



# Exclusionary Time Out To Improve Parents Of Children With Autism' Knowledge To Manage Tantrums

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## ABSTRACT

Tantrums can be frustrating for any parent, especially parents of children with autism because it is more frequent and difficult to manage. Previous studies have shown that one strategy to manage tantrums in children with autism is exclusionary time out technique. The problem is, parents are often wrong in how to handle it, this is caused by a lack of understanding of the right strategy. The objective of this study was to determine whether exclusionary time out technique can improve parents' knowledge to manage tantrums. This study was conducted based on a quasi-experiment research method with a one-group pretest-posttest design which involved five parents aged 29–36 of children with autism. Data were collected using a questionnaire with 20 questions to measure the parents' knowledge about exclusionary time out technique. The collected data were analyzed using Wilcoxon test to test the hypothesis. Result of this study showed a value of  $Z = -2.060$  and  $p = 0.039 < 0.05$  so  $H_0$  was rejected. Thus, there was a statistically significant different between pre-test and post-test. This study found that exclusionary time out technique effectively improve parents of children with autism' knowledge to manage tantrums.

**Keywords:** Exclusionary time out technique; Tantrums; Parents

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## INTRODUCTION

According to Anjani et al. (2019), children with special needs have more difficulty controlling their emotions so they often show their emotions with excessive behavior, including screaming, hitting and hurting themselves. That condition is because according to Winarsih et al. (2013), children with special needs have physical, mental-intellectual and social-emotional limitations that affect the process of growth or development compared to other children their age. Tantrum behavior can appear in any child with special needs, especially children with autism. Hill et al. (2014) states that 20 to 50% of children with autism show tantrum behavior problems, where the behavior is more difficult to prevent, the frequency is more frequent and more aggressive (Siregar, 2018).

In children with autism, tantrum is a form of rejection for an unclear reason (Sulthon, 2018). That is because children with autism are less able to understand when others show disapproval of the behavior they do, so they do things according to their own desires without caring about others (Yalim & Mohamed, 2023). That condition will make children with autism feel frustrated when asked to obey rules on daily activities which lead to tantrum (Yalim & Mohamed, 2023). Tantrum in children with autism occurs excessively and uncontrollably (Mirnawati & Amka, 2022). That is in accordance with what was stated by Baculu and Andri (2019) that children with autism have an excessive reactions during tantrum. The form of tantrum in children with autism are crying, shouting, biting, hitting the head and

grabbing hair can have a negative impact both on themselves and those around them (Mirnawati & Amka, 2022).

Regarding to the negative impact of tantrum, children with autism need treatment from their parents to express and regulate their emotion and behavior (Yalim & Mohamed, 2023). That is because tantrum which is too late to be handled by parents can be a persistent trait in children (Rahayuningsih, 2014). In addition, tantrum is one of the parental problems that cannot be ignored (Yafie et al., 2021). That is because children with autism tend to act aggressively during tantrums if not handled properly (Yalim & Mohamed, 2023). One way to overcome tantrum behavior in children with autism is through behavior modification (Nurfadilah, 2021). According to Purawanti (2014), behavior modification is a technique that uses principles from learning theory to make a change. The results of research from Mirnawati and Amka (2022) show that behavior modification using punishment methods with time out techniques can overcome tantrum behavior in children with autism.

The time out technique is a subtle punishment by giving children time to calm themselves down for mistakes they have been made (Martin & Pear, 2015). That is in accordance with what Yalim and Mohamed (2023) said that children with autism need time to calm themselves down when tantrum. In addition, the time out technique is a way that is often applied by parents to overcome behavioral problems in children (Canning et al., 2023). The time out technique is also the most frequently used technique to overcome tantrum (Woodfield et al., 2022). That technique is used because children tend to be more easily given direction using concrete things (Lestari, 2020).

The type of time out technique in this study is exclusionary time out. According to Bartlett and Ellis (2021), the exclusionary time out technique is isolating children to a place that is still in the same room. In this study, the exclusionary time out technique concept that is used is in accordance with what was stated by Mirnawati (2020), that children remain in the same room by being moved to a chair to sit in the corner of the room facing the wall until a specified time limit to limiting the access of the reinforcement. That type of time out technique is used because of the limited room in the implementation place.

