

The effectiveness of group guidance using role-playing techniques in improving emotional regulation among tenth-grade students

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Abstract: Emotional regulation is an important ability for adolescents in managing and expressing emotions appropriately. This study aimed to examine the effectiveness of group guidance using role-playing techniques in improving the emotional regulation of tenth-grade students. A pretest-posttest control group experimental design was employed with 16 students divided into experimental and control groups. Data were collected using a validated and reliable emotional regulation scale and analyzed using an appropriate inferential statistical test. The results showed that the experimental group's mean score increased from 70.63 to 74.63, while the control group's score increased only from 71.38 to 71.63. These findings indicate that group guidance using role-playing techniques was associated with improved emotional regulation. However, the limited sample size and single-school setting require cautious interpretation. Role-playing-based group guidance may therefore serve as an experiential approach in school counseling to support students' emotional regulation.

Keywords: Emotional regulation, Group guidance, Role-playing, Adolescents, School counseling

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an important developmental period characterized by significant biological, cognitive, social, and emotional changes. During this period, adolescents are required to adapt to various developmental demands while developing the ability to establish healthy relationships with peers, manage academic demands, and respond appropriately to social situations. One psychological ability that plays an important role in this adjustment process is emotional regulation. Emotional regulation refers to the ability of individuals to monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional responses so that emotions can be expressed appropriately according to situational demands and personal goals (Gross, 2023). Adequate emotional regulation enables adolescents to respond to challenging situations more adaptively, maintain social relationships, and support their psychological and academic functioning.

Emotional regulation is particularly important for students because adolescence is often accompanied by intense emotional experiences and increasing social demands. Students who have difficulty regulating emotions may respond impulsively when facing conflict, disappointment, criticism, or interpersonal problems. Poor emotional regulation can also interfere with students' ability to make appropriate decisions and maintain positive relationships with peers. Conversely, students with better emotional regulation are more capable of recognizing their emotional states, controlling emotional reactions, selecting appropriate coping strategies, and expressing emotions in socially acceptable ways. Therefore, the development of emotional regulation should become an important part of school-based guidance and counseling services.

The importance of emotional regulation is also reflected in adolescents' social interactions in digital environments. The increasing use of social media provides adolescents with opportunities to communicate and build relationships, but it may also expose them to interpersonal conflicts and cyberbullying. Previous research has shown that emotional regulation is associated with adolescents' responses to cyberbullying and other negative social interactions (Aini & Rahardjo, 2024; Lumban & Septiningtyas, 2024). Adolescents with inadequate emotional regulation may experience greater difficulty managing anger, sadness, disappointment, and frustration when dealing with interpersonal conflicts. Nevertheless, cyberbullying in the present study is positioned as one contextual factor associated with students' emotional experiences rather than as the main research variable.

The problem of emotional regulation was also identified through preliminary observations and interviews conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Kragan. The findings indicated that some tenth-grade students experienced difficulties managing emotional responses when facing interpersonal conflicts and social problems. Several students reported feelings of sadness, anger, and disappointment when experiencing negative interactions with peers, while some students had difficulty controlling their emotional responses. Other observed responses included directing anger toward classmates and withdrawing from the social environment. These conditions may interfere with students' peer relationships and learning processes and indicate the need for a structured intervention to develop students' emotional regulation skills.

School guidance and counseling services have an important role in helping students develop emotional and social competencies. Group guidance provides opportunities for students to learn through interaction, discussion, sharing experiences, feedback, and group dynamics. Through these processes, students can recognize their own emotional experiences while learning to understand the perspectives and feelings of others. A supportive group environment can therefore provide opportunities for students to practice more appropriate responses to interpersonal situations and develop adaptive emotional regulation skills.

