

## Research Article

# Psychoeducation For Parents and Shadow Teachers: Managing Tantrum Behavior in Children With Special Needs

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**Abstract.**

Tantrum behavior in children with special needs represents challenging behavior with deliberate intent and purpose. This tantrum behavior manifests within the school environment and frequently emerges at home. This behavior often leaves parents overwhelmed by ineffective management. Tantrum behavior impacts the child's learning experience within the school setting. Limited understanding of tantrum behavior management among parents and shadow teachers can lead to either neglect or inadvertent reinforcement of such tantrum behaviors. Given the pivotal roles of parents as primary educators at home and shadow teachers as companions within the school, both play as agents of change in molding the child's adaptive capabilities. This research aims to support parents and teachers in enhancing their comprehension of managing tantrum behaviors in children with special needs through psychoeducational interventions. The research participants comprise a community of parents and shadow teachers associated with children with special needs at an inclusive school in Malang City. This study presents an experimental approach using a one-group pretest and posttest design. The intervention outcomes reveal a highly significant distinction between the scores of tantrum behavior management knowledge before and after undergoing psychoeducational intervention ( $Z = -4.160$ ;  $P = 0.000$ ). Knowledge regarding tantrum behavior management after participating in psychoeducational interventions falls within the "high" category (68.2%). According to research participants, the perceived usefulness of psychoeducational interventions is gauged as somewhat beneficial (45.5%) and highly beneficial (54%). The subjects' perception of the feasibility of implementing psychoeducational interventions varies, with a high level of confidence (36.4%), a moderate level of confidence (50%), and a sense of uncertainty or doubt (13.6%).

**Keywords:** community, parents of children with special needs, psychoeducation, shadow teacher, tantrum behavior

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## 1. BACKGROUND

A tantrum or challenging behavior that occurs in children is a behavior with intention and purpose. Each child has reasons for behaving like they do, whether typical or with special needs. Tantrums in children manifest in various forms and varying degrees of severity. Typically, these tantrums are accompanied by outbursts of anger, frustration, and spectacularly erratic behavior [1]. The forms of tantrum behavior displayed include yelling, stiffening of limbs, arching of the back, kicking, falling, hitting, or attempting to escape the environment [2]. Similarly, children with special needs, such as those with intellectual disabilities and autism, may exhibit breath-holding or gasp during bouts of anger, vomiting, breaking objects, or harming themselves or others as part of their emotional outbursts [3]. This is due to difficulties in communication and utilizing executive functioning skills to regulate behavior.

While tantrums often emerge in children aged 1-3 years, they can persist in older children and those with special needs. This occurrence is attributed to their early social, emotional, and language development stages. The inability to effectively communicate their needs and feelings, including desires for self-expression, can lead to frustration [1]. Children with special needs face challenges in generating adaptive behaviors due to hindered executive functioning [4]. Tantrum behaviors in children, including those with autism, are frequently linked to deficits in executive functioning. These functions involve cognitive skills that aid in planning, organizing, evaluating, and managing complex tasks and controlling behavior. Children on the autism spectrum and those with intellectual disabilities struggle with tasks such as planning, impulse control, emotional regulation, adapting to change, monitoring behavior, problem-solving, and understanding personal space and others' boundaries [5],[6].

Children with special needs learn that their behavior can influence others, making responses from others consequential reinforcements or deterrents to their behaviors. Thus, tantrums are one way children express and manage their emotions, attempting to comprehend or alter their surroundings [7]. Tantrum behavior is not confined to school settings; it frequently occurs at home, creating overwhelming challenges for parents in handling these behaviors and subsequently impacting the child's schooling. Insufficient knowledge among parents and shadow teachers about managing tantrum behavior can lead to either tolerating or inadvertently reinforcing such behavior, with corresponding consequences. One reinforcing response prohibits teaching adaptive behavior skills to children with special needs.

