

ROLE PLAYING AS A STRATEGY TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SPEAKING AND LEARNING MOTIVATION OF RETAIL BUSINESS STUDENTS

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Abstract

This article investigates how the role-playing instructional model influences two learning outcomes, public speaking competence and learning motivation, among Grade XI Retail Business students enrolled in the Marketing Strategy of Visual Merchandising course at SMK Negeri 1 Dukuhturi, examining each outcome on its own as well as in combination. The inquiry was prompted by a recurring classroom problem: students' oral communication remained weak and their engagement stayed low under a teaching pattern still centered on conventional lecturing. To investigate this, a quantitative, quasi-experimental design employing nonequivalent control groups was adopted. Seventy-two students, selected through saturated sampling, were split into an experimental cohort (36 students from class XI BR 1) and a control cohort (36 students from class XI BR 2). A performance rubric captured public speaking competence, while a questionnaire gauged learning motivation; the resulting data were processed with Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) and an Independent Sample T-Test in IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Findings indicate a statistically significant gain in public speaking competence attributable to role playing ($t = 3.530$; $\text{Sig.} = 0.001 < 0.05$), with the experimental group's posttest average (79.36) surpassing that of the control group (76.11). By contrast, the treatment's isolated effect on learning motivation fell short of significance ($t = 1.389$; $\text{Sig.} = 0.169 > 0.05$). Yet when the two outcomes were assessed jointly, MANOVA detected a significant combined effect (Wilks' Lambda = 0.843; $\text{Sig.} = 0.003 < 0.05$). Taken together, the evidence positions role playing as a workable strategy for cultivating students' public speaking ability, whether considered alone or alongside motivation, though a longer intervention period may be needed before its effect on motivation alone becomes detectable.

Keywords: Role Playing Model; Public Speaking; Learning Motivation; Retail Business;

1 INTRODUCTION

Vocational schooling occupies a pivotal role in readying graduates for the labor market: beyond technical proficiency (hard skills), it must also cultivate the non-technical competencies (soft skills) that employers expect (Kementerian Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Republik Indonesia, 2025). National employment figures indicate that vocational high school (SMK) graduates typically find work within a fairly short span after graduation (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Vokasi Kemendikdasmen, 2024); even so, that quick absorption hinges on graduates' communication competence and workplace professionalism rather than technical mastery alone.

Within the Retail Business expertise area specifically, public speaking stands out as an indispensable soft skill, since it underlies how product information is conveyed and how persuasive rapport with customers is built (Sitepu, 2025). The Merdeka Curriculum likewise places a premium on instructional effectiveness as a driver of student engagement (Nurfauzi dkk., 2023), a concern equally relevant to the Marketing Strategy of Visual Merchandising course, where students must voice marketing ideas aloud while sustaining their own motivation to learn (Maulana dkk., 2023).

Preliminary fieldwork at SMK Negeri 1 Dukuhturi surfaced a mismatch between what Grade XI Retail Business students could do and what the retail sector demands. Students hesitated to speak before the class, rarely maintained eye contact, and leaned heavily on written scripts during presentations, patterns suggesting their communication skills fell short of the National Work Competency Standard (SKKNI) for Retail Trade, which calls for confident, spoken interaction with customers (Kementerian Ketenagakerjaan RI, 2025). Interviews conducted with 10 students beforehand reinforced this picture: 70 percent admitted to feeling anxious while presenting because of low self-assurance, echoing (Cahyadi dkk., 2024), who

identified nervousness and speech anxiety as recurring hurdles for students. Sparse active participation, another symptom of lecture-dominated instruction, pointed to weak learning motivation as well.

Role playing emerged as a fitting response to these issues, since it lets students rehearse sales scenarios firsthand, an approach grounded in experiential learning theory, which holds that competencies develop best through lived experience rather than passive exposure to concepts (Kolb dkk., 2000). Earlier studies lend support to this view: role playing has been linked to greater self-confidence and improved achievement among vocational students (Sitepu, 2025), sharper speaking skills (Wicaksono, 2024), and heightened motivation and classroom activeness (Maulana dkk., 2023; Nurfauzi dkk., 2023). Still, most of that work isolated a single dependent variable at a time, and few studies have situated role playing within retail instruction, where persuasive, customer-facing communication is central.