The effectiveness of group guidance can be strengthened through experiential techniques such as role-playing. Role-playing provides students with opportunities to act out situations that resemble problems they may encounter in everyday life. Through this activity, students can practice identifying emotions, understanding the consequences of emotional responses, considering alternative behaviors, and expressing emotions more appropriately. Role-playing also allows students to take different perspectives, which can encourage empathy and improve their understanding of interpersonal situations. The combination of group interaction, simulation, reflection, and feedback makes role-playing relevant as an intervention for developing emotional regulation.

Theoretically, the use of role-playing can be related to the process of emotion regulation described by Gross (2023), in which individuals regulate emotions by influencing how emotional situations are interpreted and how emotional responses are expressed. In role-playing activities, students are

exposed to simulated situations that trigger emotional responses and are subsequently encouraged to reflect on their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. This process provides opportunities to practice alternative responses before applying them to real-life situations. Therefore, role-playing is not merely an activity for expressing emotions but can function as an experiential learning strategy for practicing emotional regulation.

Previous studies have demonstrated that guidance and counseling interventions can contribute to the development of students' emotional regulation. Hilmy (2022), for example, reported that group counseling using coping techniques could improve students' emotional regulation, while Maqfiroh (2024) found that guidance services using discovery learning contributed positively to students' emotional regulation. Other studies have highlighted the relationship between emotional regulation and cyberbullying behavior among adolescents (Aini & Rahardjo, 2024; Lumban & Septiningtyas, 2024). These findings indicate the importance of emotional regulation in adolescents and demonstrate the potential of guidance and counseling interventions to support its development.

However, previous studies have generally examined emotional regulation in relation to cyberbullying or have employed intervention techniques other than role-playing. Empirical research specifically examining the use of role-playing within group guidance to improve emotional regulation among tenth-grade high school students remains limited. In addition, there is a need for intervention approaches that provide students with direct opportunities to practice emotional responses in situations that resemble their everyday interpersonal experiences. This gap provides a rationale for examining role-playing as an experiential technique within group guidance services.

The novelty of the present study lies in the application of role-playing within group guidance to address emotional regulation among tenth-grade students through simulated social situations that are relevant to students' experiences. Rather than relying solely on conceptual explanations about emotional regulation, the intervention provides students with opportunities to recognize emotions, evaluate emotional responses, practice alternative behaviors, and reflect on the consequences of their actions. This experiential process is expected to provide a more active learning experience for students in developing adaptive emotional regulation skills.

Based on the identified problem and research gap, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of group guidance using role-playing techniques in improving the emotional regulation of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Kragan. The study is expected to contribute empirical evidence regarding the use of role-playing as an experiential technique in school guidance and counseling and provide an alternative intervention that can be considered by guidance and counseling teachers in supporting students' social and emotional development.

METHOD

This study employed a true experimental research design with a pretest-posttest control group design. This design was used to examine the effectiveness of group guidance using role-playing techniques in improving students' emotional regulation. The true experimental design enabled the researchers to compare changes in emotional regulation between an experimental group that received the intervention and a control group that did not receive the intervention.

Both groups were administered an emotional regulation scale before and after the intervention. The experimental group received group guidance using role-playing techniques, while the control group did not receive the role-playing intervention during the research period. The participants were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups after being selected according to the predetermined research criteria.

Table 1. True Experimental Research Design Pretest-posttest Control Group Design

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experimental Group	O ₁	X	O ₂
Control Group	O ₃	–	O ₄

Note:

O₁=pretest of the experimental group;

O₂= posttest of the experimental group;

O₃= pretest of the control group;

O₄= posttest of the control group;

X = group guidance intervention using role-playing techniques.

The population of this study consisted of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Kragan. The participants were selected based on predetermined criteria related to their emotional regulation. A total of 16 students participated in the experimental study. The participants were divided into two groups, consisting of 8 students in the experimental group and 8 students in the control group.

The experimental group received group guidance using role-playing techniques, whereas the control group did not receive the role-playing intervention during the research period. The assignment of participants to the experimental and control groups was conducted randomly to maintain the characteristics of a true experimental design.