The crucial role of parents as companions to children with special needs in accessing proper education requires a profound understanding of the child's characteristics, including behavior management. Studies suggest that psychoeducation for parents of children with special needs can enhance parental knowledge and alleviate parenting stress [8]. Unaddressed tantrum behavior can severely affect the child's quality of life at home and school [9]. Continuous tantrums impairing the child's ability to learn can disturb the child's quality of life and the family's and the surrounding environment [10].

This study aims to assist parents and teachers in enhancing their knowledge of managing tantrum behaviors in children with special needs through psychoeducational interventions. Providing psychoeducation on tantrum behaviors to parents and shadow teachers will improve their knowledge. This research expects to enhance the understanding of tantrum behaviors in children with special needs and enable appropriate interventions.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

### 2.1. Variables or concepts studied

#### 2.1.1. Psychoeducation

Psychoeducation is a form of education or training to enhance an individual's understanding and knowledge [15]. In child mental health services, psychoeducation for parents is an evidence-based intervention that focuses on parents. It takes the form of training grounded in empirical evidence [16]. The components and content of psychoeducation for parents encompass several vital elements. It involves group sessions over a designated period, during which education and training for problem-solving are collectively provided [10]. The psychoeducation model for parents emphasizes educational and problem-solving strategies.

#### 2.1.2. Understanding the Management of Tantrum Behavior

According to the Indonesian Dictionary, "understanding" refers to everything known about a particular matter [17]. Tantrum behavior is an intense and emotionally expressive behavior that commonly emerges in children, particularly in early developmental stages. Anger, frustration, and intense negative emotions often identify tantrum behavior. It can involve crying, screaming, tantrums, kicking, hitting, throwing objects, and other disruptive behaviors [18]. Tantrum behavior occurs when a child cannot control or

effectively communicate their feelings or desires. Fundamentally, tantrums are a child's reaction to frustration or dissatisfaction. They can occur when a child perceives unmet desires, feels misunderstood, or cannot communicate effectively. Tantrums may also arise due to environmental stressors, fatigue, hunger, or routine changes [19].

Managing tantrum behavior involves a series of strategies and actions designed to manage, prevent, and respond to tantrum behavior in children. Such management aims to teach children how to cope with emotions and frustrations more adaptively and equip them with skills to communicate needs and desires more effectively [3]. Understanding the management of tantrum behavior refers to an individual's comprehension and proficiency in recognizing, preventing, managing, and responding to tantrum behavior in children. It entails a deep understanding of causes, triggers, behavioral objectives, and practical strategies to address tantrum behavior positively and adaptively.

Addressing tantrum behavior in children with special needs, concerted efforts by families and parents are necessary to prevent negative impacts on the child and the environment. Family efforts involve identifying behavior causes, avoiding conflicts, and providing interventions when the child is calm [20].

## 2.2. Sampling Method

The sampling method employed in this study was purposive sampling, where research subjects were selected research subjects based on predetermined criteria [21]. The criteria for selecting research subjects were as follows: 1) parents of children with special needs (CSN) at School X and shadow teachers of CSN, 2) children with autism and intellectual disabilities as their identified challenges, and 3) affiliation with the parent community at School X.

## 2.3. Research Subjects

The researcher sought out research subjects from inclusive schools in Malang. Consent forms to participate as provided research subjects were provided by the requirements specified in the sampling criteria and obtained from the parent community at Inclusive School X and the shadow teachers at the same school. Out of 22 parents affiliated with the community and 7 shadow teachers, 15 and 7 shadow teachers met the research criteria. Those who met the requirements, specifically parents with children with ASD and intellectual disabilities, and who expressed their willingness by completing the informed consent, were considered eligible subjects for the study. Subjects who met

the research sample criteria and provided their support became participants in this study. Subsequently, a pre-test was administered before the intervention to assess the understanding of the material, and a post-test was conducted after the intervention.