This study distinguishes itself in three respects: it tests two dependent variables at once rather than in isolation (public speaking competence and learning motivation), it is set within the Marketing Strategy of Visual Merchandising course rather than a generic subject area as in prior work, and it draws an explicit line between its findings and the actual competency demands of the retail workforce. Guided by these considerations, the study pursues three questions: (1) does role playing meaningfully raise students' public speaking competence; (2) does it meaningfully raise their learning motivation; and (3) does it produce a joint, simultaneous improvement in both outcomes among Grade XI Retail Business students at SMK Negeri 1 Dukuhturi.

2 METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

A quantitative, quasi-experimental strategy underpinned this study, structured around a pretest-posttest control group design (Sugiyono, 2023). Two pre-existing classes served as the study groups: class XI Retail Business 1, assigned the experimental role, received the role-playing treatment, while class XI Retail Business 2 acted as the control, following conventional instruction. The design corresponds to the sequence O1 X O2 for the experimental group and O3 – O4 for the control group, in which O1 and O3 mark the pretest, O2 and O4 mark the posttest, and X denotes the role-playing intervention (Saputri & Mardiaty, 2025).

Population and Sample

All Grade XI Retail Business Competency students at SMK Negeri 1 Dukuhturi during the 2025/2026 academic year, 72 students in total, constituted the population. Given this comparatively small population, a saturated sampling technique was applied, drawing the entire population into the sample: 36 students from class XI BR 1 formed the experimental group and 36 from class XI BR 2 formed the control group. For instrument try-out purposes, 32 students with comparable characteristics from SMK Negeri 2 Tegal were additionally recruited to trial the learning-motivation questionnaire.

Research Procedure

The study was carried out in three stages: pretest, treatment, and posttest. In the pretest stage, both groups completed the learning-motivation questionnaire and performed a product-offering simulation as an initial measurement of public speaking ability, without any specific technique instruction. In the treatment stage, the experimental group underwent learning through the role-playing model, involving role simulations as salespersons and customers, while the control group received conventional instruction consisting of lecturing and question-and-answer sessions. The posttest stage repeated the same measurements for both groups to determine the changes that occurred after the treatment.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using three instruments: (1) a performance-assessment rubric to measure public speaking ability based on five indicators—clarity and fluency of delivery, self-confidence, eye contact, body language, and intonation and articulation—with a score range of 1–20 for each indicator; (2) a four-point Likert-scale learning-motivation questionnaire consisting of 20 statements covering five indicators, namely learning persistence, learning interest, activeness, independence, and the desire to succeed; and (3) a learning-implementation observation sheet as supporting data for internal validity. The try-out of the learning-motivation questionnaire on 32 respondents at another school resulted in 17 of the 20 statement items being declared valid (r calculated $> r$ table = 0.349), while the public speaking rubric was validated through expert judgment by the subject teacher and the research advisors.

Data Analysis Technique

Analysis proceeded in a fixed sequence: descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, standard deviation) came first, followed by prerequisite testing, namely Shapiro-Wilk for normality, Levene's test for variance homogeneity, and Box's M for covariance-matrix homogeneity. Hypothesis testing followed, using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) to capture simultaneous differences across the two dependent variables and an Independent Sample T-Test to examine each variable individually (Ghozali, 2021; Sugiyono, 2023). IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 handled all computations, with significance judged at the 0.05 threshold.

3 RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis provides an initial overview of the data trends prior to hypothesis testing.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Public Speaking Ability

Statistic	Experimental Pretest	Experimental Posttest	Control Pretest	Control Posttest
N	36	36	36	36
Mean	71,28	79,36	70,03	76,11
Median	71,00	79,50	68,50	75,50
Modus	71	80	67	75
Std. Deviation	4,061	3,547	6,712	4,234

Source: Processed data, July 2026

As Table 1 illustrates, the experimental group's mean public speaking score climbed from 71.28 at pretest to 79.36 at posttest, an 8.08-point gain, while the control group rose more modestly, from 70.03 to 76.11, a 6.08-point gain. The experimental group's improvement thus outpaced that of the control group.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Learning Motivation

Statistic	Experimental Pretest	Experimental Posttest	Control Pretest	Control Posttest
N	36	36	36	36
Mean	47,58	51,33	47,89	48,94
Median	47,00	52,00	48,00	50,00
Modus	48	51	45	51
Std. Deviation	6,371	6,334	6,667	8,148

Source: Processed data, July 2026

Table 2 traces a comparable pattern for learning motivation: the experimental group's mean advanced from 47.58 to 51.33, a 3.75-point gain, whereas the control group edged up only slightly, from 47.89 to 48.94, a 1.05-point gain. Although the experimental group's increase looks larger on its face, whether that gap is statistically meaningful is addressed through the hypothesis tests presented below.