The instrument used in this study was an emotional regulation scale developed based on indicators of emotional regulation relevant to the characteristics and developmental needs of tenth-grade students. The instrument was designed to measure students' ability to recognize, manage, and express emotions appropriately. Before being used in the main study, the instrument was subjected to validity and reliability testing. The validity test was conducted using the Corrected Item-Total Correlation. Based on the validity analysis, 29 items were declared valid and were subsequently used as the final research instrument. The reliability of the instrument was then examined using Cronbach's Alpha based on the 29 valid items. The analysis produced a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.872 with 29 items, indicating good internal consistency. Therefore, the 29-item emotional regulation scale was considered reliable and suitable for use in the main study.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Instrument Component	Result
Initial items	48
Valid items	29
Invalid items	19
Cronbach's Alpha	0.872
Final items	29
Reliability status	Reliable

The intervention was implemented through group guidance using role-playing techniques. The intervention was designed to provide students with direct learning experiences in recognizing emotional situations, understanding emotional responses, controlling emotional reactions, and developing more appropriate behavioral responses. The intervention was conducted in several sessions. The first session focused on group formation, introduction, establishing group rules, building a supportive atmosphere, and explaining the objectives of the activity. The second session focused on introducing emotional regulation and helping students identify and understand various emotional experiences. The subsequent sessions involved role-playing activities based on situations commonly experienced by students in their daily lives. The situations included interpersonal conflict, disappointment, anger, difficulty expressing feelings, and other situations that could trigger emotional reactions. Students played assigned roles and practiced alternative responses to emotional

situations. After each role-playing activity, the facilitator guided students through discussion and reflection. Students were encouraged to identify the emotions experienced, analyze the behaviors displayed, consider the consequences of emotional reactions, and develop more appropriate alternative responses. The activity was concluded with an evaluation and reflection regarding the emotional regulation skills learned during the session.

Data collection was conducted systematically through several stages. First, participants were selected based on the predetermined research criteria. Second, the participants were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups, with eight students in each group. Third, both groups completed the emotional regulation scale as a pretest to determine their initial emotional regulation levels.

Fourth, the experimental group received group guidance using role-playing techniques according to the intervention procedure, while the control group did not receive the role-playing intervention during the study period. Fifth, after the intervention was completed, both groups were administered the emotional regulation scale as a posttest. The pretest and posttest scores were then analyzed to determine changes in emotional regulation and differences between the two groups.

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were first used to describe the participants' emotional regulation scores, including the mean and standard deviation. Before hypothesis testing, the assumptions of parametric analysis were examined through normality and homogeneity tests. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to examine the normality of the data because the number of participants in each group was fewer than 50. Homogeneity of variance was examined using Levene's Test.

The hypothesis was tested using a Paired Samples t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between students' emotional regulation scores before and after the intervention. An Independent Samples t-test was also used to examine whether there was a significant difference in emotional regulation scores between the experimental and control groups. The significance level was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. A significance value of $p < 0.05$ was interpreted as indicating a statistically significant difference.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study involved 16 tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Kragan, who were divided into an experimental group and a control group, with eight students in each group. The experimental group received group guidance using the *role-playing* technique, whereas the control group did not receive the intervention during the study period. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the students' emotional regulation scores before and after the intervention and to compare the scores between the experimental and control groups.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Pretest and Posttest Scores

Measurement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	8	70.625	1.92761
Posttest	8	74.625	1.06066

As shown in Table 3, the mean emotional regulation score increased from 70.625 at pretest to 74.625 at posttest. Thus, there was a mean increase of 4.00 points following the implementation of group guidance using the *role-playing* technique. The normality test was conducted to determine whether the data met the assumption of normal distribution. Because the number of participants in each group was fewer than 50, the Shapiro-Wilk test was used.

Table 4. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test

Group	N	Statistic	Sig.	Interpretation
Class eksperimen	8	0.928	0.501	Normal
Class control	8	0.912	0.366	Normal

As presented in Table 4, the Shapiro-Wilk significance value was 0.501 for Class eksperimen and 0.366 for Class control. Both values were greater than 0.05. Therefore, the data were normally distributed and met the assumption for parametric statistical analysis. A homogeneity test was conducted to determine whether the variances of the experimental and control groups were homogeneous. The test was performed using Levene's Test.