### 2.3.1. Research subject

The research subject contains the research subject followed by an explanation of the demographic characteristics of the research subject. In qualitative research, the researcher explains in detail and briefly, the research design, which includes data collection strategies (a brief description of who the researcher is, who the participants/data sources are, and the relationship between participants and researchers; also explain how to recruit and select participants)

### 2.3.2. Research Instruments

The instruments utilized in this study are as follows:

1. Psychoeducational Module for Tantrum Behavior Management in Children with Disabilities (CWD): The researcher developed this module based on several referenced books and journals related to tantrum behavior in children with disabilities and its management. The psychoeducational material aims to assist parents in handling tantrum behavior in CWD. It encompasses topics such as helping parents understand the definition of behavior and distinguishing it from tantrum behavior, recognizing the objectives of tantrums, identifying tantrum behaviors, and understanding strategies for managing tantrum behavior [22].
2. Tantrum Behavior Management Scale: This scale comprises a pre-test and a post-test segment constructed based on the psychoeducational module for tantrum behavior management. The pre-test and post-test sections contain questions that assess knowledge regarding the characteristics of tantrum behaviors in children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Intellectual Disability, along with their management. The management of tantrum behavior in CWD encompasses understanding triggering factors, prevention strategies, communication skills, responses during tantrum occurrences, positive reinforcement, emotional regulation techniques, and collaboration with professionals [23].

The scale consists of 11 questions, covering 5 aspects: 1) Understanding the definitions of behavior and tantrum behavior, 2) Grasping the purposes behind tantrum behavior

in CWD, 3) Identifying tantrum behaviors, 4) Knowledge of managing tantrum behavior, and 5) Awareness of environmental support in handling tantrum behavior in CWD. This scale was validated through expert judgment and employed for both the pre-test and post-test assessments.

### 2.3.3. Research design

The research design in this study employs an intervention in the form of specialized training for parents of children with special needs. The training provided is psychoeducational guidance for handling tantrum behaviors exhibited by children with special needs at school and home. Psychoeducation is an educational or training approach to enhance an individual's understanding and knowledge [15]. The success of inclusive education for children with special needs at school is partly dependent on their ability to engage attentively in learning activities and complete assigned tasks. When these children frequently display challenging behaviors, such behaviors can negatively affect the classroom environment. Unresolved tantrum issues at home can result in discomfort in the classroom, thereby disrupting the learning environment.

The intervention targets both shadow teachers and parents. The implementation of psychoeducation aims to enhance understanding of tantrum behaviors and equip parents and shadow teachers with strategies to manage tantrum behaviors at home and school. Parents of children with special needs play a crucial role in their academic success. Tantrum behaviors exhibited at home can have reciprocal effects in the school setting and vice versa. In the school context, shadow teachers play a role in maintaining behavioral stability. Schools are institutions that require the skills of personnel and teachers to facilitate the integration of children into society during their childhood [24].

### 2.3.4. Data Collection Procedures

The data collection procedures in this study were carried out through three stages:

1. Preparation Stage The researcher conducted interviews with the school principal, classroom teachers, and representatives of parents of children with special needs at School X. After collecting data through the interviews, the researcher identified issues within the community and delved deeper into these issues by conducting more in-depth interviews with parents of children with special needs at School X. During this stage, complaints were gathered from parents and shadow teachers regarding their difficulties in managing the tantrum behaviors of children with

special needs. The researcher then gathered parents from the school committee community and obtained informed consent to participate in psychoeducational sessions to manage tantrum behaviors. A total of 22 participants agreed to be subjects of the study, consisting of 7 shadow teachers and 15 parents of children with special needs.

2. Intervention Implementation Stage: The intervention provided to the experimental group was a psychoeducational intervention for managing tantrum behaviors. Psychoeducation was delivered through lectures and discussions over six sessions spanning two weeks, totaling 860 minutes of intervention. Before receiving the psychoeducation, all subjects underwent measurement of their understanding of tantrum behaviors using an initial questionnaire as a pre-test. At the end of the intervention, the same questionnaire was administered as a post-test.

The intervention was carried out in six sessions. Each session is described below:

**Session 1:** Introduction, Introduction, and Pre-Test Administration The session begins with an opening by the head of School X, followed by introductions between parents and trainers and the administration of a pre-test.

