

The effect of role playing on social interaction

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Abstract

This research was motivated by the results of observations that found a number of students were still unable to interact optimally. Some students tend to be solitary, show awkwardness when dealing with new friends, lack courage in communicating, and have difficulty working together with peers outside their circle of friends and are reluctant to get involved in group activities. This study aims to determine the influence of role playing on social interaction. Researchers use group guidance services with the role playing method. The results of the study showed a significant influence of group guidance services using the role playing method on students' social interactions. Based on the independent samples t-test on the posttest data, the calculated t value was 4.797, which was greater than the t table of 2.074 ($df = 22$) and the significance value was $p < 0.001$ (< 0.05). This shows that there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group after being given treatment. Thus, group guidance services using the role playing method have a positive effect on increasing students' social interactions.

Introduction

Humans are social creatures, which means that humans have a natural need to interact with other people (Salsabila, 2022). Humans also have encouragement such as the urge to self-actualization, curiosity, encouragement to meet needs and so on (Endah Rahmawati, 2019). In carrying out life, humans cannot live alone but need the presence of other humans to be able to maintain their lives and make life more meaningful by using spoken language or sign language. Living together between humans will involve various forms of communication and situations because social interaction is the main basis of community life. Communication has a role in forming healthy relationships to create positive social interactions in the neighborhood environment (Uswari, I. ., Habibi, M. ., Jaelani, A. K. ., & Fahrudin, 2023). Social interaction is a reciprocal relationship that influences each other, in which there is action and there is reaction (Mulyadi. Yonathan Yoel dan Franky Liauw, 2020). Social interaction is a condition for social activities to occur. In carrying out interactions there are conditions that must be met, namely social contact and social communication (Intan Putri, Dendi, Syukerti, N., Ahmad Iman Mulyadi, 2022). Through social interaction, humans can get to know each other, influence each other, and work together.

In the context of education, social interaction is key for students to be able to learn, work together, and develop emotionally and intellectually. Social interaction in collaborative learning plays an important role in improving students' understanding of the material and academic achievement (Karina, M., Judijanto, L., Rukmini, A., Fauzi, M. S., & Arsyad, 2024).

The ability to establish healthy relationships with other people, whether peers, teachers, or the surrounding environment, is very important in determining students' success in the learning process and character formation.. However, in reality, not all students have adequate social interaction skills. In various schools, especially at the Senior High School (SMA) level, many students are still found to be unable to communicate effectively, lack self-confidence in socializing, and show a tendency to withdraw from their social groups.

The phenomenon of low social interaction among students has become an increasingly relevant issue in recent years, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic which had a major impact on the social habits of children and adolescents. Restrictions on social activities in the community after the Covid-19 pandemic have given rise to socio-cultural transformations in society that have changed patterns of behavior and social interactions in everyday life (Ken Widyatwati Wignjosasono, 2022). For almost two years, the learning process has been conducted online. As a result, when returning to face-to-face learning, many students have experienced difficulties in rebuilding social relationships, are awkward in working together, and show insensitivity in establishing interpersonal communication. Seeing the low learning outcomes during the Covid-19 Pandemic is certainly due to the lack of motivation and social interaction of students in participating in the learning process(Anggara Dwinata, Syaipul Pahru, Leny Suryaning Astutik, Claudya Zahrani Susilo, 2023) .This condition also occurred at Girimulyo 1 State Senior High School, especially for class X students in the 2025/2026 academic year.. Based on the results of initial observations, it was found that a number of students were still unable to interact optimally, indicated by several students tending to be alone, showing awkwardness when dealing with new friends, lack of courage in communicating, and difficulty working together with peers outside their circle of friends and being reluctant to get involved in group activities. Students are seen to be selective about the friends they hang out with and form certain groups (gangs), which has the potential to create exclusivity.