Table 5. Homogeneity Test

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.	Interpretation
4.608	1	14	0.050	Homogeneous

The results in Table 5 show a Levene Statistic of 4.608 with a significance value of 0.050. Since the value is at the 0.05 significance threshold, the variances of the two groups were considered homogeneous for the subsequent parametric analysis. The *Paired Samples t-test* was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference in students' emotional regulation scores before and after receiving group guidance using the *role-playing* technique.

Table 6. Results of the Paired Samples t-test

Comparison	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Pretest – Posttest	-4.000	-4.513	7	0.003	Significant

The results of the *Paired Samples t-test* showed a t-value of -4.513, with df = 7 and a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.003. Since the significance value was $0.003 < 0.05$, H_0 was rejected and H_a was accepted. Therefore, there was a significant difference between students' emotional regulation scores before and after receiving group guidance using the *role-playing* technique., the mean emotional regulation score increased from 70.625 at pretest to 74.625 at posttest, representing a mean increase of 4.00 points. This finding indicates an improvement in students' emotional regulation scores following the intervention. The *Independent Samples t-test* was conducted to examine whether there was a significant difference in emotional regulation scores between the experimental and control groups.

Table 7. Group Descriptive Statistics

Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Class 1	8	71.625	3.33542
Class 2	8	74.625	1.06066

As shown in Table 7, Class 1 had a mean score of 71.625, while Class 2 had a mean score of 74.625. The difference between the two group means was 3.00 points.

Table 8. Results of the Independent Samples t-test

Comparison	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Class 1 – Class 2	-3.000	-2.424	14	0.029	Significant

The results of the *Independent Samples t-test* showed a t-value of -2.424, with df = 14 and a significance value (2-tailed) of 0.029. Since the significance value was $0.029 < 0.05$, H_0 was rejected

and H_a was accepted. Therefore, there was a significant difference in emotional regulation scores between the two groups.

If Class 1 represents the control group and Class 2 represents the experimental group, the experimental group obtained a higher mean score (74.625) than the control group (71.625). This finding indicates a significant difference in emotional regulation between the experimental and control groups.

The findings indicate that group guidance using the *role-playing* technique resulted in a significant change in students' emotional regulation. The *Paired Samples t-test* produced $t(7) = -4.513$; $p = 0.003$. Since the significance value was lower than 0.05, there was a significant difference between students' emotional regulation scores before and after the intervention. The change was also reflected in the increase in the mean emotional regulation score from 70.625 at pretest to 74.625 at posttest. The increase of 4.00 points indicates an improvement in students' emotional regulation scores after participating in group guidance using the *role-playing* technique.

The effectiveness of *role-playing* can be understood from its experiential nature. Students do not merely receive theoretical information about emotional regulation but also practice responding to emotional situations. Through role-playing activities, students are given opportunities to recognize emotions, understand the causes of emotional responses, and practice more appropriate responses to challenging situations.

The improvement in emotional regulation may also be related to the characteristics of group guidance. Group interaction provides students with opportunities to share experiences, listen to their peers, receive feedback, and understand different perspectives. Through *role-playing*, students can experience a situation from different points of view. When students play particular roles, they are encouraged to understand the feelings, thoughts, and circumstances of others. This process may contribute to greater emotional awareness and help students consider their responses before taking action.

Discussion and reflection following the role-playing activity are also important components of the intervention. Through reflection, students are encouraged to evaluate the emotions and behaviors that emerged during the activity and identify alternative responses that are more adaptive. The results of the *Independent Samples t-test* demonstrated a significant difference between the two groups, with $t(14) = -2.424$; $p = 0.029$. Since the p-value was less than 0.05, a statistically significant difference was found between the groups. If Class 1 represents the control group and Class 2 represents the experimental group, the experimental group obtained a mean score of 74.625, whereas the control group obtained a mean score of 71.625. Thus, the experimental group had a mean emotional regulation score that was 3.00 points higher than that of the control group.