**Session 2:** Psychoeducation on Tantrum Behavior in Children with Special Needs (CSN).

During this session, the presenter delivers material about tantrum behavior in CSN. Before this, the presenter introduces the characteristics of CSNs served at Schools X. Introducing CSN characteristics aims to equip parents with knowledge about their children's characteristics. The core material is then presented, covering the definition of behavior, tantrum behavior, underlying factors, describing tantrum behavior, identifying the child's goals behind tantrums, and developing specific strategies to address tantrum behavior at home and school.

**Session 3:** Discussion and Q&A.

In this session, before the Q&A, the presenter shows videos of children exhibiting tantrum behavior at home and school. This is done to stimulate discussions regarding tantrum behavior by observing the videos. After watching the video clips, the presenter allows participants to ask questions or share experiences dealing with children or students who display tantrum behavior. The discussion and Q&A are divided between parents and shadow teachers.

In this session, the presenter reviews the previous material as a bridge to help participants recall and connect with the training content on managing tantrum behaviors for children with special needs at home and school. Subsequently, the participants are

divided into four groups: parents and shadow teachers. This grouping aims to facilitate discussions, task assignments, and presentations. Seating arrangements are organized in a circle among the groups to enhance discussions among group members.

**Session 4:** Psychoeducation dealing with tantrum behavior at home and school

The presenter once again displays a video depicting a child exhibiting tantrum behavior. Each participant is requested to observe, describe the behavior, gather information regarding the behavior that emerges, and discern the child’s underlying motives for behaving in such a manner (seeking attention, avoiding people, activities, sensations, and objects). The session then continues with participants filling out the booklet in the training manual (module on managing tantrum behaviors).

Here is a summary of the training material presented in Session 4.

TABLE 1: summary of training material.

No.	Psychoeducation Material
1 2 3 4 5 6	Definition of Behavior and Tantrum Behavior in Children with Special Needs Objectives of Child Tantrum Behavior and Identification of Tantrum Behavior Viewing a Tantrum Behavior Video Describing Behavior from the Video Presentation of Group Results Completion of Booklet (Worksheets) for the Accompanied Child Child’s Identity Identification of Behavior (harmful behaviors and level of difficulty to change) Gathering Information about Behavior Understanding the Child’s Behavior Objectives Identifying Triggering Events that escalate and de-escalate tantrum behavior Creating Intervention Plans Identitas anak Establishing Short-term and Long-term Goals for Tantrum Behavior Management

**Session 5:** Presentation, Discussion, and Q&A In this session, the presenter guides the presentations of each group representative. Interactive discussions between groups progress well. Several groups learn from and exchange information with one another. All participants are actively engaged based on the presentations and the course of the debate. Before some groups proceed with their presentations, they exchange information among themselves. Some participants need clarification when creating short-term and long-term goals for behavior intervention.

**Session 6:** Conclusion and Post-Test Administration In this session, the presenter administers a post-test to each participant. The presenter apologizes if there were any instances of unclear language or content delivery during the two-day training. The head of SDN Y School gives the closing remarks. The school head thanked the presenter and all participants for their active involvement. The school head also advises each participant to apply the acquired knowledge to support children and CWD, aiming for a better quality of life.



1. Data Processing Phase: After obtaining all post-test and pre-test data, data processing is conducted using the paired sample t-test to examine whether there is a significant influence before and after the psychoeducation intervention.

The data analysis employed

In this study utilized the independent T-test and paired T-test. These data analysis techniques were employed to assess the differences in pre-test and post-test scores before and after the psychoeducation intervention, as well as to determine whether there was an influence of psychoeducation on the enhancement of knowledge regarding tantrum behaviors among parents [25].

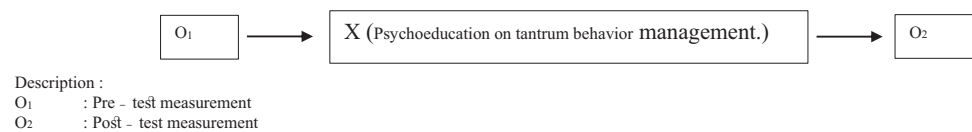


Figure 1:

### 2.3.5. Data analysis technique

The data analysis technique contains an explanation of the technique used and the considerations for selecting the technique. In this section the researcher also mentions the software used.

