

EFFECTIVENESS OF ROLEPLAYING TECHNIQUE IN REDUCE VERBAL BULLYING BEHAVIOR IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

EFEKTIVITAS TEKNIK ROLEPLAYING DALAM MENURUNKAN PERILAKU BULLYING VERBAL PADA SISWA SMP

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Abstrak

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the role-playing technique in reducing verbal bullying behavior among students. Verbal bullying is a form of non-physical aggression frequently occurring in schools, which negatively affects the emotional and social development of victims. The role-playing technique was selected as a guidance approach that enables students to act out social situations, fostering empathy, understanding others' perspectives, and improving communication skills. This research employed a quantitative method with a quasi-experimental One-Group Pretest–Posttest Design. Participants completed a pretest, received group guidance sessions using the role-playing technique over four sessions (90 minutes each), and then took a posttest. The research instrument was a validated verbal bullying behavior scale. Data were tested for normality using the Shapiro–Wilk test and analyzed with a paired sample t-test at a significance level of 0.05. The findings indicated a significant decrease in verbal bullying behavior, with the mean score declining from 173.875 (pretest) to 102.625 (posttest) and a p -value = 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). These results demonstrate that the role-playing technique effectively reduces verbal bullying behavior among junior high school students. The study contributes to the development of anti-bullying intervention strategies in educational settings and offers an alternative approach for addressing similar issues in other institutions.

Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menguji efektivitas teknik bermain peran dalam mengurangi perilaku perundungan verbal di kalangan siswa. Perundungan verbal adalah bentuk agresi nonfisik yang sering terjadi di sekolah, yang berdampak negatif pada perkembangan emosional dan sosial korban. Teknik bermain peran dipilih sebagai pendekatan bimbingan yang memungkinkan siswa untuk memerankan situasi sosial, menumbuhkan empati, memahami perspektif orang lain, dan meningkatkan keterampilan komunikasi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan Desain Pretes-Postes Satu Kelompok eksperimen semu. Peserta menyelesaikan pretes, menerima sesi bimbingan kelompok menggunakan teknik bermain peran selama empat sesi (masing-masing 90 menit), dan kemudian mengikuti postes. Instrumen penelitian adalah skala perilaku perundungan verbal yang telah divalidasi. Data diuji normalitasnya menggunakan uji Shapiro-Wilk dan dianalisis dengan uji-t sampel berpasangan pada tingkat signifikansi 0,05. Temuan menunjukkan penurunan signifikan dalam perilaku perundungan verbal, dengan skor rata-rata menurun dari 173,875 (pra-tes) menjadi 102,625 (pasca-tes) dan nilai $p = 0,000$ ($p < 0,05$). Hasil ini menunjukkan bahwa teknik bermain peran efektif mengurangi perilaku perundungan verbal di kalangan siswa SMP. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan strategi intervensi anti-perundungan di lingkungan pendidikan dan menawarkan pendekatan alternatif untuk mengatasi masalah serupa di institusi lain.

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INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that is deliberately and repeatedly carried out against someone perceived as weaker by an individual or group that considers themselves stronger or more powerful Sdn et al.,(2024). This behavior can take various forms, such as physical violence, psychological pressure, and verbal abuse through hurtful words. According to. Ra et al., (2025) both direct and indirect bullying such as through social media can have significant emotional impacts on victims, including feelings of sadness, depression, anxiety, and trauma. Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) recorded 2,473 bullying cases from 2011 to 2019, occurring in educational settings and on social media. In mid-July 2023, the public was again shocked by four viral bullying cases in schools, totaling 16 cases from January to July 2023. This indicates that bullying among students remains an unresolved social issue. Child abuse also occurs in other forms. For instance, the Department of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (P3A) of South Kalimantan recorded 118 cases of violence in May 2023 including physical, psychological, and sexual violence—particularly in Banjarmasin City and Tabalong Regency.