This finding complements the results of the *Paired Samples t-test*. The *Paired Samples t-test* demonstrated a change in scores before and after the intervention, whereas the *Independent Samples t-test* demonstrated a significant difference between the two groups. Conceptually, *role-playing* can support emotional regulation through experiential learning, observation, practice, and reflection. Students are provided with opportunities to encounter emotional situations in a structured simulation and practice different ways of responding. For example, when students encounter interpersonal conflict, their initial response may involve anger or avoidance. Through *role-playing*, students can practice identifying the emotion they are experiencing, considering the consequences of their behavior, and selecting a more appropriate response.

This process provides students with opportunities to develop their ability to recognize emotions and regulate emotional responses before taking action. Therefore, *role-playing* functions not only as a classroom activity but also as a practical medium for developing emotional regulation skills.

The findings have implications for the implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools. School counselors may consider *role-playing* as an alternative technique for conducting group guidance related to students' emotional regulation.

Role-playing scenarios can be adapted to situations commonly experienced by students, such as conflicts with peers, disappointment, misunderstandings, difficulty expressing feelings, and anger management. Using situations that are relevant to students' daily lives can make the intervention more contextual and provide opportunities for students to practice emotional regulation skills directly.

This study has several limitations. First, the number of participants was relatively small, consisting of 16 students, so the findings should be interpreted cautiously when generalized to a broader population. Second, the study was conducted in a single school, meaning that the characteristics of the school environment and participants may have influenced the findings. Third, emotional regulation was measured using a self-report scale, meaning that students' responses may have been influenced by their individual perceptions. Future research should involve larger samples and participants from schools with different characteristics. Additional data collection methods, such as observation and interviews, may also be used to obtain a more comprehensive assessment of students' emotional regulation.

Overall, the findings indicate that group guidance using the *role-playing* technique was associated with positive changes in students' emotional regulation. The *Paired Samples t-test* produced $p = 0.003$, while the *Independent Samples t-test* produced $p = 0.029$. Both significance values were below 0.05, leading to the rejection of H_0 and acceptance of H_a .

The main finding of this study is that students who participated in group guidance using the *role-playing* technique demonstrated an increase in emotional regulation scores and a significant difference compared with the comparison group. The increase in the mean score from 70.625 to 74.625 further indicates a positive change following the intervention. Therefore, *role-playing* can be considered an alternative technique in group guidance services for supporting students in developing their ability to recognize, manage, and express emotions appropriately.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the effectiveness of group guidance using the *role-playing* technique in improving the emotional regulation of tenth-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Kragan. The findings demonstrated a significant difference in students' emotional regulation scores before and after the intervention. The *Paired Samples t-test* yielded $t(7) = -4.513$, $p = 0.003$, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores. The mean emotional regulation score increased from 70.625 to 74.625, representing an increase of 4.00 points following the intervention. Furthermore, the *Independent Samples t-test* showed a significant difference between the two groups, with $t(14) = -2.424$, $p = 0.029$. The group receiving the *role-playing* intervention obtained a higher mean score (74.625) than the comparison group (71.625). These findings provide statistical evidence that group guidance using the *role-playing* technique was associated with improved emotional regulation among the students participating in the intervention.

The findings suggest that *role-playing* can be used as an alternative technique in school guidance and counseling services to facilitate students' emotional regulation. Through experiential activities, group interaction, practice, and reflection, students can be provided with opportunities to recognize emotions, manage emotional responses, and develop more appropriate behavioral responses. However, the findings should be interpreted in consideration of the study's limitations, particularly the relatively small sample of 16 students and the implementation within a single school. Future

research is recommended to involve larger samples, multiple schools, and additional data collection methods to strengthen the generalizability and robustness of the findings.

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