## 3. RESULT

Hypothesis test

TABLE 2: Wilcoxon test.

	<b>Pre-test -- post-test Knowledge of tantrum behavior management.</b>
Z	-4.160 <sup>b</sup>
Symp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Table 1 above demonstrates a significant difference between pre-test and post-test data, indicating that providing psychoeducation to parents and shadow teachers in managing tantrum behaviors of children with special needs has a significant impact, as per the Wilcoxon test analysis. The disparity between pre-test and post-test values cannot be attributed solely to chance, and there is an indication that the intervention effectively reduces tantrum behaviors in children with special needs

TABLE 3: Description.

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Means	Std. Deviation
Pre_ Knowledge of tantrum behavior management	22	6.109	1.5455	2.1	8.4
Post_ Knowledge of tantrum behavior management	22	8.018	1.4285	4.9	9.8

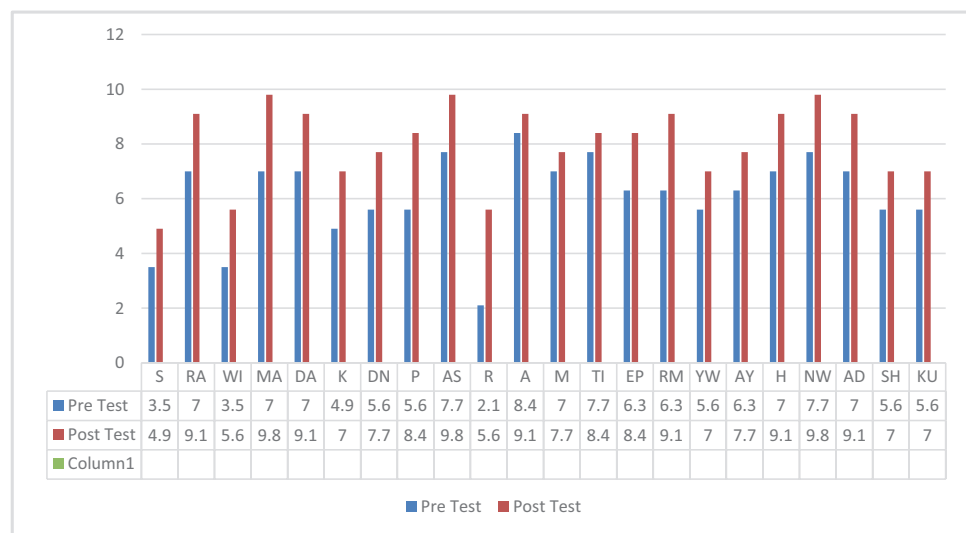
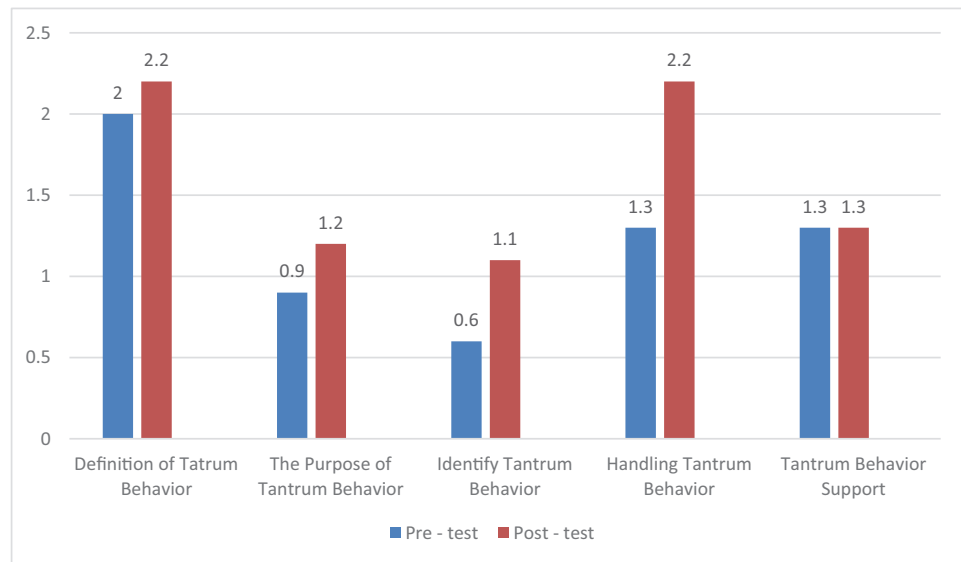