Prerequisite Analysis Tests

Normality checks via Shapiro-Wilk returned significance values above 0.05 for every pretest and posttest group across both variables, ranging from 0.066 to 0.613, confirming that the data conformed to a normal distribution (Sugiyono, 2023).

Table 3. Shapiro-Wilk Normality Test Results

Variable and Group	Statistic	Sig.	Description
Public Speaking – Experimental Pretest	0,954	0,140	Normal
Public Speaking – Experimental Posttest	0,974	0,553	Normal
Public Speaking – Control Pretest	0,963	0,268	Normal
Public Speaking – Control Posttest	0,944	0,066	Normal
Learning Motivation – Experimental Pretest	0,962	0,243	Normal
Learning Motivation – Experimental Posttest	0,946	0,077	Normal
Learning Motivation – Control Pretest	0,976	0,613	Normal
Learning Motivation – Control Posttest	0,953	0,129	Normal

Source: Processed data, July 2026

Levene's test applied to the posttest data yielded significance values of 0.300 for public speaking and 0.244 for learning motivation, both comfortably above 0.05 and thus indicating homogeneous variances. Box's M, used to check covariance-matrix homogeneity, produced a value of 3.207 with significance 0.375, well above the 0.001 cutoff, so the covariance matrices across groups were judged homogeneous, satisfying the assumption required for MANOVA (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 4. Homogeneity (Levene) and Box's M Test Results

Variable / Test	Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.	Description
Posttest Public Speaking (Levene)	1.090	1	70	0.300	Homogeneous
Posttest Learning Motivation (Levene)	1.379	1	70	0.244	Homogeneous
Box's M	3.207 (F=1.036)	3	882000.000	0.375	Homogeneous

Source: Processed data, July 2026

Hypothesis Testing

MANOVA served to test whether public speaking competence and learning motivation differed jointly between the experimental and control groups, addressing the third research question and hypothesis H3.

Table 5. MANOVA Test Results

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	0.157	6.446	2	69	0.003	0.157
Wilks' Lambda	0.843	6.446	2	69	0.003	0.157
Hotelling's Trace	0.187	6.446	2	69	0.003	0.157

Roy's Largest Root	0.187	6.446	2	69	0.003	0.157
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Source: Processed data, July 2026

As shown in Table 5, all four multivariate indices—Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, and Roy's Largest Root—converge on a significance value of 0.003, below the 0.05 threshold. H_{03} is therefore rejected in favor of H_{a3} : the experimental and control groups differ significantly once public speaking competence and learning motivation are considered together as a single combined outcome.

To unpack this combined result further, an Independent Sample T-Test examined each dependent variable on its own, addressing research questions one and two along with hypotheses H1 and H2.

Table 6. Independent Sample T-Test Results

Variable	Levene F	Levene Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Posttest Public Speaking	1.090	0.300	3.530	70	0.001
Posttest Learning Motivation	1.379	0.244	1.389	70	0.169

Source: Processed data, July 2026

Table 6 reports $t = 3.530$ with Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.001 for public speaking, signaling a significant gap between the two groups at posttest. Learning motivation tells a different story: $t = 1.389$ with Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.169, which falls short of significance and indicates no reliable difference between the groups on this measure.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Test Result	Sig.	Decision
H1	Independent Sample T-Test: $t = 3.530$	0.001	H_a accepted, H_0 rejected
H2	Independent Sample T-Test: $t = 1.389$	0.169	H_a rejected, H_0 accepted
H3	MANOVA: Wilks' Lambda = 0.843; $F = 6.446$	0.003	H_a accepted, H_0 rejected