Related to the application, parents of children with autism are often wrong when applying exclusionary time out technique. That is in accordance to data from field studies which is collected with interviews and observations, where most parents are still talking to their children when the child is placed in a timeout chair without knowing the consequences of what they do. That happens because the lack of knowledge related to the application of appropriate exclusionary time out technique which causing obstacles for parents in managing tantrums that occur in their children. The obstacle faced by parents is that children often need time to sit in a chair beyond the specified time limit. That condition is in accordance with studies by Yaacob, et al. (2021) which revealed that there are many parents of children with autism who still have difficulty when caring for their children, one of them is when facing tantrum behavior. That is caused by lacks of knowledge from parents which are related to how to manage tantrum behavior.

Therefore, parents must follow the right procedure when applying the exclusionary time out technique. That condition will occur when parents have knowledge related to exclusionary time out technique through psychoeducation (Yaacob et al., 2021). Psychoeducation is a therapeutic systemic psychotherapeutic intervention used to inform about disorder and treatment to facilitate understanding related to knowledge of how to cope with the disorder (Srivastava & Panday, 2016). Woodfield (2022) said that psychoeducation time out technique is often given to parents which is an evidence-based to overcome tantrum behavior. That is because the application of the time out technique is proven to be safe and effective to use.



Several previous studies have shown the effectiveness of psychoeducation to improve parental knowledge to manage disruptive behaviors, especially tantrum. Studies by Yafie, et al. (2021) finds that contextual teaching and learning parenting program psychoeducation can improve parents' knowledge and ability to manage tantrums in children aged 3 years. Furthermore, studies by Bearss, et al. (2018) conducted research on the effectiveness of parental psychoeducation program to manage disruptive behavior in children with autism. Based on previous research, researcher creates psychoeducation program for parents of children with autism whether exclusionary time out technique can improve parents' knowledge to manage tantrums.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study was conducted using a quasi-experimental research method with a one group pre-test-post-test design. That method is an experimental research carried out only in one group, namely the experimental group without a control group (Isnawan, 2020).

### Participants

The study participants were selected by the non-probability sampling method, the sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling technique determine samples with certain considerations (Sugiyono, 2019). Participants in this study were taken according to predetermined criteria, which are parents of children with autism who had not applied the exclusionary time out technique appropriately. Participants in this study amounted to 5 people consisting of 3 mothers and 2 fathers aged 29-36 years.

### Instrument

Data collection in this study was carried out by providing a questionnaire containing 20 statements related to how to apply the exclusionary time out technique. Questionnaires were given before and after the psychoeducation. That questionnaire was given to see the ability of participants before and after following exclusionary time out technique psychoeducation.

### Research Procedure

This training is held in 4 days, each day consists of 2 sessions. The duration per session is 2 hours consisting of several activities:

1. The opening included ice breaking and explanations related to training on exclusionary time out technique and informed consent to participants.
2. Pre-test, carried out by filling out a questionnaire sheet related to how to apply exclusionary time out technique before following psychoeducation.
3. The presentation of material, was carried out to provide information about the understanding, types, principles and steps of applying exclusionary time out technique to manage tantrum.
4. Questions and answers, conducted to control participants' understanding of exclusionary time out technique material.
5. Video playback of the application of exclusionary time out technique to manage tantrum in children with autism. Video playback is carried out to provide an overview to participants regarding how to apply the exclusionary time out technique appropriately.
6. Quiz, conducted to refresh participants' knowledge about exclusionary time out technique material.

7. Role play, carried out by one participant acting as a child with autism who is having tantrum and another participant playing a role in applying exclusionary time out technique when the children shows tantrum.
8. Let's assess, done by participants filling out assessment sheets to evaluate errors in the application of exclusionary time out technique to other participants who act as a parent. Let's assess is given to train participants' understanding of the material.
9. Post-test, conducted by filling out a questionnaire sheet related to how to apply exclusionary time out technique after following psychoeducation.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Questionnaires are used as pre-test and post-test to measure the knowledge of parents of children with autism related to exclusionary time out technique. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 22.0 with non-parametric Wilcoxon analysis.