Social interaction issues not only impact students' personal lives but also the overall classroom dynamics. Social interactions with peers can have long-term effects on the development of children's social and academic skills (Kim, S., Lin, T. J., Chen, J., Logan, J., Purtell, K. M., & Justice, 2020). Classes filled with students with low interaction skills tend to be less harmonious, have low levels of cooperation, and are less effective in implementing collaborative learning. Social interactions also provide opportunities for children to learn self-regulation, impulse control, and stress management(Syifa Aulia Nurfazrina, Muslihin, H. Y., 2020).

This condition is certainly a challenge for teachers in creating an active and conducive learning atmosphere. Children who have good interaction skills will be accepted by their living environment, and positive experiences in social activities will provide a strong foundation for their social life in the future(Bakri, A. R. ., Nasucha, J. A. . ., & Indri M, 2021). If not handled properly, these social interaction problems can develop into other psychosocial problems, such as social isolation, bullying, and academic stress. Teenagers with good social skills have been shown to have higher learning motivation. On the other hand, low social skills have the potential to cause feelings of loneliness, lack of emotional support, and low enthusiasm for participating in learning(Triyanti, T., Rasimin, R., & Yaksa, 2023) .This confirms that social skills are an important aspect that cannot be ignored in developing students' character. Weak social skills result in low academic achievement, lack of friends, rejection, anxiety, and depression(Polat, Ö., Sezer, T., & Atış-Akyol, 2022).

In an effort to help students develop social skills, guidance and counseling services in schools have a strategic role. The strategy for improving students' social skills is closely related to the role of Guidance and Counseling Teachers who help students in the socialization process in the school environment and can carry out their duties as students(Putri Evita Sari Nasution, 2023) . One of the services that can be utilized is group guidance, which is a process of

providing assistance to a number of students through structured and directed group interactions. One of the methods used in guidance and counseling is group guidance, which utilizes dynamic interactions between group members. In each session, learners are taught to enrich their character, including the value of respect for others (Abadi, Dinda Putri, Indreswari, Henny, Bariyyah, 2025). Group guidance provides a space for students to share with each other, learn from each other's experiences, and practice social skills in a safe and supportive environment. Group guidance is effective in providing positive social experiences for students, such as feeling accepted, valued, and being able to develop social and emotional skills, including empathy, cooperation, and self-confidence. (James et al., 2026)

One of the factors contributing to this condition is the limited guidance services provided in schools. Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers have not yet implemented the role playing method in group guidance due to limited teaching time, where BK hours only take place once every two weeks. This results in a lack of opportunities for students to engage in activities that can help develop social interaction skills through role playing in a more interactive and applicable way. The role playing method in group guidance has a positive impact on improving students' social skills. Role playing techniques provide students with the opportunity to participate directly in simulated social situations that reflect real life (Denisa Septiani, Juwita Madira, Dea Kartika Utami, Berlian Cahyani, 2025). Group guidance using role playing techniques is a service that plays a role in preventing problems and difficulties for students in their personal, social, academic and learning life and can help students develop their personal abilities and potential, make decisions and choose careers in a dynamic group. (All Habsy, B., Valencya, N., Mayassary, Z. N., Linsetyowati, N. C. C., & Ramadhani, 2024). Group guidance using the role playing method can significantly improve students' social interactions (Widiandika, 2020). Based on this background, it can be formulated that this study aims to determine whether there is a significant influence of the application of group guidance with the role playing method on the social interactions of class X students at SMA Negeri 1 Girimulyo.

Methods

Design

This research uses a quantitative research method with a quasi-experimental approach. The research design used was a non-equivalent control group design. In this design there are two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was given treatment in the form of group guidance services using the role playing method, while the control group was not given treatment. Both groups were given an initial test (pretest) to determine the condition of students' social interactions before treatment, and after treatment the experimental group was given a final test (posttest) which was also given to the control group. The differences in pretest and posttest scores of the two groups were then analyzed to determine the effect of the treatment on students' social interactions.

Participants

The population in this study were class X students of SMA Negeri 1 Girimulyo in the 2025/2026 academic year.

