for Theatre Actors has a good validity and reliability score and can be used properly.

Keywords: theatre actor, performance anxiety, validity, reliability, scale

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1. Introduction

"Tension is the actor's occupational disease"

(Stanislavski)

An actor stands motionless on the stage, in front of the audience, before the eyes of the audience, hands and back cramping, tongue choking, feet glued to the floor, the room expanding and constricting, breathing short, and clothes soaked with sweat. Yes, it is a glimpse of one of the unforgettable and threatening experiences when an actor is on stage for a live performance attended by the audience. Every performing artist, both novice artists (students and performing arts students) and senior actor feel it (Kenny & Driscoll, 2014). This unpleasant experience can last throughout an artist's career, resulting in decreased performance, long-term physical and mental health problems, refusal to perform, and even the decision to quit and leave the profession as a performing artist (Clark & Agras, 1991).

As a branch of performing arts, theatre is the art or activity of performing in or producing plays on stage *(Merriam-Websters Advanced Learners English Dictionary, 2008, p. 15340)*. Theatre is a live performing art that elaborates complex elements such as stage space, drama script, actors playing, performance property, audience, and time. When performed in front of the audience (live performance), the time element is the key distinguishing factor between theatrical art and other types of art, namely a direct experience between actors in front of the audience (Fortier, 1997, pp. 3235).

Theatre actors play drama scripts live in front of the audience. Because actors speak and act to play a scripted text in front of an audience, we can also classify theatre as a public performance. However, if a person experiences stress caused by nervousness due to speaking in front of a crowd, he or she can experience speech or language disorders (Buchanan et al., 2014; Lemasson et al., 2018). The body's responses to performance-related anxiety include increased heart rate, changes in heart rhythm, and anxiety (Abel & Larkin, 1990), dry mouth, sweaty palms, negative thoughts related to the fear of making mistakes, decreased performance quality such as body shaking and memory slips (Fishbein et al., 1988). This anxiety, of course, can disrupt a show.

Several factors may induce anxiety in theatre actors, from within or outside. Anxiety that comes from within the actor can be personality factors, quantity and

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quality of preparatory exercise, the experience of playing a role, and the actor's lifestyle. External factors Anxiety can be the culture, director, script, prop or stage equipment, partners, division of roles and work tasks in the team, relations with crew members (Orzechowicz, 2008), food and drinks, the amount of honorarium, the number of spectators, and much more.

Psychological readiness is thus an essential aspect of the actor's profession both in practice and when performing on stage. Readiness is also strongly influenced by emotional aspects that arise both from pre-show anxiety pressure and other external factors that are not related to the role or the emergence of emotions from certain scene activities during acting (Orzechowicz, 2008). Furthermore, good psychological readiness will facilitate the actors, the director, and the entire crew to give their best abilities and allow them to produce innovations and breakthroughs in more creative performing arts (Kurniawan, 2016; Nurcahyono, 2017).

So far, anxiety research in performing arts has been conducted in music, dance, and performances in sports events. However, no scale specifically measures anxiety among theatre actors both outside and within the country. This research aims to examine anxiety in theatre actors and build a performance anxiety scale for theatre actors. The scale method to measure the performance anxiety of theatre actors is important to develop because the actor as the subject is the person who knows best about himself, and what is stated by the subject to the researcher is accurate and trustworthy (Hadi, 2016).

Specific anxiety in public performance activities has so far been limited to research on speech anxiety in speech or public speaking (Buchanan et al., 2014; Lindner et al., 2021; Stein et al., 1996; Stupar-Rutenfrans et al., 2017; Tsang, 2020), Music Performance Anxiety (Abel & Larkin, 1990; Cupido, 2018; Dobos et al., 2019; Fishbein et al., 1988; Guyon et al., 2020; Kantor-Martynuska & Kenny, 2018; MacAfee & Comeau, 2020; Osborne & Kenny, 2008), anxiety about dance performances (Doğan, 2018; Serra et al., 2020), to anxiety about sports performance (Ford et al., 2017; Johnston et al., 2020; Monsma et al., 2009). The scale that has been widely developed and adapted to various country contexts is the music performance anxiety scale. Although both are in performance, there has been no research on specific anxiety in theatre actors.

