



Research Paper

# The Effectiveness of Psychoeducation in Improving Teacher Knowledge About Inclusive Education Among Preschool Teacher

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**ABSTRACT:** Inclusive education is an education system that provides opportunities for all students, including children with special needs, to learn together in regular schools. However, in Indonesia, the implementation of inclusive education overcomes a number of challenges, one of which is related to the lack of understanding and readiness of teachers in dealing with children with special needs. Psychoeducation is an approach that combines psychological and educational interventions to improve individual understanding of certain issues. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of psychoeducation in improving teachers' knowledge of inclusive education. This study used a within-subject design method with a research sample of 13 teachers. The results showed that psychoeducation which included techniques such as lectures, video, case studies, roleplay, and questions and answers could improve teachers' knowledge by showing significant post-test scores improvement. Nevertheless, teachers' behavior in implementing inclusive education requires time and further intervention. Overall, psychoeducation succeeded in improving teachers' knowledge and bringing about positive changes in their attitudes towards inclusive education at the preschool level.

**KEYWORDS:** Psychoeducation, Teacher Knowledge, Inclusive Education, Preschool

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## I.INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is an approach in the world of education that aims to provide equal opportunities for all children, including children with special needs, to be able to learn together in a regular school environment. In Indonesia, the concept of inclusive schools is still relatively new and has not been fully implemented optimally. The government has issued a policy requiring schools to accept children with special needs, but in practice many schools have difficulty implementing inclusive education due to various limitations, especially in terms of the readiness of educators (Meilina, 2023). One of the main challenges in implementing inclusive education is the lack of knowledge and understanding of teachers about how to handle students with special needs in the classroom. Many teachers are thought to not have the background or training to handle children with special needs—such as autism spectrum, attention deficit and hyperactivity, specific learning disorder, communication disorder and others. As a result, children with special needs often do not receive intervention and support that is appropriate to their needs (Saputra, 2024).

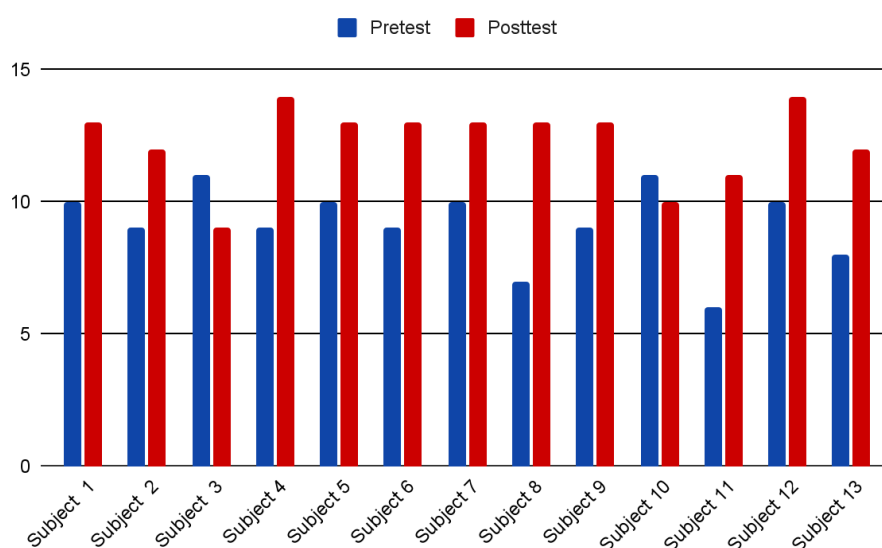
This study was conducted in one of the kindergartens in Medan Indonesia that has accepted five children with special needs, consisting of one autistic child, one child with epilepsy, two children with language delays, and one child with social-emotional problems. This phenomenon shows that schools in Indonesia are starting to open up to inclusive education, but still face major challenges in terms of teacher readiness. The results of interviews with the principal in TK B showed that one of the main obstacles faced by schools in managing inclusive classes is the lack of teacher knowledge and skills in dealing with students with special needs. One approach that can be used to improve teacher understanding and skills in handling inclusive education is through psychoeducation. Psychoeducation is a method that combines education with psychological interventions to

improve individual understanding of a particular topic. In the context of inclusive education, psychoeducation can help teachers understand various aspects related to children with special needs, ranging from child characteristics, effective learning strategies, to appropriate classroom management techniques. By providing psychoeducational training to teachers, it is hoped that they will be better prepared in managing heterogeneous classes and providing appropriate interventions for children with special needs (Sari & Hendriani, 2021). Several previous studies have shown that psychoeducational programs are effective in improving teacher competence in dealing with students with special needs. Tejena, Nawangsari, and Rustika (2022) in their research stated that psychoeducation can improve teachers' understanding of inclusive education, so that they are more confident in teaching children with special needs. Likewise, Satwika et al. (2018) showed that training in identifying children with special needs for inclusive school teachers has a positive impact on their ability to recognize and provide appropriate interventions to students. Dhera et al. (2023) also find that the effectiveness of training in identifying children with special needs for teachers in inclusive schools in its implementation is in accordance with the theories used as references. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of psychoeducation in improving teachers' knowledge of inclusive education among preschool teachers. With this research, it is hoped that it can contribute to the world of education, especially in improving teacher readiness in facing the challenges of inclusive education in Indonesia. In addition, the results of this study are expected to be a reference for policy makers in developing more effective training programs for teachers in dealing with children with special needs in inclusive schools.