Table 1. Research Population of Class X Students of SMA Negeri 1 Girimulyo in the 2025/2026 Academic Year

No	Class	Amount
1.	XA	36
2.	XB	36
3.	XC	36
Amount		108

From this population, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique to determine the research sample. This technique was chosen because the sample was determined based on certain criteria that align with the research objective, namely students with low social interaction skills. The research sample is as follows:

Table 2. Research Sample of Class X of SMA Negeri 1 Girimulyo, Academic Year 2025/2026

No	Group	Class	Sample
1.	Control Group	XA	12
2.	Experimental Group	XC	12
	Number of Samples	2	24

Instruments

In this study, the researcher used a data collection method in the form of a questionnaire with a closed questionnaire type. The research instrument used a social interaction questionnaire.

Table 3. Social Interaction Instrument Grid

Variable	Indicator	No Item		example statement
		<i>Favourable</i>	<i>Unfavourable</i>	
Social Interaction	Involving more than one individual.	1,2,3,4,5,6	7,8,9,10,11,12	I always invite friends to discuss lessons that I don't understand
	Using certain symbols as a means of conveying messages.	13,14,15,16,17,18	19,20,21,22,23,24	I speak clearly so that my friends can easily understand what I am saying.
	Takes place in the time dimension (past, present, future).	25,26,27,28,29,30	31,32,33,34,35,36	I always relate the conversation to experiences I have had.
	Social interactions have a specific purpose.	37,38,39,40,41,42	43,44,45,46,47,48	I always invite friends to work together to complete tasks well.
Number of Items				48

In determining questionnaire scores, the Likert scale used in this study used a range of 1 to 4, assuming it would make it easier for the research subjects to choose their answers. The alternative answer choices for respondents can be described in the following table:

Table 4. Likert Scale Scores

Alternative Answers	Item Score	
	<i>Favourable</i>	<i>Unfavourable</i>
Very Appropriate (SS)	4	1
Appropriate (S)	3	2
Not Appropriate (TS)	2	3
Very Unsuitable (STS)	1	4

This study uses construct validity. In this study, all questionnaires used construct validity which was developed based on theoretical construction. Item validity test is used to determine the accuracy of the data. Validity testing through a questionnaire on 81 class X students at SMA Negeri 1 Girimulyo using the JASP application version 0.18.3.0 for data analysis, obtained as many as 7 items were declared invalid because the calculated r was less than 0.220. Based on the results of the validity test, the number of items used for research in the social interaction questionnaire was 41 items. In this reliability test, the researcher used the Alpha formula from Cronbach Coefficient Alpha as proposed by Arikunto (2013: 239) with the interpretation of the reliability test results:

Table 5. Interpretation of Reliability Values

The value of r	Interpretation
0,800 – 1,000	High
0,600 – 0,800	Sufficient
0,400 – 0,600	Somewhat Low
0,200 – 0,400	Low
0,000 – 0,200	Very Low (No correlation)

Based on the reliability test conducted with the JASP program version 0.18.3.0, the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha of the student social interaction questionnaire was 0.911. Thus, it can be stated that the questionnaire has high reliability.

Procedure

Based on the results of initial observations, 24 students were indicated to have low social interaction skills. Furthermore, to implement group guidance services using the role playing method, the researcher divided the sample into two groups. Each group consists of 12 students, namely 12 students from class X A and 12 students from class X C. This division is carried out so that group guidance services can be implemented more effectively and conductively, so that each student gets the opportunity to actively participate in activities.

Table 6. Research Plan

No	Activity	Service Topics	Time
1.	Completing the Student Needs Questionnaire	Distributing questionnaires on the needs of class X students	3 x 30 minutes
2.	Instrument Testing	Distributing social interaction questionnaires for testing	2 x 30 minutes
3.	<i>Pretest</i>	Provide a pretest of the social interaction questionnaire.	25 minutes
4.	Treatment I	Increase students' active participation in social interactions through group cooperation and discussion.	45 minutes