Anxiety disorders are behavioral disorders with characteristics such as excessive fear and anxiety and associated behavioral disorders. Anxiety itself is an initial response or a form of anticipation of a perceived threat that will occur. Unlike the usual feelings of fear, stress, or anxiety, anxiety disorders can last relatively long (usually six

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months or more). Anxiety disorders are more common in women than men (close to at least 2:1) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 189; Wesner et al., 1990).

Anxiety disorders related to public appearances are known as social anxiety disorders (SAD). A person feels afraid or anxious in a social situation or avoids interactions that might make him being investigated or noticed. Social interactions include meeting strangers, situations in which the individual is being observed, and situations in which the individual appears in front of others. The cognitive process is when a person feels like he is being evaluated negatively by others, by being humiliated, humiliated, or rejected, or by the possibility of offending others, when that person appears in public (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 190). The types of feared social situations can be grouped into three types: situations when someone appears in a public performance (performance), general situations when interacting socially, and situations when someone is observed or becomes the object of observation (Spokas & Cardaciotto, 2014, p. 250).

Performance anxiety is essential to be studied further so that it can be anticipated because it can interfere with the life and career of a public speaker, performers such as musicians, dancers, athletes (Studer et al., 2011), singers, and actors (Marchant-Haycox & Wilson, 1992; Steptoe et al., 1995). Anxiety, or tension in the term used by Stanislavski, is a disease of the actor's profession ("Tension is the actor's occupational disease") (Strasberg & Schechner, 1964, p. 219). A disease that can interfere with the creation of his work because an actor who experiences it will be unable to think or feel. Actors who experience anxiety will become preoccupied with themselves and then produce ways or techniques in inappropriate gestures such as putting excessive pressure on the voice, face, shoulders, or hands to manage the anxiety condition (McGaw et al., 2007, p. 22). The larger the number of viewers, the more it will impact the actor's level of anxiety, emotionality, posture orientation, and gestures "(Lemasson et al., 2018).

For example, music performance anxiety is a specific mental condition in the form of fear and worry that arises, especially when musicians are in front of an audience at a performance event(Spahn, 2015). Several physical and emotional symptoms characterize musical performance anxiety. Physical symptoms include a fast heart rate, increased blood pressure, rapid and shallow breathing, and a dry mouth. Emotional and cognitive symptoms include narrowing the mind, such as increased alertness and concentration on guilt and fear, increased feelings between fear and pleasure, typical behaviors such as repetitive actions, a tendency to run away, and general restlessness (Spahn, 2015).

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Anxiety actors themselves can be classified as one type of social anxiety disorder (social anxiety disorder) and music performance anxiety (Spahn, 2015). Anxiety arising from a theatrical performance is due to a specific feeling of fear in the conditions of performance activity or being in a situation of appearing in public. The Fifth Edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) states that social anxiety is a feeling of fear or significant anxiety about one or more situations in which a person is exposed to the possibility of supervision by others. Some of the social interaction situations referred to include having conversations with other people or appearing in front of others to give speeches (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 202).

There is a specific type of anxiety disorder only in performances or appearances in public called the performance-only type of social anxiety. Terms that refer to this public anxiety are such as "fear of performing", "podium anxiety", "stage fright" (stage fright), and "performance anxiety" or performance anxiety.). This disorder usually interferes most with the performer artist's professional life, such as musicians, dancers, theatre actors, athletes, and performers who need public speaking. This disorder differs from other types of disorders, which are characterized by anxiety only during performances or performances and not feeling anxious or avoiding non-public social situations (American Psychiatric Association, 2013, p. 203).

Performance anxiety is concern and fear of the consequences of not performing a task or performing it at a level that will increase expectations of better task achievement. If the fear that is felt is related to worry or anxiety about an adverse judgment, feeling of shame, or humiliation from another person, then the anxiety is classified as social phobia ("APA Dictionary of Psychology," 2015, p. 778). Physical indications of performance-type social anxiety can be seen from the feeling of excessive stimulation or hyperarousal during performance or performance situations. This condition is characterized by a higher heart rate response when speaking in public, a higher startle response, increased skin sensitivity, and an increased heart rate when imagining the worst situation they imagine (de Vente et al., 2014, p. 100).