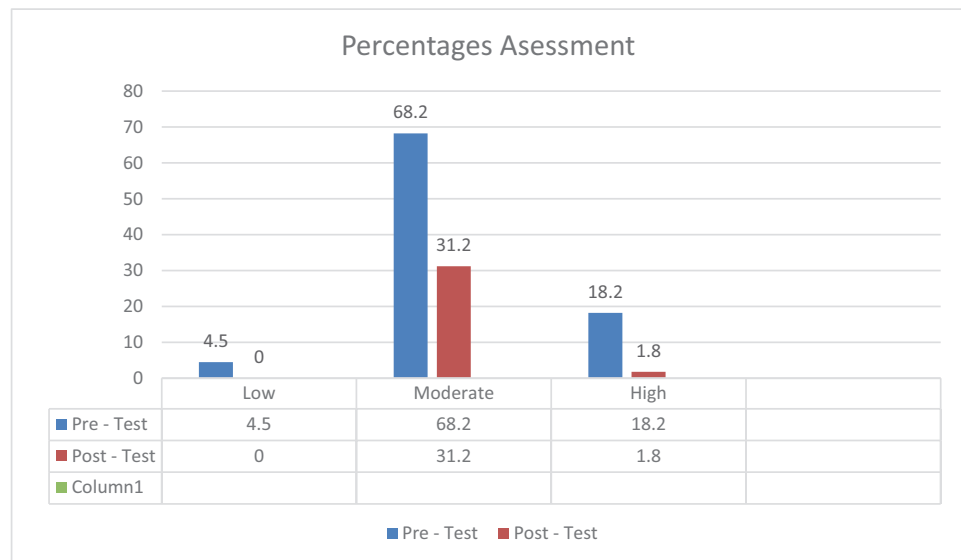
Figure 2: Description of pre-post knowledge of tantrum behavior management in each subject with special needs.

The analysis results indicated that most subjects showed higher post-test scores than pre-test scores, suggesting a positive influence of psychoeducation. Approximately 0.682% of the subjects displayed noteworthy improvements. These score enhancements in the mentioned subjects illustrate a favorable response to the psychoeducation intervention. While the degree of improvement varied among subjects, these findings collectively support the research hypothesis that psychoeducation significantly contributes to managing tantrum behaviors in children with special needs.

The graph above illustrates the data showing an increase in scores before and after the intervention for each variable. In the pre-test and post-test, the definition of tantrum behavior score increased from 2.0 to 2.2; for the pre-test and post-test, the purpose of tantrum behavior score increased from 0.9 to 1.2. Furthermore, in the pre-test and post-test, the identification of tantrum behavior increased from 0.6 to 1.1. In the pre-test and post-test, behavior management increased from an initial score of 1.3 to 2.2. However, for environmental support, it remained at 1.3 both in the pre-test and post-test.



