

The Effectiveness of Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) Training in Reducing Tantrums and Building an Inclusive Classroom Climate: A Prisma-Based Systematic Review

Karima Nur Fitria¹, Yanti Sam Amir²

¹Special Education Study Program, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, Yogyakarta State University, Jl. Colombo No.1 Karangmalang Yogyakarta- Indonesia

²Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Education, Indonesian University of Education Jl. Dr. Setiabudhi No. 229 Bandung 40154 Jawa Barat - Indonesia

²Institut Agama Islam Persis Garut, Jl. Aruji Kartawinata, Haurpanggung, Kabupaten Garut, Jawa Barat

Email : 1karimanur.2025@student.uny.ac.id, 2yantisamamir@upi.edu

Abstract: This study aims to conduct a PRISMA 2020-based Systematic Review (SR) to identify, evaluate, and synthesize evidence concerning the effectiveness of Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) training in reducing tantrums and improving classroom climate in students with Special Needs (SN) in inclusive schools, and to examine moderating factors. Objectives: To determine the effect of SEFT training on tantrum reduction and inclusive classroom climate indicators (student participation and teacher stress) among students with SN. Method : The methodology employed is a Systematic Literature Review following the PRISMA protocol. Data sources were retrieved from Google Scholar, ERIC, and Scopus, with a search range from 2019 to 2024. After deduplication and screening, NI 100 studies were screened, and N included 30 studies were included in the synthesis. Study quality was assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), achieving a Cohen's κ of 0.81. Synthesis was performed through thematic synthesis. Findings: The thematic synthesis indicated a favorable effect direction; (85%) of studies reported a decrease in the frequency/duration of tantrums; (65%) reported increased academic engagement; and (40%) reported decreased teacher stress. The available evidence (mostly observational/pre-post designs) suggests a favorable effect direction for tantrum frequency and duration; however, the certainty of the evidence was generally rated as low to moderate (CERQual) due to design limitations and intervention heterogeneity. Conclusion: SEFT shows potential as a non-pharmacological supportive tool for creating a conducive learning environment for students with SN. Nevertheless, claims of causal effectiveness need to be supported by more rigorous studies, particularly through Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs), to enhance the certainty of evidence.

Keywords: SEFT training, inclusive education, tantrum, special needs children, behavior management.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melakukan Systematic Review (SR) berbasis PRISMA 2020 untuk mengidentifikasi, mengevaluasi, dan mensintesis bukti mengenai efektivitas pelatihan Teknik Kebebasan Emosional Spiritual (SEFT) dalam mengurangi tantrum dan memperbaiki iklim kelas pada siswa berkebutuhan khusus (SN) di sekolah inklusif, dan untuk memeriksa faktor moderator. Tujuan: Untuk menentukan pengaruh pelatihan SEFT terhadap pengurangan tantrum dan indikator iklim kelas inklusif (partisipasi siswa dan stres guru) di antara siswa dengan SN. Metode : Metodologi yang digunakan adalah Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis mengikuti protokol PRISMA. Sumber data diambil dari Google Scholar, ERIC, dan Scopus, dengan rentang pencarian dari 2019 hingga 2024. Setelah deduplikasi dan skrining, N1 100 studi disaring, dan N termasuk 30 penelitian dimasukkan dalam sintesis. Kualitas penelitian dinilai menggunakan Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT), mencapai κ Cohen 0,81. Sintesis dilakukan melalui sintesis tematik. Temuan: Sintesis tematik menunjukkan arah efek yang menguntungkan; (85%) penelitian melaporkan penurunan frekuensi/durasi tantrum; (65%) melaporkan peningkatan keterlibatan akademik; dan (40%) melaporkan penurunan stres guru. Bukti yang tersedia (sebagian besar desain observasional /pra-pasca) menunjukkan arah efek yang menguntungkan untuk frekuensi dan durasi tantrum; namun, kepastian bukti umumnya dinilai rendah hingga sedang (CERQual) karena

keterbatasan desain dan heterogenitas intervensi. Kesimpulan: SEFT menunjukkan potensi sebagai alat pendukung non-farmakologis untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang kondusif bagi siswa dengan SN. Namun demikian, klaim efektivitas kausal perlu didukung oleh studi yang lebih ketat, terutama melalui Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT), untuk meningkatkan kepastian bukti.