Specific anxiety about performance or appearance in public has its roots in fear and anxiety from social evaluation, so it is also shaped by broader cultural influences which greatly determine the appropriateness of social behaviors that are acceptable to the public and, of course, the consequences if one violates these social norms (Patel & Hinton, 2020, p. 67). Individuals from collectivist cultural backgrounds tend to be more afraid of conditions and situations that have the potential to embarrass, blush or appear red-faced compared to individuals from individualist cultural backgrounds.

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This study aims to develop or construct a psychological measuring instrument or scale that measures a theatre actor's level of performance anxiety. The scale constructed follows the psychometric measurement steps and procedures with validity and reliability testing. Hopefully, the theatre actor's performance anxiety scale will fill the gap in this field of study. This scale is expected to be a tool to assess the actor's level of readiness during the training period until before the show begins.

2. Methods

The Actor Performance Anxiety Scale was developed based on the Performance Only Type of Social Anxiety Theory. The development of a Performance Anxiety Scale for Theatre Actor will be carried out through several stages as follows: a) concept determination; b) blueprint design; c) item writing; d) item review; e) data collection; f) validity and reliability test. The validity test was carried out through content, construct, and criterion validity. The reliability test will be carried out using Cronbach's alpha.

The subjects in this study were 163 theatre actors who had at least three months of theatre practice experience and had a stage performances. Data is collected by spreading the scale on the subject either directly (on paper) or online. Participants filled out a 7-point experience response scale containing each of at least 0 to a maximum of 6. Data collection also includes respondents' gender, age, and regional origin.

The scale tested for validity and reliability before being applied to the research subject. The first testing step involved content validity, which was carried out to determine if the items on the scale aligned with the measured construct (Azwar, 2012). The validity was tested using the content-validity coefficient and Aiken's value. Next, the discriminatory power of each item was evaluated through item-total correlation analysis to identify items that had a high discriminatory power. The validity of the criteria was calculated using the product-moment correlation. Cronbach's alpha was used to test the reliability. The analysis was performed using SPSS software.

3. Results and Discussion

Validity test

Researchers used content validity to assess the validity of the scale. Azwar (2012) explains that content validity shows the extent to which the content of the scale suspports the theoretical construct being measured. The validity of the content of the measuring instrument is determined through professional judgment in the item review process through logical analysis to determine whether the items in the scale have relevance to the behavioral indicators and the measurement objectives. Content

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validity was then analyzed using Aiken's V content validity coefficient. The assessment was carried out by assigning a number between 1 (i.e. very unrepresentative or irrelevant) to 5 (i.e. very representative or relevant) by a panel of experts. The range of possible V is from 0 to 1.00.

The rater responded that the items could be read and understood well. There are some notes to improve some items, but with the consideration that there are no notes that the items must be deleted or changed in full, the researcher continues the test to the next stage without making changes to the item items. Furthermore, based on the calculation of the coefficients to assess the instrument's validity, the V value obtained is 0.921. The lowest value of v items is 0.875, and the highest is 0.958. Based on Aiken's Rating Score table, for the number of raters six people with a content score of 5, a good V score is 0.83 with p 0.010 or 0.77 with p 0.036. With a score of 0.921, thus it can be concluded that this scale is valid.

Reliability Test

Reliability is the level of trustworthiness or consistency of measurement results, which means how high the accuracy of measuring a scale is (Azwar, 2012). Reliability shows the extent to which the measurement results remain consistent when two or more measurements are made of the same symptom using the same measuring instrument. This study uses coefficient alpha Crobrach for reliability, with statistical tests using SPSS 26.0 for Windows.