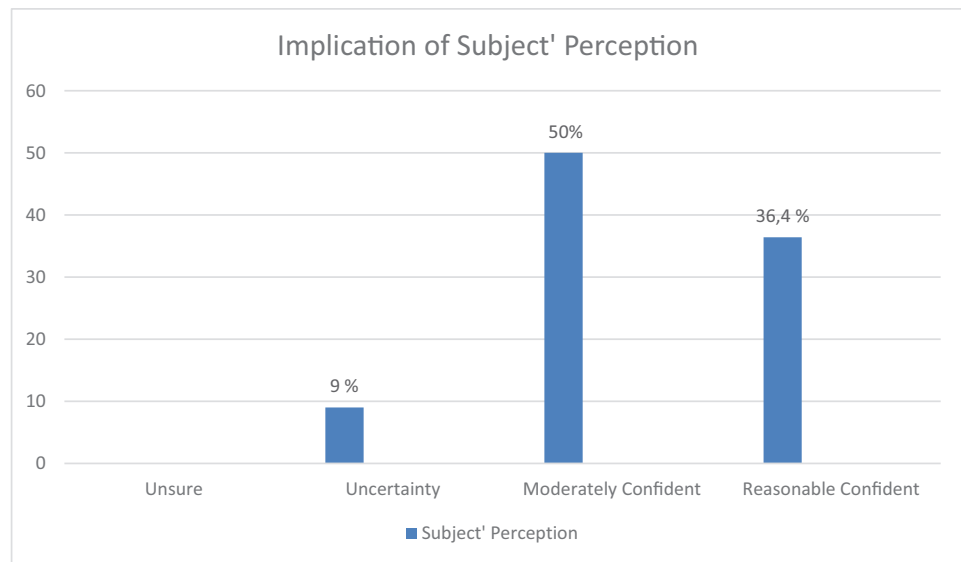
**Figure 3:** Description of the pre-post aspects of psychoeducation regarding the management of tantrum behaviors in children with special needs.



**Figure 4:** Description of the pre-post knowledge of tantrum behavior management.

At the low knowledge level, subjects initially possessed a limited understanding of managing tantrum behaviors in children with special needs, with an average pre-test score of 4.5. However, after the intervention, the subjects' knowledge significantly improved to 0 in the post-test, indicating a substantial enhancement in their comprehension. On the other hand, subjects at the moderate knowledge level had a satisfactory understanding of managing tantrum behaviors in children with special needs, with an average pre-test score of 68.2. Despite their already decent knowledge, the intervention still positively enhanced their understanding, as evidenced by the average post-test

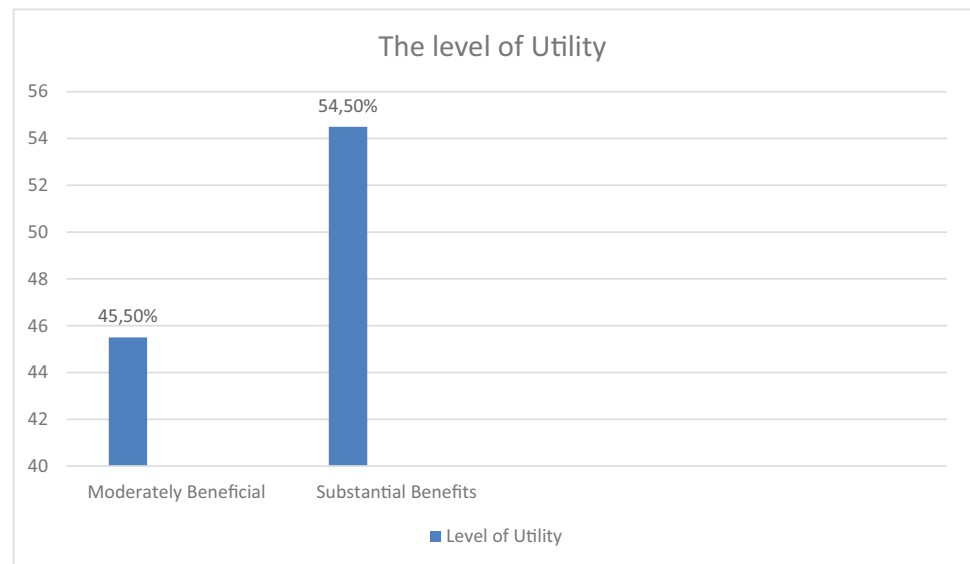
score of 31.8. Subjects who initially had a high level of knowledge about managing tantrum behaviors in children with special needs, with an average pre-test score of 18.2, managed to maintain their strong knowledge through the intervention. The noticeable increase in the average post-test score, reaching 68.2, indicates that this high level of knowledge was preserved and even further developed.