No	Activity	Service Topics	Time
5.	Treatment II	Optimizing the Use of Symbols and Expressions in Students' Social Communication Process	45 minutes
6.	Treatment III	Develop reflective social interactions based on experience and expectations	45 minutes
7.	Treatment IV	Social communication strategies for adaptive collaboration and conflict resolution	45 minutes
8.	<i>Posttest</i>	Provide a posttest of the social interaction questionnaire.	25 minutes

Data Analysis

The data analysis technique uses the independent samples t-test. In this study, the normality test was carried out using the Shapiro-Wilk method with the help of JASP software version 0.18.3.0. The selection of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test was based on the number of respondents being less than 50 people, in accordance with the opinion of Sugiyono (2015: 114) who stated that the Shapiro-Wilk test is suitable for use in small samples, namely less than 50 data, to determine the distribution of random data in a sample.

To determine the effect of group guidance with the role-playing method on students' social interactions, data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test if the data were not normally distributed based on the results of the Shapiro-Wilk normality test. This test is used to examine differences in pretest and posttest scores in the same group before and after being given group guidance treatment.

In this study, the homogeneity test was carried out using the Levene Statistic test with the help of JASP software version 0.18.3.0. This test is used because it can evaluate the similarity of variance between groups, both in normally and non-normally distributed data.

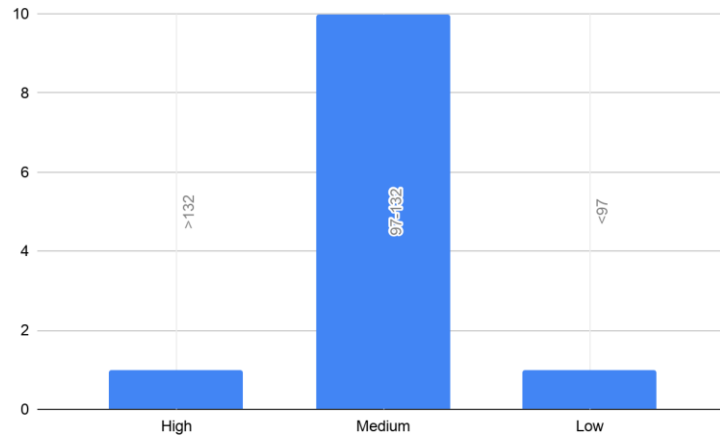
Results

The research results from the pretest of the experimental group of students' social interactions showed that the number of respondents (N) = 12, the highest score was 154, the lowest score was 82, and the average was 114.3.

Table 7. Categories of Social Interaction Pretest Classification of Students in the Experimental Group

No	Criteria	Score Range	Frequency
1	High	>132	1
2	Medium	97-132	10
3	Low	<97	1
Amount			12

Based on the table of categories for the experimental group's pretest variables above, there is 1 student in the high category, 10 students in the medium category, and 1 student in the low category. The data can be presented in a histogram as follows.



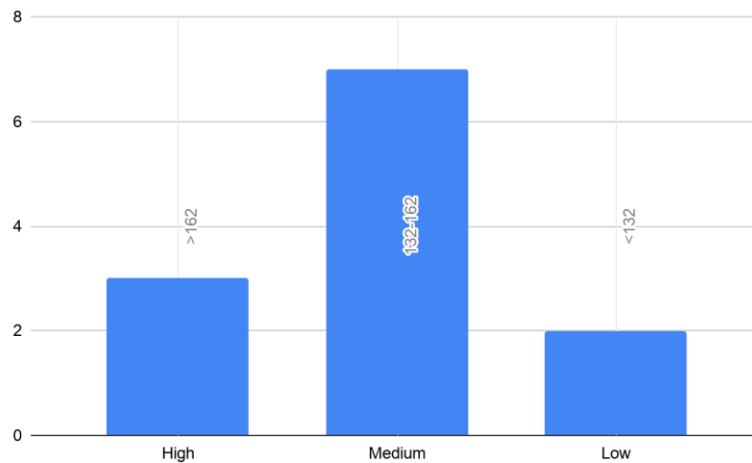
Graph 1. Histogram of Pretest Categories of Experimental Group

The research results from the posttest of the experimental group of students' social interactions showed that the number of respondents (N) = 12, the highest score was 164, the lowest score was 117, and the average was 146.75.