After selecting the items based on the item discriminatory index, the reliability test was carried out. This selection is made first to see which items have the same function as the scale function, namely through the corrected item-total correlation (CITC). Items that pass the waiver have a CITC value of 0.30 or more. Exceptions can be made if the number of items has fallen too many, namely by lowering the value to 0.25 (Azwar, 2012). The reliability test used actual research data from 163 subjects as the basis for the analysis. This scale development research uses a value of 0.30 in item selection, in which items or items with a value of <0.30 will be aborted. The Cronbach Alpha value of the tested scale shows a value of 0.947. Based on the reliability test, the CICT score of each item was obtained as follows where there were six (6) items that were dropped, namely item numbers 4, 6, 8, 11, 23, and 38.

Furthermore, retesting is carried out after the items with a <0.30 are aborted. The Cronbach Alpha from the previous scale showed a value of 0.947. After the items with a <0.30 were deleted and retested, the Cronbach Alpha value was 0.953. Based on the validity and reliability tests, the Performance Anxiety Scale for Theatre Actor

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developed in this study can be used properly. The higher anxiety level and vice versa can be seen from the score.

Table 1. Item-Total Statistics

Items	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
1	1580,307	0,457	0,952
2	1581,352	0,463	0,952
3	1537,540	0,641	0,951
5	1592,107	0,370	0,953
7	1555,641	0,567	0,952
9	1569,831	0,605	0,951
10	1582,492	0,482	0,952
12	1587,387	0,416	0,953
13	1575,744	0,466	0,952
14	1554,908	0,707	0,951
15	1551,022	0,620	0,951
16	1537,397	0,685	0,951
17	1558,875	0,708	0,951
18	1562,036	0,604	0,951
19	1561,911	0,498	0,952
20	1550,249	0,740	0,951
21	1579,511	0,505	0,952
22	1551,297	0,716	0,951
24	1572,424	0,578	0,952
25	1566,978	0,480	0,952
26	1569,157	0,539	0,952
27	1583,315	0,431	0,953
28	1554,841	0,610	0,951
29	1540,530	0,653	0,951
30	1564,545	0,586	0,952
31	1596,485	0,393	0,953
32	1614,617	0,272	0,953
33	1550,427	0,700	0,951
34	1539,130	0,722	0,951
35	1573,149	0,416	0,953
36	1562,888	0,564	0,952
37	1550,792	0,701	0,951
39	1550,461	0,648	0,951
40	1541,828	0,640	0,951
41	1573,818	0,568	0,952
42	1547,032	0,634	0,951
43	1532,469	0,776	0,950
44	1542,123	0,759	0,950

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Norms and Interpretation of the score

Azwar (1993) explains that the interpretation of scores is based on the assumption that the scores of the subject population are normally distributed. Based on this assumption, the researcher can make a theoretical score distributed according to the normal curve model. The normality distribution is divided into six (6) standard deviation units, consisting of three (3) parts to the left and three parts to the right of the mean. Based on calculating the nominal value, maximum value, average, and standard deviation, scores can be categorized based on hypothetical (theoretical) scores and can be categorized based on scores obtained from score data filled in by real subjects. This Performance Anxiety Scale for Theatre Actor will be categorized based on a hypothetical score.

This scale development uses a scale response in a continuum of at least 0 to a maximum of 6. Thus, with a scale of 38 items, the theoretical or hypothetical score that the respondent can obtain is at least 0 (score 0 x 38 items), and the maximum score is 228 (6 x 38 items). The score range of 228 can be divided into three categories (low – moderate – high).

4. Conclusion

The performance anxiety scales for theatre actors are designed to measure the extent to which individuals experience these aspects in the context of specific stage performance situations. This study can help gain a better understanding of an actor's level of anxiety. It can assist in developing intervention strategies to address performance anxiety that may hinder one's ability to perform well in the situations. Through this study, we have thoroughly developed a valid and reliable measurement scale to assess theatre actor performance anxiety. The process involved various stages, including identifying relevant key dimensions of the construct, developing items, validity and reliability tests, and empirical testing on a representative sample.

Our research findings provide strong empirical support for the validity and reliability of the developed scale. Our results indicate that the scale effectively measures the theatre actor performance anxiety construct and can serve as a valuable tool in educational and practical contexts to understand and address anxiety issues in student as well as professional actors. This study also offers some important insights. First, our findings demonstrate that theatre actor performance anxiety is a multidimensional construct involving aspects such as performance anxiety, concern about outcomes, and time pressure. This study underscores the importance of considering the diversity of anxiety dimensions when designing effective educational interventions.