Wibowo et al., (2021) reported that from 2011 to 2014, KPAI received 369 bullying complaints in the education sector, or about 25% of the total complaints, with 1,480 cases occurring in schools. This suggests that bullying, especially in educational environments, has become a more dominant form of violence than ordinary student conflicts. According to Isriyah & Rahmawati, (2025) verbal bullying is one of the most common forms of violence in educational settings, marked by insults, demeaning speech, harsh language, and harassing comments that can severely affect victims' psychological well-being. One of the most frequent yet often underestimated forms of bullying is verbal bullying. Rahmah & Purwoko, (2024) emphasize that verbal bullying can cause psychological disturbances in victims, such as decreased self-esteem and symptoms of depression. One case that caught public attention was a suspected bullying incident at Binus School Serpong on February 19, 2024. The incident took place outside of school, at a food stall, involving more than one alleged perpetrator. The victim suffered physical injuries, including bruises and burns, which went viral on social media JAKARTA, (2024). According to Rahmawati & Ulwiyah, (2024) argue that such acts affect the victim's psychological state and disrupt the learning environment. To address this, an educational approach involving direct experience is needed. Roleplaying is selected as it trains students to empathize through simulation of roles as perpetrators, victims, and observers. This helps students understand the impact of hurtful verbal behavior and encourages more positive interactions. According to Nasikhatus Nafisah et al., (2023) such cases are often linked to students' lack of awareness about the importance of respecting differences. For example, at SMP Negeri 3 Satu Atap Bojong, a student mocked a classmate using unpleasant nicknames, making the victim feel inferior and socially withdrawn. This highlights the need to strengthen empathy and mutual respect in schools. According to Fauziyah & Rusmana, (2022) state that verbal bullying is an act of hurting others through words, carried out by individuals or groups—typically those stronger than the victims. This behavior negatively affects both physical and psychological well-being. Factors such as race, ethnicity, family economic conditions, and media influence also contribute to bullying. It can occur inside or outside school, often in places that make the victim feel fearful and uncomfortable. There are several factors that contribute to the occurrence of verbal bullying Sumarauw et al., (2024) Family factors, such as a lack of parental attention and harsh home environments, can influence students to become either bullies or victims. These conditions often fail to provide children with the emotional support and positive role models needed for healthy social development. Cultural factors also play a role; unstable political conditions, economic hardship, prejudice, discrimination, and social conflicts may create an

atmosphere of stress and insecurity, potentially leading young individuals to develop arrogant or aggressive behaviors as coping mechanisms. In addition, peer pressure is a significant trigger. As Numberted by Ningrum et al., (2019) excessive competitiveness or negative group dynamics among peers can drive students to engage in verbal bullying in order to gain social recognition or assert dominance within their group. Verbal bullying has serious consequences for everyone involved. Maulida et al., (2022). assert that it is a repetitive aggressive act that harms others. Victims may suffer from insecurity, low self-confidence, a gloomy mood, and social withdrawal Jelita et al., (2021). Moreover, perpetrators may develop harsh personalities, overconfidence, and a sense of superiority—hindering their emotional development and empathy D. R. S. Ningrum et al., (2023). According to Aini & Thohir, (2023) and Maulida et al., (2022) indicators of verbal bullying include belittling, mocking, insulting, threatening, cursing, name-calling, and making inappropriate judgments.

Roleplaying technique is a learning method in which students act out roles based on scenarios related to issues in their lives. Through this role enactment, they are trained to communicate with different people according to the given situations. Ummah, (2019). The roleplaying method is a teaching technique in which participants portray characters with specific backgrounds and objectives within a simulation. They interact with other participants to understand and address the given situations Sarifah, (2022). Roleplaying technique is a method that allows individuals to practice new behaviors and social skills in a safe context, with participants taking on roles as themselves or others in situations related to the problems they are facing. Mamahit et al., (2021). define roleplaying as a way to train new behaviors and social skills in a safe context, where participants play themselves or others in related scenarios In group counseling, roleplaying is deemed appropriate for addressing bullying behavior in junior high school students Atikah & Wirastania, (2022). It Numbert only fosters empathy and social skills but also builds self-awareness about harmful verbal actions. This approach aligns with mindfulness-based interventions that emphasize emotional regulation and awareness of internal and external conditions.