Source: Processed data, July 2026

4 DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of Role Playing on Public Speaking Ability

The evidence points clearly toward role playing as an effective lever for public speaking development: the Independent Sample T-Test returned a significant result (Sig. = 0.001), and the experimental group's posttest average (79.36) outpaced the control group's (76.11). This pattern aligns with experiential learning theory (Kolb dkk., 2000), which holds that skill formation depends more on direct, repeated practice than on theoretical exposition alone. (Darmawan & Sa'i, 2025) similarly note that effective public speaking rests on self-confidence, expressive delivery, and eye contact, qualities that role playing naturally exercises as students step into a salesperson's role, in contrast to the control group, confined to listening without hands-on practice. Corroborating evidence comes from (Wicaksono, 2024), who observed that role-play exercises push students to articulate ideas and interact verbally, thereby sharpening their speaking ability, and from (Sitepu, 2025), whose findings link role playing to gains in self-confidence, one of the indicators measured in this study's public speaking rubric.

Effectiveness of Role Playing on Learning Motivation

Learning motivation followed a different trajectory. The posttest gap between the experimental and control groups proved statistically insignificant (Sig. = 0.169), even though the experimental group's mean (51.33) edged out the control group's (48.94). Hypothesis H2, which predicted a significant motivational gain from role playing, is accordingly rejected. One plausible explanation lies in the nature of motivation itself: it functions as a force that sustains learning effort over time (Suharnadi dkk., 2024), shaped by an intricate mix of internal and external influences (Setiawan & Bahtiar, 2023). This dovetails with (Undiarsih dkk., 2025), who found that interactive, participatory teaching approaches can raise motivation and

achievement, but typically only when applied consistently over time. Here, the role-playing treatment was administered just once, a duration likely too brief to shift motivation meaningfully, consistent with (Julita dkk., 2025), who argue that boosting learning motivation calls for a sustained, comprehensive approach. This outcome diverges from (Maulana dkk., 2023), who reported a significant motivational boost from role playing, a discrepancy plausibly rooted in differences in how long and how intensively the treatment was applied across the two studies.

Simultaneous Effectiveness on Public Speaking and Learning Motivation

Viewed jointly, the MANOVA results confirm that role playing exerts a significant combined effect on public speaking competence and learning motivation (Wilks' Lambda = 0.843; Sig. = 0.003), supporting acceptance of H3. This combined significance owes primarily to the pronounced gap in public speaking, with learning motivation contributing a comparatively modest share. Such a pattern fits the premise that role playing engages students in simulations demanding both communicative skill and emotional investment in the learning process (Nurgiansah dkk., 2021). (Habsy dkk., 2023) add that stronger public speaking feeds into greater self-confidence, which can in turn stimulate motivation, though in this study that pathway was not robust enough to register as significant when tested independently. (Junaidah, 2022) and (Jamiatussoleha, 2025) likewise contend that role-based learning models inject vitality into the classroom, engaging students emotionally as well as building their skills.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Drawing on the data analysis and discussion above, three conclusions emerge regarding the role-playing model's effect on public speaking competence and learning motivation among Grade XI Retail Business students at SMK Negeri 1 Dukuhturi in the Marketing Strategy of Visual Merchandising course. First, role playing proved effective and significantly improved students' public speaking competence, as confirmed by the Independent Sample T-Test (Sig. = 0.001 < 0.05) and a higher posttest mean for the experimental group relative to the control group. Second, role playing did not demonstrate a significant standalone effect on learning motivation (Sig. = 0.169 > 0.05), plausibly because the treatment was delivered only once and because motivation, as a psychological construct, typically requires more time to shift measurably. Third, when both outcomes were considered together, role playing produced a significant combined effect, as shown by the MANOVA results (Wilks' Lambda = 0.843; Sig. = 0.003 < 0.05), with public speaking competence driving most of that combined significance.

Building on these conclusions, several recommendations follow. Subject teachers might apply role playing across 2–3 consecutive sessions per topic rather than a single session, giving students more opportunity to practice repeatedly. Schools, for their part, could designate a practice space or simple sales-simulation area and fold participatory teaching methods into teacher-training programs. Future researchers, meanwhile, might extend the treatment to at least three sessions and draw participants from more than one school to strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

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