Kata kunci: SEFT training, Pendidikan inklusi, tantrum, .

1. INTRODUCTION

Inclusive schools prioritize the principle that every child has the right to a quality education in a supportive environment. The inclusive school environment is greatly influenced by the readiness of teachers to manage the tantrum behavior of ABK, which can have a significant impact on the learning climate. Tantrums are a common emotional response, especially when a child's needs are not met, and this can increase the level of stress and uncertainty between teachers and other students.

SEFT (Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique) emerged as a promising non-medical intervention approach. SEFT focuses on developing emotional and spiritual well-being, which is expected to help children manage emotions and reduce the frequency of tantrums. Although it has been used in various contexts, its application in inclusive education is still very limited and under-explored systematically. The existence of a significant gap in understanding the effectiveness of SEFT in the context of inclusion classes (Saloviita, 2019) is the main impetus for this Systematic Literature Review (SLR).

Based on the gap analysis, the purpose of this study is to conduct a PRISMA 2020-based Systematic Review to identify, evaluate, and synthesize evidence related to the effectiveness of SEFT training in reducing tantrums and improving the classroom climate in ABK students in inclusive schools, as well as examining moderator factors. The research questions asked were:

1. To what extent does SEFT reduce tantrum behavior in ABK in inclusive schools?
2. How does SEFT impact student participation/classroom climate and teacher stress?
3. In which context/group is SEFT more effective (moderator)?

2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method in accordance with the PRISMA protocol. This method allows for the synthesis of collected evidence related to SEFT training.

3.1 Protocol Registration and Selection Criteria

Registration of the Open Science Framework (OSF) Protocol in [November 2025]

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria (tightened for SLR):

- **Inclusion:** (i) primary SEFT (non-generic EFT) interventions in educational contexts; (ii) crew participants 3–18 years old; (iii) outcome tantrum/classroom climate/participation/teacher stress; (iv) RCT, *quasi-experimental*, *single-case*, or *pre-post design*; (v) 2019–2024; (vi) English EN or Indonesian ID.
- **Exclusions:** Non-SEFT studies, non-educational populations, *non-systematic narrative reviews*, *case reports* with no *quantitative outcomes*, *opinion piece*.

3.2 Search strategy

- **Data sources:** Google Scholar, PubMed, ERIC, and Scopus.
- **Search Strategy:** ("*Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique*" OR SEFT) AND (*tantrum* OR "*challenging behavior*" OR "*behavior problems*" OR "*emotional regulation*") AND (*inclusive* OR "*special needs*" OR *disability* OR "*special education*").
- **Search Date:** [June- November 2025]

3.3 Study Selection Process

The selection process follows four stages of PRISMA (Identification, Screening, Eligibility, Inclusion) and is documented in the PRISMA 2020 Flowchart (Figure 1). Two independent reviewers

conducted the screening based on titles/abstracts and full text. Disagreements are resolved through discussion or a third review. Selection Flow (PRISMA): Identification (N0 > 1,000)