The purpose of roleplaying is to help individuals understand themselves, enhance social skills, and model or analyze behavior Iv et al., (2021). According to Mansyur, (2021) the aim of roleplaying is to depict past events or explore current/future situations by assigning roles to individuals. Nasikhatus Nafisah et al., (2023) explain that roleplaying is an active learning method that involves students acting out scenarios to develop social understanding and skills. By taking on roles of bully, victim, or observer, students can feel the emotional and social impacts of bullying. This helps them understand the importance of empathy, fairness, and respect. Roleplaying also improves communication skills, the ability to express ideas politely, and decision-making in complex social situations. It combines cognitive and emotional learning, making it more effective in shaping character and student behavior. According to Studi et al., (2024). roleplaying allows students to express emotions, develop social sensitivity, and train conflict resolution skills positively. Strengthening character education through multicultural and interactive approaches like roleplaying helps schools create a safer, more inclusive environment that supports students' emotional and social development. Roleplaying steps Sri Maisyaroh, (2024) include: starting with material on assertive behavior, assigning roles to each group member, distributing scripts for understanding, enacting Numbert-assertive behaviors first, followed by assertive behaviors, and concluding with group discussions and reflections. Students are also encouraged to ask questions and share impressions during the session. According to Farahdina Aisha, (2023) advantages of this technique include training students to internalize and practice learning content. Kartiko & Kurniawan, (2018) argue that roleplaying teaches students to appreciate others' feelings, promoting tolerance in social interaction. It also encourages

responsibility, cooperation, and critical thinking in problem-solving. However, Setyowati et al., (2020) Numberte some disadvantages, such as the need for extensive time and space, the challenge of students' self-confidence, and limitations in suitable topics. Success also relies on good cooperation between educators and learners.

Rahmawati & Isriyah, (2025) show that participation intensity in psychoeducational group guidance significantly improves positive academic emotions and reduces negative emotions. While using a psychoeducational approach, this finding aligns with multicultural group counseling principles that also value active participation. In this study, roleplaying is used interactively to improve students' empathy and social awareness, aiming to reduce verbal bullying behavior. Previous research has used roleplaying to enhance positive traits such as empathy, communication, and socialization skills. However, very few studies have specifically focused on its use to address verbal bullying in school settings despite its prevalence and direct emotional impact on students.

Rasyada, (2025) explains that roleplaying was first introduced by Jacob L. MoreNumber, a psychologist and founder of psychodrama in the early 20th century. The method is interactive, creative, and emotionally engaging. In education, it helps deepen conceptual understanding, train social skills, and broaden perspective. MoreNumber believed that direct role enactment was more effective than discussion alone, emphasizing spontaneity for meaningful learning. It enhances student engagement and empathy, as they learn to see from others' perspectives. Despite these benefits, the application of multicultural-based roleplaying in group counseling remains under-researched, even though cultural diversity in schools often leads to verbal conflicts, such as mocking dialects, nicknames, or belittling identities. This highlights a research gap in preventing verbal bullying rooted in cultural differences. This study aims to fill that gap by combining roleplaying with a multicultural approach in group counseling. Using a quasi-experimental design, it seeks to provide strong empirical data to design more targeted guidance services for reducing verbal bullying in schools.