## RESULT

### Participant's Characteristics

**Table. 1 Characteristics of participants**

Characteristic	Total (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Woman	3	60
Man	2	40
<b>Age</b>		
29 - 31 years	2	40
32 - 34 years	2	40
35 - 36 years	1	20
<b>Children's Age</b>		
4 - 6 years	2	40
7 - 9 years	3	60

### Data Analysis

The results of pre-test and post-test data analysis in the implementation of psychoeducation can be seen in the following table:

**Table. 2 Wilcoxon test results**

	<i>Pre test - Post test</i>
With	-2,060b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,039



The results of this study were supported by statistical analysis, namely the Wilcoxon pre-test and post-test obtained a Z value of -2,060 with  $p= 0,039$  ( $p < 0,05$ ). That shows there is a significant difference in knowledge of parents of children with autism between before and after psychoeducation, which means the psychoeducation of exclusionary time out technique is effective.

**Table. 3 Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre	5	11	14	13,60	1,517
Post	5	15	18	16,40	1,817
Valid N (Listwise)	5				

The table above shows an increase in post-test scores, where post-test scores are higher than pre-test scores. The average score of participants during the pre-test was 13,60 and the post test was 16,40. This shows an improvement in the knowledge of parents with children with autism about exclusionary time out technique before and after the psychoeducation.

## DISCUSSION

Psychoeducation is held in a room at the therapy center for children with special needs which is carried out 8 times for 4 days, from February 1 to 4, 2023, each session lasts for 2 hours. Pre-test and post-test are carried out before and after the psychoeducation takes place. This training began with an opening which included ice breaking and explanations related to research as well as informed consent to training participants first. Methods used in this psychoeducation of exclusionary time out technique to manage tantrum in children with autism include lectures, videos, quizzes and role plays. Researcher use varied training methods that support the training process so that participants are easier to receive knowledge related to exclusionary time out technique. That is in accordance with what was said by Bell, et al. (2017) that research methods which encourage and support psychoeducation participants to be more active can facilitate knowledge improvement. Psychoeducation went smoothly and all participants were present from the beginning to the end of the training.

During the lectures, parents were seen paying attention and initiative to note important points on the exclusionary time out technique material. During the question and answer session, each parent also took advantage of the opportunity to ask questions related to the material provided. Parents also tell that they often feel depressed when their children shows tantrum. That is in accordance with what was conveyed by Padden and James (2017) that parents of children with autism have higher levels of stress than other parents. In addition to the material, the video is also displayed as a discussion material per group related to the application of the exclusionary time out technique, where parents focus on watching the video and try to work together to give their answer during the discussion session. When the quiz questions were given, all parents showed their enthusiasm by raising one of their hands.

After the procedures of how to apply the exclusionary time out technique are given, the session continues with role play. In that activity, one parent acts as a child who shows tantrum and the other as a parent who applies exclusionary time out technique. All parent seem very enthusiastic when they get the opportunity to play as a parent who manage tantrum and only make one mistake during its

implementation. On the other hand, all parents still talking to to the children who is sitting on the chair for exclusionary time out. Where one of the basic principles in the application of exclusionary time out technique according to Bartlett (2021) is that parents are not allowed to give comment when children are tantrum. After that, parents were asked to assess the results of role play by correcting errors of other participants when applying exclusionary time out technique. The result is that all parents are able to evaluate the mistakes that exist.

This study has an abnormal data. That is because the number of participants are small and the characteristics of parents are different in terms of age, gender to the age of children with autism. Santoso (2010) revealed that abnormal data does not mean that a study is not good. Data abnormalities can be caused because the data comes from a small number of samples and different characteristics so that the data is not evenly distributed and the results obtained cannot be generalized to the existing population. However, the results of the Wilcoxon pre-test and post-test showed a significant improve in knowledge among parents of children with autism to manage tantrums using exclusionary time out technique before and after psychoeducation. That is because the application of the time out technique has been proven effective in managing tantrum (Woodfield et al., 2022).

From the explanation above, it can be concluded that psychoeducation is effective in increasing the knowledge of parents of children with autism in managing tantrum in their children. Based on the results of this study, several suggestions can be put forward for future researchers and parents of children with autism. Further researchers can add research participants and follow-up sessions. Parents should continue to develop skills in how to manage tantrum in children with autism using exclusionary time out technique and other techniques.

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