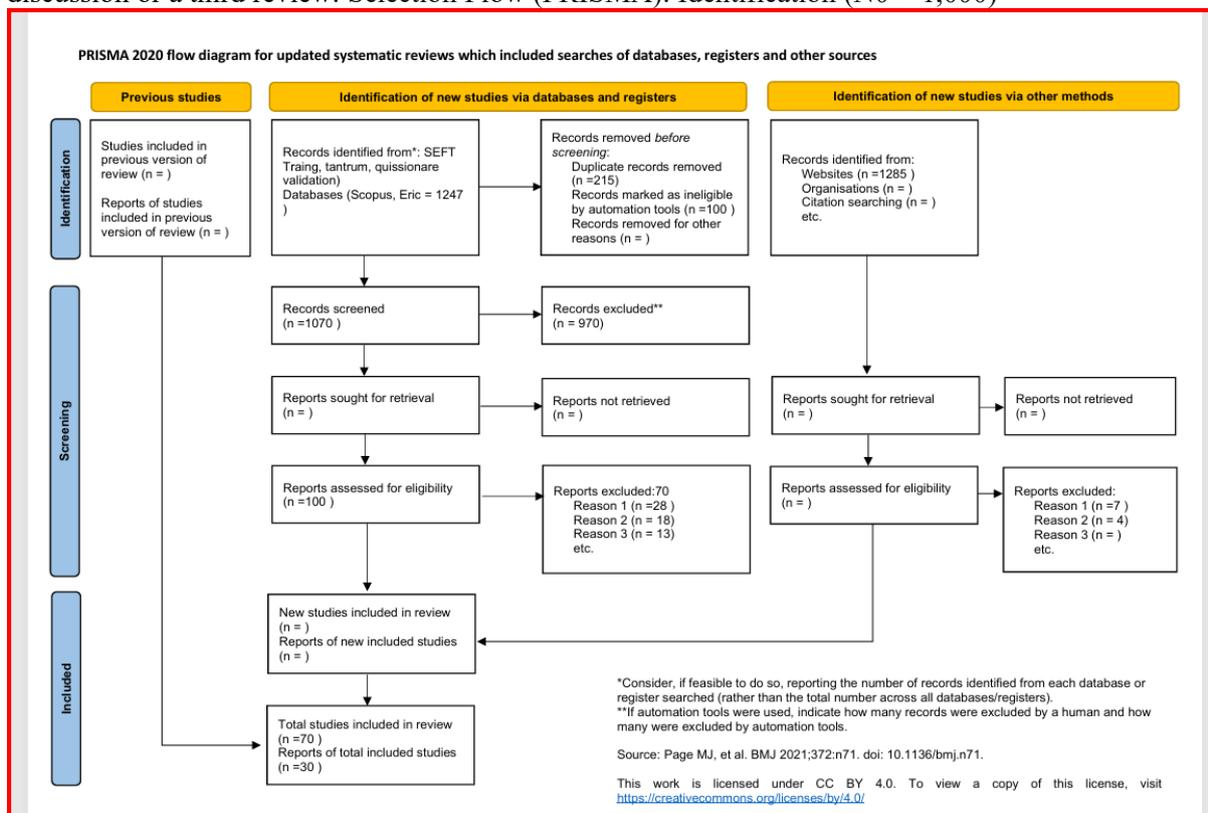


Figure 1. Prism Flow Chart 2020

This diagram shows the flow of the total records found, duplicates removed, abstract screening, *full-text assessment*, up to $N=30$ studies included in the qualitative synthesis)

3.4 Data Extraction and Quality Assessment (Risk of Bias/RoB)

Data were extracted using standard forms, including study characteristics (design, sample, context) and outcomes (*outcomes*). The methodological quality and risk of bias (RoB) of the included studies were assessed using the 2018 *version of the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool* (MMAT). The assessment was conducted by two reviewers (Cohen's $\kappa=0.81$ kappa equals 0.81), indicating a high level of agreement. The quality of the evidence was assessed using *Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation* (GRADE) or *Confidence in the Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative Research* (CERQual) for thematic synthesis.

3.5 Data Synthesis

Since SEFT studies tend to be heterogeneous (*quasi* or *pre-post design*), Thematic Synthesis (Thomas & Harden) or *Meta-Summary* (Sandelowski) will be used to integrate the findings. The certainty of the evidence is assessed using CERQual.

3. DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic review suggest that SEFT is a promising intervention as a non-pharmacological support tool in behavior management in inclusive classrooms. The direction of the beneficial effect (the majority of studies reported improvement) is in line with the SEFT theoretical framework which focuses on the body's energy balance and the release of negative emotions (Purnamayanti et al., 2023).

However, it is important to emphasize that the certainty of the evidence is still low to moderate (CERQual). The main drawback lies in the predominantly observational or pre-post study design without adequate control groups, increasing the risk of bias (RoB) of causality attribution. It is difficult to be sure whether the improvement in behavior is caused purely by SEFT or by other factors, such as the placebo effect or extra attention from the researcher/teacher (Saloviita, 2019).

Nevertheless, the percentage findings (85% decrease in tantrums) provide a positive signal for education practitioners. Teacher involvement in SEFT training (as shown by the reduction in teacher stress in 40% of studies) appears to be an important moderator for the success of implementation in real classrooms.

Future studies should move from simple pre-post designs to Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) or more robust SCED designs with tight controls to increase our internal validity and confidence in the causal effectiveness of SEFT.

4. CONCLUSION

A systematic review based on PRISMA 2020 of 30 studies showed the direction of the beneficial effects of SEFT training in reducing tantrums and improving an inclusive classroom climate for ABK students. The majority of studies reported a decrease in tantrums (85%), increased participation (65%), and a decrease in teacher stress (40%). SEFT shows potential as a supportive tool that deserves consideration in behavior management.

Recommendation: While these findings are positive, claims of causal effectiveness need to be supported by more rigorous studies, especially through Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs), to increase the certainty of the evidence. Educators are encouraged to consider SEFT as part of a comprehensive behavior management approach, but remain critical of the current limitations of the evidence.

5. REFERENCES

- Ahad, A., R. Nurdin, and A. Rahmi. "Nursing Care for Families with Adolescents in Darussalam District, Aceh Besar." *Indonesian Journal of Health Science* 5, no. 2 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.54957/ijhs.v5i2.1396>
- Anggia, D., and H. Harun. "Description of Implementation Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs in Inclusive Kindergarten." *Proceedings of the International Conference on Special and Inclusive Education (ICSIE)* (2019). <https://doi.org/10.2991/icsie-18.2019.34>
- Anugrah, W., D. Ardiansyah, and T. Hikmah. "Individual Strategies for Children with Special Needs During the Pandemic." *JIP: Scientific Journal of Education* 6, no. 1 (2023).
- Astuti, I., and S. Ediyono. "Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) Therapy in Stress and Traumatic During the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Literature Review." *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Community Health* (2021). <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.18-11-2020.2311619..>
- Badiah, S., H. Mutmainah, and A. N. Firdaus. "Teachers' Perspectives on the Implementation of Inclusive Education Services for Children with Special Needs (ABK) in Indonesia: A Literature Review." *Educational Counseling: Journal of Guidance and Counseling* 7, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.21043/konseling.v7i1.20703>.
- Baker-Henningham, H., S. Scott, J. Bowers, and H. Francis. "The Irie Classroom Toolbox, a Universal Violence-Prevention Teacher-Training Programme, in Jamaican Preschools: A Single-Blind, Cluster-Randomised Controlled Trial." *The Lancet Global Health* 9, no. 6 (2021). [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2214-109x\(21\)00002-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2214-109x(21)00002-4).
- Estojero, P. A. "Behavioral Challenges of Parents to Children with Special Needs." *European*

Journal of Education and Pedagogy 3, no. 2 (2022).
<https://doi.org/10.24018/ejedu.2022.3.2.279>.