Table 8. Posttest Classification Categories of Social Interaction of Students in the Experimental Group

No	Criteria	Score Range	Frequency
1	High	>162	3
2	Medium	132-162	7
3	Low	<132	2
Amount			12

Based on the table of categories for the experimental group's posttest variables above, there are 3 students in the high category, 7 students in the medium category, and 2 students in the low category. The data can be presented in a histogram as follows.



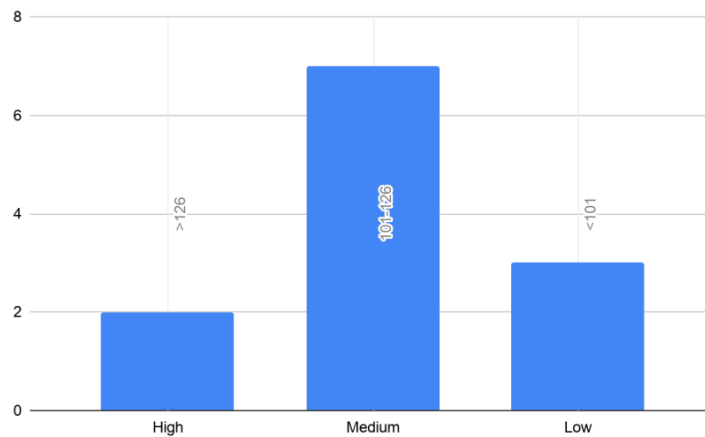
Graph 2. Histogram of Posttest Categories of Experimental Group

The research results from the pretest of the control group of students' social interactions showed that the number of respondents (N) = 12, the highest score was 134, the lowest score was 92, and the average was 113.333.

Table 9. Categories of Social Interaction Pretest Classification of Control Group Students

No	Criteria	Score Range	Frequency
1	High	>126	2
2	Medium	101-126	7
3	Low	<101	3
Amount			12

Based on the table of categories for the control group's pretest variables above, there are 2 students in the high category, 7 students in the medium category, and 3 students in the low category. The data can be presented in a histogram as follows.

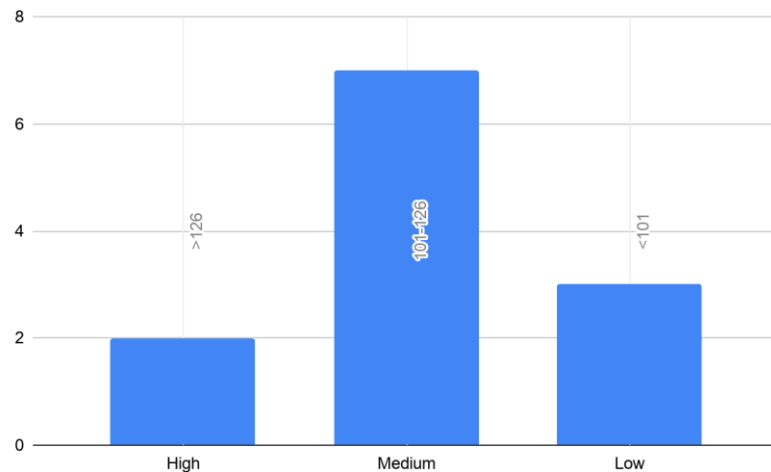
**Graph 3.** Histogram of Pretest Category of Control Group

The research results from the posttest of the control group of students' social interactions showed that the number of respondents (N) = 12, the highest score was 136, the lowest score was 63, and the average was 110.75.

Table 10. Categories of Posttest Classification of Social Interaction of Students in the Control Group

No	Criteria	Score Range	Frequency
1	High	>132	2
2	Medium	90-132	8
3	Low	<90	2
Amount			12

Based on the table of categories for the control group posttest variables above, there are 2 students in the high category, 8 students in the medium category, and 2 students in the low category. The data can be presented in a histogram as follows.