According to Collins et al., (2021), Indonesia has more than 1,300 ethnic groups across the archipelago. This diversity is a valuable national asset and can foster unity if managed wisely. However, it also leads to social tensions due to a lack of understanding and mutual respect. Historically, horizontal conflicts driven by identity differences have occurred in places like Poso, Ambon, and Kalimantan. These tensions underscore the need for early education on tolerance, so that the younger generation can coexist peacefully in a diverse society. Laksana, (2024) suggests that using local culture-based learning media makes materials more relevant and promotes mutual respect among students. Multicultural approaches foster inclusive behaviors like tolerance and cooperation in diversity. Learning impacts Numbert only cognitive development but also social character formation. This study focuses on the development of social behavior in guidance and counseling, especially in fostering appreciation for differences and preventing verbal bullying. Group guidance services are designed with a multicultural basis, with counselors acting as facilitators to foster tolerance and positive communication among students. This domain is relevant to the goals of guidance and counseling, namely to help students develop personally and socially. Since verbal bullying is closely tied to social interaction, a social development approach is deemed most appropriate. Through multicultural-based roleplaying, students are invited to experience, enact, and reflect on situations that represent diversity. This helps them understand the impact of verbal behavior and cultivate empathy. Research problem: How effective is the roleplaying technique in reducing verbal bullying behavior? Research objective: To determine the effectiveness of roleplaying in reducing verbal bullying among junior high school students in Jember Regency.

METHODS

This study is a quantitative research employing a quasi-experimental design, specifically the One Group Pretest-Posttest Design. The subjects were given a pretest, followed by a treatment in the form of group guidance services using the roleplaying technique, and then a posttest. The purpose of this study is to determine changes in verbal bullying behavior before and after the treatment. In general, the experimental design used in this study is as follows:

Table 1. Desain *One Group Pretest-Posttest Design*

Group									
GE	O	X1	O1	X2	O2	X3	O3	X4	O4

Description:

GE : Placement of the experimental group (using an intact group).

O : Pre-test conducted before the subjects receive the treatment in the experimental group.

X : Treatment in the form of the roleplaying technique applied to the experimental group.

O₄ : Post-test conducted after the treatment is given to the experimental group.

Table 2. Population of Junior High School Students

Student Data			
Class	Total	Female	Male
VIII	26	16	10
Total	26	16	10

The population in this study consisted of eighth-grade students of junior high schools in Jember Regency. The research sample was selected using purposive sampling, by considering students who showed indications of verbal bullying behavior based on the results of a preliminary questionnaire. Students identified as having a high tendency toward verbal bullying behavior were then selected as research subjects and provided with group guidance services using the roleplaying technique. The researcher conducted group guidance services in eight sessions, which were carried out systematically and structured based on predetermined themes and roleplaying scripts. Data collection in this study was conducted using two main instruments: a questionnaire and an observation sheet. The questionnaire contained statements developed based on indicators of verbal bullying behavior and was used to measure quantitative changes both before and after the treatment. Meanwhile, the observation sheet was used to record students' actual behavior during the implementation of the services, thus providing a direct picture of students' responses in social situations.

The use of these two instruments was intended to obtain more valid and reliable data through method triangulation. The data collected from the pretest and posttest questionnaires were then analyzed using the SPSS program, beginning with statistical assumption tests, namely the Normality test and homogeneity test, to determine whether the data met the requirements for using parametric tests. If the data were normally distributed and homogeneous, a paired sample t-test was employed. Conversely, if the data did not meet these assumptions, the Non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used. The effectiveness of the service was considered achieved if there was a significant decrease in verbal bullying behavior scores from the pretest to the posttest. The criterion for success was determined based on a significance value ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the

difference in scores before and after the treatment served as the basis for drawing conclusions regarding the hypothesis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study involved 26 eighth-grade students from a junior high school in Jember Regency. Among the 26 subjects, 8 students were identified as engaging in verbal bullying behavior based on the results of observations and a preliminary questionnaire. The results of the students' pre-test scores are presented in the following table:

Table 3. Pre-test Results

Number	Name	<i>Pre-test</i>
1.	VDA	173
2.	AR	174
3.	RS	174
4.	MNA	174
5.	DDF	174
6.	ARSH	174
7.	KN	174
8.	MA	174

Based on Table 3, the students identified as engaging in verbal bullying behavior consisted of 3 male students and 5 female students, ranging in age from 12 to 14 years old. The pre-test results indicated that the level of verbal bullying behavior among eighth-grade junior high school students was still relatively high prior to the intervention using the roleplaying technique.

