

(Research) Article

The Effect of Group Guidance Services Using Role Playing Techniques on the Interpersonal Communication Skills of Grade VII Students at MTs Nurus Salam Deli Tua

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Abstract: This study aims to determine the effect of group guidance services with role-playing techniques on the interpersonal communication skills of seventh-grade students at MTs Nurus Salam Deli Tua. Interpersonal communication skills are crucial for adolescents to interact effectively with their social environment. This study employs a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental method in the form of a one-group pretest-posttest design. The population of this study consisted of 65 students, with a sample of 10 students selected purposively based on the results of initial observations. The instrument used was an interpersonal communication questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis was performed using a t-test. The results showed a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant effect of group guidance services with role-playing techniques on students' interpersonal communication skills.

Keywords: Group guidance services; Role-playing techniques; Interpersonal communication skills; Seventh-grade students; Guidance impact.

1. Introduction

Interpersonal communication is a crucial skill for every individual, especially during adolescence. Adolescence is a transitional period marked by physical, emotional, and social changes, making adolescents particularly vulnerable to difficulties in establishing healthy social relationships. In an educational context, interpersonal communication skills play a strategic role because they influence interactions between students and between students and teachers. Adolescents with strong interpersonal communication skills tend to adapt more easily to social environments, express ideas clearly, and demonstrate empathy for others.

However, the reality on the ground shows that many students experience barriers to effective communication. Based on initial observations at MTs Nurus Salam Deli Tua, it was found that some students had difficulty expressing their opinions, lacked empathy for their peers, and tended to withdraw from their social environment. This indicates problems with openness, self-confidence, and listening skills, which are all components of interpersonal communication. If not promptly addressed, these issues can impact students' learning processes, social relationships, and even their mental health.

This issue highlights a research gap: the suboptimal strategies used by guidance and counseling services to develop students' interpersonal communication. One potential approach that has

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not been widely implemented systematically in schools is group guidance services using role-playing techniques. This technique allows students to learn actively through role-playing, where they can explore feelings, express ideas, and experience the perspectives of others in social situations that resemble real-life situations. Role-playing not only encourages active student participation but also naturally fosters empathy and communication skills. Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of role-playing in improving social and communication skills. However, further testing is needed in different contexts and student characteristics, including MTs students with unique social and cultural backgrounds. Based on this explanation, this study aims to determine the effect of group guidance services using role-playing techniques on the interpersonal communication skills of ninth-grade students at MTs Nurus Salam Deli Tua. This research is expected to contribute both theoretically to the development of practice-based counseling services and practically to guidance and counseling teachers in designing effective services to improve students' social skills.

3. Proposed Method

This study used a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design. This design allowed researchers to observe changes in students' interpersonal communication skills before and after being provided with group guidance services using role-playing techniques. This research was conducted at MTs Nurus Salam Deli Tua in the 2024/2025 academic year. The population in this study was all 65 ninth-grade students. Of these, the researchers selected 10 students as a sample using a purposive sampling technique. This sample selection was based on observations and interviews with guidance counselors, who found that the selected students exhibited symptoms of poor interpersonal communication, such as difficulty expressing opinions, being less responsive to others, and tending to withdraw from social settings.

The treatment provided to the sample students was group guidance services using role-playing techniques. This service was implemented in several sessions, each lasting 60 to 90 minutes. In each session, students are given the opportunity to role-play social scenarios relevant to their lives, such as dealing with conflict, having a group discussion, or expressing opinions in public. The goal of these activities is to train students in interpersonal communication skills, including openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitudes, and equality.

The instrument used to measure interpersonal communication skills was a questionnaire developed based on indicators proposed by Joseph Devito (2013). This questionnaire contained closed-ended statements using a Likert scale of 1-4 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) and covered five main aspects: openness, empathy, supportiveness, positive attitudes, and equality. Before being used in the main study, the questionnaire was piloted on 36 students outside the study sample. Validity test results showed that all items had correlation coefficients above 0.3 and were deemed valid. Reliability tests showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.89, indicating excellent reliability of the instrument.

Data obtained from the pretest and posttest questionnaires were analyzed using paired sample t-tests using SPSS. This test aims to determine whether there is a significant difference in students' interpersonal communication skills before and after being given group guidance services using role-playing techniques. The decision-making criteria are: if the significance value (p) < 0.05, it can be concluded that the treatment has a significant effect.