Graph 4. Histogram of Control Group Posttest Categories

Based on the average calculation results, the pretest scores of the experimental group (114.33) and the control group (113.33) indicated equivalent initial abilities. After treatment, the posttest average for the experimental group increased to 146.75, while the control group decreased to 110.75. This indicates that the treatment given to the experimental group was effective in improving student learning outcomes.

Table 11. Normality Test Results

<i>Test of Normality (Shapiro-Wilk)</i>			
		W	P
<i>Pretest</i>	Eksperimen	0.930	0.382
	Kontrol	0.926	0.343
<i>Posttest</i>	Eksperimen	0.934	0.427
	Kontrol	0.907	0.196

Note. Significant results suggest a deviation from normality.

Based on the results of the normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk method, the significance value (p) for the pretest data of the experimental group was 0.382 and the control group was 0.343. Meanwhile, the posttest significance value for the experimental group was 0.427 and the control group was 0.196. All significance values were greater than 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data in each group, both pretest and posttest, were normally distributed.

Table 12. Results of Homogeneity Test

<i>Test of Equality of Variances (Levene's)</i>				
	F	df₁	df₂	P
<i>Pretest</i>	0.161	1	22	0.692
<i>Posttest</i>	0.867	1	22	0.362

Based on the results of the homogeneity test using Levene's Test, the significance value for the pretest data was 0.692 and the posttest data was 0.362. Since both significance values are greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data has homogeneous variance, both in the pretest and posttest. Thus, the requirement for homogeneity of variance between groups is met.

Table 13. t-Test Data Table

No	Experimental Group			Control Group		
	Pretest	Posttest	Difference	Pretest	Posttest	Difference
1	113	158	-45	119	121	-2
2	116	163	-47	109	123	-14
3	127	154	-27	119	107	12
5	111	148	-37	118	117	1
6	82	162	-80	99	107	-8
7	154	134	20	134	134	0
8	112	138	-26	94	85	9
9	114	128	-14	117	123	-6
10	102	117	-15	128	119	9
11	111	152	-41	115	136	-21
12	100	143	-43	116	63	53
Total	1372	1761	-389	1360	1329	31
Mean	114.333	146.75	-32.416	113.333	110.750	2.583

Based on the table above, it is known that the average pretest score for the experimental group was 114.33 and increased to 146.75 in the posttest, with an average difference of -32.42. In contrast, the control group had an average pretest score of 113.33 and decreased to 110.75 in the posttest, with an average difference of 2.58. This indicates a significant increase in scores in the experimental group after treatment, while the control group experienced a slight decrease. Therefore, it can be concluded that the treatment given to the experimental group had a positive effect on improving student learning outcomes.

Table 14. Results of the Independent Samples T-test

<i>Independent Samples T-Test</i>			
	t	df	P
Pretest	0.159	22	0.875
Posttest	4.797	22	< .001

Note. Student's t-test.

Based on the results of the independent sample t-test on the experimental group and the control group, it can be concluded that at the time of the pretest, the p value was obtained = 0.875 (> 0.05), which indicates there was no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group before the treatment. This means that the initial conditions of both groups can be considered equal or homogeneous. Meanwhile, at the time of the posttest, the p value was obtained < 0.001 and the calculated t value was 4.797. With degrees of freedom (df) = 22 and a significance level of 5% (0.05) for a two-tailed test, the t table value = 2.074.

Meanwhile, the calculated t (4.797) $>$ t table (2.074) and $p < 0.05$, it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the posttest results of the experimental and control groups. This means that the treatment of group guidance services with the role-playing method has proven effective in improving students' social interactions compared to the control group that was not given this treatment.