This study also offers some important insights. First, our findings demonstrate that theatre actor performance anxiety is a multidimensional construct involving physical (somatic) aspects, cognitive, and behavioural aspects. These three basic aspects are often interrelated and influence each other. Cognitive aspects such as negative thoughts about one's abilities may trigger physical or somatic reactions like excessive sweating or an increasing heartbeat, which can affect behavioural responses such as avoiding situations. This study underscores the importance of considering the diversity of anxiety dimensions when designing effective student-actor training programs and educational interventions.

While this study has successfully developed a functional performance anxiety scale for theatre actor, more challenges remain to address. Further study is needed to test the validity and reliability of this scale in various educational and cultural contexts, age groups, and larger populations. Additionally, it is important to continue developing appropriate intervention strategies based on these findings. This study can provide valuable guidance to educators and counsellors in designing appropriate support strategies for acting students and professional actors. We hope this study can help improve student well-being and create a more supportive educational environment, preparing our acting students to become better professional actors.

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Appendix

Item No.	PERNYATAAN	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Telapak tangan saya terasa basah saat saya maju ke depan panggung							
2	Saya mengalami kesulitan untuk mengingat naskah							
3	Saya sangat khawatir bila saya akan membuat kacau pertunjukan							
5	Saya menghindari tawaran memerankan suatu peran							
7	Telapak tangan dan kaki terasa dingin saat pentas							
9	Saya melakukan kesalahan tempo akting ketika pentas							
10	Fleksibilitas tubuh yang sudah saya latih seperti tidak ada gunanya							
12	Saya selalu percaya diri untuk berperan menjadi aktor di atas panggung							
13	Detak jantung saya meningkat seiring mendekatnya waktu pementasan							
14	Nafas saya tidak teratur saat pentas							
15	Saya merasa sulit tidur karena akan tampil							
16	Muncul Pikiran negatif yang berkaitan dengan kegagalan pertunjukan							
17	Kaki saya terasa berat untuk melangkah ke atas panggung ketika hendak tampil							
18	Ketika sedang pentas, suara saya sering mengecil tanpa saya sadari							
19	Saya menjadi lebih sensitif pada suara berisik ketika akan pentas							
20	Nafas saya terasa berat ketika tampil di depan penonton							
21	Muncul perasaan ingin muntah ketika mau pentas							
22	Saya kadang merasa bingung saat di atas panggung							
24	Saya kerap membelakangi penonton tanpa saya sadari							
25	Ketika diminta untuk berperan, Saya lebih memilih berkegiatan di belakang panggung daripada menjadi seorang pemeran							
26	Saya beberapa kali Slip lidah (salah mengucapkan kata tertentu)							
27	Saya menolak untuk menjadi pemeran utama							
28	Saya merasa jantung saya berhenti ketika saya melakukan kesalahan							
29	Saya mengalami sulit tidur seiring mendekatnya waktu pentas							
30	Perut saya terasa mulas dan tidak nyaman saat mau pentas							
31	Saya tetap fokus berkonsentrasi saat pentas							
32	Saya selalu dapat memberikan penampilan terbaik saya							
33	Wajah saya terasa kaku saat sedang pentas							
34	Detak jantung saya tidak teratur saat saya pentas							
35	Keringat keluar lebih banyak dibanding saat saya tidak tampil							
36	Saya tiba-tiba terbangun tengah malam							

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37	Penonton terasa mengintimidasi saya							
39	Kaki dan tangan saya gemetar ketika akan dan saat pentas							
40	Saya sangat khawatir tidak dapat menampilkan kemampuan terbaik saya							
41	Saya melakukan kesalahan dialog saat pentas							
42	Pola tidur saya terganggu saat mau pentas							
43	Suhu tubuh terasa panas – dingin saat di hadapan penonton							
44	Nafas saya terasa pendek-pendek saat berada di depan penonton							