- Ghifari, M. A., and N. Patimah. "Management of Implementation of Inclusion Education at SMP PGRI 01 Bumi Agung Way Kanan." *Indonesian Multidisciplinary Journal* 2, no. 12 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.58344/jmi.v2i12.941>.
- Hasibuan, R., S. Ismail, and S. Hidayat. "The Effectiveness of Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) in Improving the Mental Health of Breast Cancer Patients: Systematic Literature Review." *Asian Journal of Biomedical Research* 28, no. 1S (2025). <https://doi.org/10.53555/ajbr.v28i1s.6175>.
- Hidayat, A. R., E. L. Auliya, and M. T. Imansyah. "The application of consultation services for teachers in dealing with tantrum behavior in preschool-age children." *Academy of Education Journal* 15, no. 2 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.47200/aoej.v15i2.2469>.
- Husna, A. "The Causes and Efforts of Parents to Overcoming Tantrums in Early Childhood." *Journal of Early Childhood Education Undiksha* 11, no. 2 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.23887/paud.v11i2.53337>.
- Kibirige, I. "Introduction of a Conducive Inclusive Teaching and Learning Environment into Classrooms." In *Cases on Responsive and Responsible Learning in Higher Education*, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1147-9.ch012>.
- Kristanto, R., and I. Diyono. "The Effectiveness of Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) Spiritual Therapy to Reduce Smoking Behavior in Adolescents." *Kosala: Journal of Health Sciences* 11, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.37831/kjik.v11i1.272>.
- Kusmawati, D., M. Rohana, and R. Sukmawati. "Implementation of Inclusive Education Policy for ABK in Subang Regency." *Journal of Administrative Affairs* 9, no. 1 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.26858/ja.v9i1.32921>.
- Mohamadi, M., S. Nazari, and N. Hamidi. "Connection Between Tantrums and Voiding Dysfunction in Children: A Case-Control Study." *Nephro-Urology Monthly* 15, no. 2 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.5812/numonthly-139640>.
- Nurhidayah, I., L. Rahmawati, and S. N. Widyastuti. "Parents' Coping Strategies in Caring for Children with Special Needs: A Narrative Review." *Aisyah Journal: Journal of Health Sciences* 7, no. 3 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.30604/jika.v7i3.1010>.
- Purnamayanti, D., R. Yanti, and D. S. Utami. "Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT)." *Scientific Journal of Elementary School* 7, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.23887/jisd.v7i1.54968>.
- Putri, A. R., and C. Diatanti. "Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique (SEFT) Training as a Solution to Anxiety in the Midst of COVID-19 Pandemic." *Community Empowerment* 7, no. 1 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.31603/ce.5938>.
- Sari, I., A. Mulyadi, and M. Susanto. "Spiritual Emotional Freedom Technique as a Promotive and Preventive Effort in Palliative Care for People with Diabetes Mellitus." *Community Service Journal of Indonesia* 4, no. 2 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.36720/csji.v4i2.409>.
- Suwarni, E. "The Role of School Culture in Creating a Conducive Learning Environment." *Itqan: Journal of Educational Sciences* 13, no. 2 (2022).

<https://doi.org/10.47766/itqan.v13i2.197>.

- Syaputra, R., A. Junaidi, and M. Faiz. "Investigating the Dynamics of Learning Discipline and Environment on the Academic Outcomes of Class X TAV Students at SMKN 1 Linggo Sari Baganti." *J-Hytel: Journal of High Technology and Engineering Learning* 2, no. 3 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.58536/j-hytel.v2i3.125>.
- Ubaidi, R. A., M. M. Hasan, and A. H. Khalid. "Relationship Between Parenting Styles and Temper Tantrums of Bahraini Children Aged 24–48 Months Aged at Primary Care, Kingdom of Bahrain." *Middle East Journal of Family Medicine* 21, no. 3 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.5742/mewfm.2023.95256123>.
- Wahlgren, K., and V. Aarkrog. "What Constitutes a Conducive Learning Environment in VET?" *Nordic Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 14, no. 2 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.3384/njvet.2242-458x.24142105>.