4. Results and Discussion

This study aimed to determine the effect of role-playing group guidance services on the interpersonal communication skills of ninth-grade students at MTs Nurus Salam Deli Tua. The study sample consisted of 10 students selected using purposive sampling based on initial observations and recommendations from guidance counselors. Before receiving the services, students were given a pretest questionnaire measuring five indicators of interpersonal communication according to Devito (2013): openness, empathy, supportiveness, positivity, and equality. After receiving six sessions of role-playing

group guidance services, students completed a posttest questionnaire using the same instrument.

Tabel 1. Average results of pretest and posttest scores

Interpersonal Communication Indicators	Average Pretest Score	Average Posttest Score
Openness	52,6	70,4
Empathy	49,8	68,1
Supportiveness	50,2	69,3
Positiveness	51,1	71,2
Equality	48,9	67,5
Total Skor Rata-rata	50,2	69,3

Statistical analysis using a paired sample t-test showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant difference between pre- and post-treatment scores. Thus, group guidance services using role-playing techniques significantly improved students' interpersonal communication skills. The significant increase in scores across all indicators indicates that role-playing techniques are effective in improving students' interpersonal communication skills. This technique provides students with a space to practice expressing their thoughts and feelings effectively.

openly in a supportive group setting. When students role-play in various social scenarios, they not only learn to express their opinions but also understand others' perspectives, increase empathy, and develop positive communication skills. These findings align with research by Romlah (2013), which found that role-playing techniques in group guidance can build positive group dynamics and improve students' social skills. These results also support research by Setyowati and Maharani (2020), which found that role-playing effectively improves interpersonal communication among junior high school students. From a theoretical perspective, these results support Devito's (2013) view that effective interpersonal communication is formed through direct experiences involving openness, empathy, support, positive attitudes, and equality. Through this approach, students not only gain cognitive understanding but also experience and practice social skills in real-life contexts. Practically, these findings demonstrate that active counseling approaches such as role-playing can be an effective and relevant intervention strategy for madrasah students from diverse social backgrounds. This technique is suitable for use by guidance and counseling teachers to help students overcome communication barriers and build more harmonious social relationships.

5. Comparison

This study shows that group guidance services using role-playing techniques have a significant positive impact on improving students' interpersonal communication skills. These results align with several previous research findings, but are unique in their application in a madrasah environment with a more specific local cultural context. In comparison, research by Astuti (2021) showed that role-playing techniques effectively improve empathy and speaking skills in junior high school students. Meanwhile, Wulandari & Prasetyo (2020) found that role-playing techniques can increase openness and self-confidence in interpersonal communication among high school students. Compared with these studies, this research focuses more on the context of group guidance within the madrasah environment, which has not been widely explored in academic literature.

This study also supports the findings of Sukmawati (2019), who revealed that students' interpersonal communication can be improved through role-playing simulations because this approach encourages emotional engagement and direct experience. However, the strength of this study lies in the integration of systematic group guidance with active student participation through role-playing techniques, which significantly improves communication dimensions such as active listening, verbal expression, and non-verbal comprehension. By comparing the results of this study with the state-of-the-art, a significant contribution is made in the form of a structured role-playing-based intervention model within group guidance services that is contextually adapted in the MTs environment. This can serve as a strategic reference in developing guidance and counseling services programs that are responsive to students' interpersonal communication needs, particularly in religious-based junior high schools.

6. Conclusions

This study revealed that group guidance services using the role playing technique significantly influenced the improvement of interpersonal communication skills among Grade VII students at MTs Nurus Salam Deli Tua. Quantitative analysis showed a significant difference between pretest and posttest scores, indicating that the intervention effectively enhanced students' communication abilities.

These findings align with the research objective, which aimed to examine the effect of role playing in group guidance on students' interpersonal communication. The study demonstrated that active learning through direct student participation helped develop key skills such as speaking, active listening, empathy, and self-expression.

Theoretically and practically, this research contributes to the development of school counseling services, especially in Islamic junior high schools (madrasahs). The results can serve as a foundation for school counselors to incorporate role playing into group guidance programs as a fun, applicable, and effective approach to improving students' social skills.

However, this study has several limitations, including its focus on a single school and the use of only one intervention technique. Future research is encouraged to involve a larger and more diverse sample, apply various counseling techniques, and consider additional variables such as self-confidence or emotional intelligence in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of guidance interventions on student development.

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