## II.PURPOSE AND METHODS

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of psychoeducation in improving preschool teachers' knowledge of inclusive education. The method employed is an experimental design with a within-subjects design. A within-subjects design is an experimental approach in which all participants or subjects are tested in all experimental conditions (Kantowitz et al., 2009). The sample consisted of 13 teachers at TK B Medan, Indonesia where 12 teachers were known to teach inclusive classes. The study began with a pretest to measure teachers' knowledge of inclusive education using a knowledge test with 14 items. Psychoeducation has been designed with some methods that are lectures, videos, case studies, roleplay and questions-answers. Psychoeducation was carried out for 1 meeting with a duration of 6 hours. During psychoeducation, observations were made to see if there were changes in participant behavior and attitudes towards inclusive education materials. After the training, a post-test was conducted using the same instrument to measure changes in the level of teacher knowledge about inclusive education. One week after the training, a follow-up was carried out to see whether the results of psychoeducation were applied in everyday life.

## III.RESULT & DISCUSSIONS



**Figure 1.** Pre-test and post-test score improvement

Psychoeducation begins with an introduction and an explanation of the objectives and benefits of psychoeducation. This is followed by games as an energizer to help participants stay focused during the session.

The psychoeducation materials include: (1) Early Childhood Development, (2) Understanding Children with Special Needs, (3) Teacher Competence in Implementing Inclusive Education, (4) Implementation of Inclusive Education at the Early Childhood Level, and (5) Teaching Strategies in Inclusive Classrooms. The materials are structured based on the knowledge domain according to Bloom's Taxonomy. Bloom (Ratnawati, 2016) developed the concept of knowledge through Bloom's Taxonomy, which is used as a framework for educational objectives. Bloom's Taxonomy classifies various aspects based on scientific research to systematically organize interrelated concepts (Santrock, 2009).

To measure the effectiveness of the training, participants were required to complete a pre-test before the training began and a post-test after the psychoeducation session ended. The results indicated a significant increase in participants' post-test scores, demonstrating that the psychoeducation materials successfully enhanced participants' understanding of inclusive education. The pretest average was 12.31, while the posttest showed a decrease with an average of 9.15. The Wilcoxon test for teacher knowledge produced a Z value of -2.989 and a p value of 0.003, which is smaller than 0.05. This shows that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest, which means that the training has succeeded in significantly improving teacher knowledge. Overall, although the training did not have a significant impact on teacher attitudes, the training proved effective in improving teacher knowledge, as evidenced by the significant statistical test results. However, two participants showed a decline in their scores due to challenges in fully attending the psychoeducation sessions.

Psychoeducation utilized various methods, including lectures, videos, case studies, and question-and-answer sessions, which proved effective in helping participants understand the materials. The use of role-playing provided an opportunity for participants to practice the material directly. Additionally, active participation in discussions was a key indicator of success. In this study, participants actively expressed their opinions during discussion sessions and were able to connect the materials with their real-life experiences with children. Vygotsky's theory (in Woolfolk, 2009) on social interaction-based learning explains that a positive relationship between facilitators and participants is a crucial factor in the success of the learning process. Responsive facilitators who create a supportive environment can enhance participants' engagement and facilitate effective material delivery (in Woolfolk, 2009). Furthermore, participants were provided with a workbook to aid their understanding and note-taking throughout the psychoeducation session. The workbook facilitated note-taking, reflection, and review, enabling participants to grasp the concepts more effectively (Supratiknya, 2011).

Observations revealed that participants showed high enthusiasm and active engagement in each session. They demonstrated understanding by sharing their perspectives on early childhood development, different types of children with special needs, and the importance of teacher competence in inclusive education. The use of engaging and interactive training methods, such as group discussions, video presentations, and role-playing, helped participants better comprehend the psychoeducation materials. These methods were proven to facilitate a deeper understanding of the topics covered in the psychoeducation sessions.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The implementation of psychoeducation showed a significant increase in students' understanding and skills in managing time. Comparison of scores between the initial and final tests conducted before and after psychoeducation showed a significant increase in scores in most participants, indicating that psychoeducation successfully had a positive impact on teachers' understanding of inclusive education. The interactive nature of the training, which used various methods, concrete examples and discussions made it easier for teachers to understand the psychoeducational material. The interactive roleplay and question and answer methods helped teachers understand the psychoeducational material more deeply. However, the results of the follow-up conducted one week after the training showed that although there was a clear increase, the teachers showed a significant change in attitude in teaching in inclusive classes. Teachers facilitate special students with individual schedules and arrange different learning times from general students according to the needs and specialties of the children. In addition, from the results of the interviews it was found that teachers provided education to parents in the education program for children with special needs.

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