In response to this, the researcher implemented a treatment in the form of roleplaying technique intervention conducted over four sessions, with each session lasting 90 minutes. Each session had distinct objectives and activities aligned with the stages of the roleplaying technique: warming up, action, sharing-discussion, and reflection. The detailed implementation can be seen in the following table:

Table 4. Implementation Details of the Roleplaying Technique Intervention

Session	Theme	Stage	Duration
1	Insulting a friend's appearance	1. Material Delivery	90 minutes
2	Accusation and gossip	2. Role Assignment	
3	Mocking regional accents	3. Character Understanding	
		4. First Roleplaying	
		5. Re Roleplaying	
4	Giving offensive nicknames	6. Discussion and Reflection	

Each session in this program followed a structured and consistent approach, consisting of six identical stages. It began with the presentation of material to provide a theoretical or conceptual foundation related to the session's theme. This was followed by role assignment, allowing participants to prepare for the simulation activity. The third stage was character exploration, where participants were given time to internalize and understand the roles they would perform in the simulation. The core activity of each session was the first enactment, during which participants conducted a roleplay based on the selected theme. This was followed by a second enactment, allowing them to improve or deepen their understanding based on the insights gained from the first performance. Each session concluded with a discussion and reflection phase, which served as a critical moment for participants to analyze their experiences, understand the impact of the simulated

behaviors, and extract lessons applicable to real-life situations. Each session lasted 90 minutes, providing sufficient time to carry out all stages in depth.

This program was designed as an educational intervention using experiential learning methods to help participants understand the negative impacts of various forms of bullying and to develop empathy and awareness of the importance of creating a respectful and positive environment. Through four 90-minute intervention sessions, students experienced a process of vicarious learning, in which they observed the negative consequences of verbal bullying and the positive benefits of empathetic communication. Bandura, (1986) emphasizes that an individual's self-efficacy can increase when they successfully perform a behavior in a safe and controlled environment. The roleplaying technique used in this study provided a secure setting for students to experiment with new communication behaviors without fear of negative social consequences.

The researcher provided the treatment in the form of a roleplaying technique intervention conducted over four sessions. The complete post-test results can be seen in the following table:

Table 5. Pre-test and Post-test Results

Number	Name	Pre-test	Treatment			
			Post-test 1	Post-test 2	Post-test 3	Post-test 4
1.	VDA	173	122	110	105	107
2.	AR	174	99	105	101	99
3.	RS	174	130	125	114	105
4.	MNA	174	125	107	114	103
5.	DDF	174	107	130	115	102
6.	ARSH	174	130	126	114	102
7.	KN	174	105	82	97	104
8.	MA	174	130	99	99	99
Mean		173,875	118,5	110,5	107,375	102,625
Category		High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low

The difference between the pre-test and post-test is presented in the graph 1:

The post-test results presented in Table 5 show a significant change in the level of students' verbal bullying behavior after the roleplaying technique intervention was administered. The pre-test scores were in the high category, post-test 1 and post-test 2 were in the moderate category, post-test 3 remained in the moderate category, and post-test 4 shifted to the low category. The average post-test scores indicate a substantial decrease from the pre-test condition. The comparison between pre-test and post-test results demonstrates a decline in scores, indicating the high effectiveness of the intervention. These findings are in line with Social Learning Theory proposed by Bandura,(1977), which states that behavior is learned through the processes of observation, imitation, and modeling. In the context of this study, the roleplaying technique provided an opportunity for students to observe and practice positive communication behavior models. These results are also consistent with recent research by (de Albuquerque & Fragelli, 2022) which showed a "significant increase in the level of empathy and a significant decrease in bullying and aggressive behavior" among students who participated in roleplaying games.