Discussion

Social interaction plays an important role in human life. Abilities such as initiating/maintaining social interactions, interacting with others, following directions, regulating emotions, and solving social problems are considered important for success in school (Pello, Yalti Selfince, dan Zega, 2024). Student need communication to support their teaching and learning activities both at school and in the community and family environment (Mulyani, Nur Sya'ban Ratri Dwi, Rahmawati, Endah, Astuti, Anita Dewi, Aini,

2025). Thus, increasing social interaction through role-playing-based group guidance services is evidence that students can more easily develop the social skills needed in community life. Communication carried out by students not only impacts their social abilities but also influences their academic abilities (Maulana, M., Hidayati, 2016). Role playing is a learning strategy in group counseling services that provides opportunities for students to play roles, developing their imagination regarding communication problems and social relationships with others. (Novialdi, Andrian dan Telaumbanua, 2021)

In addition to being theoretically supported, the results of this study are also consistent with previous research findings. Previous research showed that group guidance services using role-playing techniques were effective in improving social interaction (Wibowo et al., 2019). Other research findings demonstrate that group counseling services using role-play techniques can improve students' social interactions. By optimally providing appropriate services and techniques for students, it can improve students' social interactions (Gaho, Jidarahati. Telaumbanua, Kaminudin dan Laia, 2021). Another study on the effectiveness of group guidance services using role-playing techniques in improving social interaction among class X students at MAN 2 Semarang City in 2024 also found that this method had a significant effect on improving students' social interaction (Nadia Arova Febriana, 2024). This strengthens the results of this study that group guidance with the role playing method has proven to be effective as a guidance and counseling service strategy in schools. The research findings support the aforementioned study, which demonstrates that group guidance services using role-playing techniques can improve social interaction among students at SMP PGRI Ngamprah. This improvement is evident in benefits such as positive behavioral changes among students and a willingness to develop interactions. (Ramdhani et al., 2025)

Thus, it can be concluded that group guidance services using the role playing method are an appropriate and effective strategy for improving students' social interaction skills. This is very relevant to the characteristics of adolescence which is full of social and emotional dynamics, where the skills of communicating, cooperating, and understanding others are very much needed to form healthy and harmonious interpersonal relationships.

Implications

These results strengthen the theory that learning through observation and imitation of behavior (such as in role playing) is very effective in changing social interaction patterns in adolescents. This research impacts all levels of the education system, including individual counseling, classroom instruction, curriculum, teacher training, school management, policy, parental involvement, and research. The main conclusion is that role-playing is not just a fun activity, but a scientific intervention proven to significantly improve students' social interaction skills. Successful implementation requires systematic implementation, resource support, and professional development. If all these factors are met, the benefits include a better classroom climate, effective collaboration, reduced social isolation, and a readiness for community life that is felt by all students, not just the research subjects.

Limitations and future directions

This study was limited to a single school, meaning the results cannot be generalized to all regions. Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the sample to include several schools in different regions for more representative data.

Conclusion

This study proves that group guidance services using the role playing method have a significant effect on improving the social interaction of grade X students at SMA Negeri 1 Girimulyo. This is demonstrated by the results of the independent samples t-test on the posttest data, with a calculated t value of 4.797 greater than the t table value of 2.074 (df = 22) and a

significant value of $p < 0.001$ (< 0.05). The experimental group that received the role playing treatment showed an increase in the average social interaction score from 114.33 to 146.75, while the control group actually experienced a decrease from 113.33 to 110.75.

This study is important for you whether you are a teacher, counselor, principal, policymaker, or prospective researcher because it provides empirical evidence that a simple intervention such as role playing can address a real problem faced by many schools in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era: students' weak social interaction skills. Many students today tend to isolate themselves, feel awkward communicating, struggle to cooperate, and are reluctant to engage in group activities. If left unaddressed, these problems can develop into social isolation, bullying, academic stress, and low learning motivation. By implementing the role playing method in group guidance services, schools have access to a strategy that is scientifically proven, easy to implement, and in building students' social skills, skills that are essential for both academic success and future community life. In other words, this study offers a practical solution that you can immediately apply in your respective schools.

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Author Contribution Statement

ER contributed to the research concept, research design, data collection, and analysis and interpretation of the results. NRDM played a role in the development of research instruments, data processing. IZA preparation of the research report, and writing of the manuscript. Three authors jointly approved the final version of the manuscript for publication

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