**Figure 5:** Description of the Implications of Psychoeducation Intervention According to Research Subjects' Perceptions.

50% of the subjects felt moderately confident about the implications yielded by this psychoeducation intervention. This indicates that half of the subjects believed this intervention would positively impact their knowledge and skills in handling tantrum behaviors in children with special needs. This reasonable confidence level suggests that the subjects recognize the intervention's potential to bring about tangible and beneficial changes within their context. Furthermore, 36.40% of the subjects felt confident about the intervention's implications. This percentage reveals that more than a third of the subjects believe that psychoeducation intervention will significantly and positively enhance their knowledge about managing tantrum behaviors in children with special needs. This confidence reflects the anticipation that the intervention will bring meaningful changes within their context. Lastly, 9% of the subjects expressed uncertainty about the implications of the psychoeducation intervention. Despite the low percentage, this group needs more confidence about the intervention's impact. They may have specific considerations or concerns influencing their belief in the intervention's implications.

Most subjects, comprising 54.50%, felt that the psychoeducation intervention provided substantial benefits. This indicates that the intervention significantly altered the subjects' perceptions and knowledge regarding how to manage tantrum behaviors in



**Figure 6:** Description of the Utility of Psychoeducation Intervention According to Research Subjects' Perceptions.

children with special needs. This assessment suggests that the intervention offered profound insights and practical approaches within the context of the subjects' everyday lives. On the other hand, 45.50% of the other subjects perceived the psychoeducation intervention as moderately beneficial. While this percentage is lower compared to those who found it very beneficial, it still highlights the positive impact of the intervention in enhancing the subjects' knowledge and skills in addressing tantrum behaviors in children with special needs. Even though a profound transformation of knowledge might not have been achieved, the utility of this intervention is still evident within this group.

## 4. DISCUSSION

The management of tantrum behavior in children with special needs cannot rely solely on one party, such as the school, shadow teacher, or parents. The success of behavior intervention must be a collaborative effort between the school and parents. Parents play a crucial role in determining the success of a child's behavior. Psychoeducation programs for parents have proven effective in imparting knowledge and skills [22]. Providing psychoeducation can increase knowledge among parents of children with special needs [25]. Psychoeducation aimed at parents and shadow teachers can also enhance the child's independence [26].

According to [7], parents are a child's primary source of knowledge. They are essential as the bridge between the home and school environments. Parents also serve as co-therapists for their children with special needs. Hence, enhancing parents' knowledge

and parenting skills in managing behavior is essential. Improving parents' knowledge and skills in behavior management allows children with special needs to learn better and longer in educational settings [26]. Psychoeducation focused on positive parenting for children with disabilities has been proven effective, leading to more positive parenting patterns [27].

In addition to providing psychoeducation to parents and shadow teachers, involving critical figures within the school, such as the principal and school management, as well as stakeholders in the case of private schools, can be beneficial. Tantrums in children with special needs can be triggered by environmental factors that have not been adopted. Parental confidence in psychoeducation materials is high, and parents and shadow teachers find the content beneficial for managing tantrum behavior. Despite the executive functioning challenges in ASD, parents feel that the knowledge gained from psychoeducation can be applied at home to address tantrum behaviors. Parents can implement interventions at home by teaching new skills to children with special needs and maintaining consistent planning.

A limitation of this study is that parents of children with special needs require in-depth application of the knowledge they acquire. In this study, parents did not receive hands-on training in managing tantrum behavior in their children with special needs. Practical training could be beneficial, such as role-playing between parents and their children. A follow-up involving monitoring and evaluation is necessary to assess the application of tantrum behavior management by parents and shadow teachers.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the community-based intervention results, psychoeducation and training for managing tantrum behavior in children with special needs can enhance the knowledge of parents and shadow teachers about tantrum behavior and its management. One limitation of this study is the need for more role-play or practical training for managing tantrum behavior, which resulted in the subjects needing more skills in handling tantrums.

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## Ethics Policy

This study has obtained the approval of the subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and the ethics committee of the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang, approved the research.

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