Discussion

The researcher first conducted a Normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk test and a homogeneity test before performing the hypothesis test. The results of the Normality test are presented in the following table:

Table 6. Shapiro-Wilk Numbernormality Test Results

	<i>Shapiro-Wilk</i>		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
<i>Pre-test</i>	,418	8	,051
<i>Post-test 1</i>	,831	8	,061
<i>Post-test 2</i>	,936	8	,574
<i>Post-test 3</i>	,829	8	,056
<i>Post-test 4</i>	,948	8	,687

The results of the Numbernormality test showed that the pre-test data had a Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.418 with a significance level of 0.051. The post-test1 data had a Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.831 with a significance level of 0.061, post-test2 had a Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.936 with a significance level of 0.574, post-test3 had a Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.829 with a significance level of 0.056, and post-test4 had a Shapiro-Wilk value of 0.948 with a significance level of 0.687. All five significance values are greater than 0.05, indicating that the data are Numbernormally distributed and meet the assumptions for parametric testing. In addition, the results of the homogeneity test can be seen in the following table:

Table 7. Results of the Homogeneity Test

	<i>Homogenitas</i>		
	Mean Square	df	Sig.
<i>Post-test 1</i>	14,000 188,667	,074	,794
<i>Post-test 2</i>	,286 302,952	,001	,976
<i>Post-test 3</i>	6,446 67,905	,095	,768
<i>Post-test 4</i>	21,875 5,333	4,102	,089

Based on Table 1, the homogeneity test shows a significance value of $p > 0.05$, indicating that the data variance is homogeneous. To test the effectiveness of the roleplaying technique in reducing verbal bullying behavior, a paired sample t-test was conducted. The results of the paired sample t-test are presented in the following table:

Table 8. Results of the Paired Sample t-Test

	<i>Paired Differences</i>		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	95 % Confidence Intrval of the Difference				
	Lower	Upper			
<i>Pair1 Post-test 1</i>	44,64135	66,10865	12,199	7	,000
<i>Pair 2 Post-test 2</i>	49,90244	76,84756	11,123	7	,000
<i>Pair 3 Post-test 3</i>	60,10177	72,89823	24,577	7	,000
<i>Pair 4 Post-test 4</i>	68,7200	73,76800	66,910	7	,000

Based on Table 8, the results of the paired sample t-test show the following: Pair 1 (Post-test 1) has a t-value of 12.199 with 7 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.000; Pair 2 (Post-test 2) has a t-value of 11.123 with 7 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.000; Pair 3 (Post-test 3) has a t-value of 24.577 with 7 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.000; and Pair

4 (Post-test 4) has a t-value of 66.910 with 7 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.000. Since the significance values are less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, indicating that there is a significant difference in the level of verbal bullying behavior before and after the roleplaying intervention.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the roleplaying technique proved to be effective in reducing verbal bullying behavior among junior high school students in Jember Regency. A comparison between the pre-treatment and post-treatment conditions showed a significant change in the distribution of verbal bullying behavior categories: in the pre-test, 8 students were in the high category; in post-test 1, all 8 students moved to the moderate category; in post-test 2, 8 students remained in the moderate category; in post-test 3, 8 students continued to be in the moderate category; and in post-test 4, all 8 students shifted to the low category. The results of the paired sample t-test indicated a highly significant difference, with $p < 0.05$, demonstrating a strong level of effectiveness. This transformation from the majority of students initially being in the high category to eventually being in the low category indicates that the roleplaying technique successfully altered verbal bullying behavior patterns in a fundamental way through mechanisms such as the development of empathy, cognitive restructuring, and social skills training. It is recommended that schools incorporate the roleplaying technique into their anti-bullying programs and provide training for school counselors. The Department of Education should offer policy support and allocate adequate funding to implement this technique across schools. Future research is encouraged to use an experimental design with a control group, conduct long-term follow-ups, and employ multi-method assessments. Practical implementation should consider careful participant selection, facilitator competence, and continuous support from multiple stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of behavioral changes among students.

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