

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

School-based strategies for implementing psychoeducation on emotion regulation in junior high students

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**Abstract**

Adolescence is a period when individuals undergo numerous changes, including physical, psychological, and emotional shifts. Many issues arise during this stage due to adolescents' inability to regulate their emotions. Therefore, this project was conducted with the goal of enhancing adolescents' emotion regulation abilities. The study used experimental design with involving 36 participants ranging in age from 13 to 15 years old. The participants were students from Junior High School Hasanuddin 06 Semarang, Indonesia. The activities were performed using a conventional approach that focused on interaction between the presenter and the audience. It incorporated active learning methods, specifically interactive question-and-answer sessions and discussions. Data during study was analysed by using paired t-test. The research results show that there is an increase in knowledge about emotion regulations among the junior high school student population ($p < 0.05$). This finding demonstrates that the psychoeducation increased the students' knowledge and understanding of emotion and how to regulate emotions. Therefore, the results of this program can serve as a foundation for psychologists to use psychoeducation as an innovation or approach to address emotional regulation issues, particularly among adolescents.

Keywords: Behavioural science, emotional regulation, psychoeducation, psychological issues, teenagers

Introduction

Adolescence which typically occurs between the ages of 12 and 18 is a critical developmental stage serving as the transition period from childhood to adulthood (Crone & Konijn, 2018). Adolescence is a phase marked by significant changes across physical, psychological, and emotional domains (Best & Ban, 2021). Physical changes in adolescents are characterized by alterations in posture, facial structure, and the function of the reproductive organs (Demaria et al., 2024). Adolescents experience psychological and emotional changes, including self-discovery, adapting to society, and developing attraction to the opposite sex (Sundari et al., 2025). However, without proper monitoring from parents or schools, this development can often lead to negative outcomes, such as juvenile delinquency and other issues. In addition, many adolescents also exhibit maladjustment behaviors, characterized by an inability to adapt and interact effectively with new environments, leading to actions such as aggression, defiance, stubbornness, fighting, bullying, and poor communication with parents (Feng et al., 2024). One in seven adolescents globally (15%) experience a mental disorder, with maladjustment behaviors like depression, anxiety, and behavioral issues being leading causes of illness and disability, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) (World Health Organization, 2025). Study shows a wide range in behavioral and emotional problem prevalence (16.5% to 40.8%) across different populations, with some estimates reaching up to 20% for mental or behavioral problems (Sears & Papini, 2019). Therefore, a study underscores the significance of promoting protective factors through strategies encompassing personal, family, and social dimensions (Wu et al., 2025). Educational programs emerge as a vital approach for preventing substance abuse in adolescents by targeting these factors (Méndez et al., 2024).

Adolescence is a critical period often marked by an increased number of problems, largely raising from the inability to effectively regulate emotions (**Figure 1**). Emotions themselves are physiological reactions rooted in feelings that arise from an individual's internal state toward external conditions (Young et al., 2019). Consequently, emotions significantly influence a person's thoughts, perceptions, and behavior (Smith et al., 2023). The resulting emotional reaction can manifest as either positive or negative, depending entirely on how the individual processes and manages the feeling.

Emotion regulation is therefore defined as a person's ability to control or manage these emotional experiences (Kozubal et al., 2023). Specifically, an individual who can regulate emotions effectively can maintain, increase, or decrease their emotional response, and, most importantly, express those emotions in a constructive and positive manner (Menefee et al., 2022). A study conducted an intervention in school environment which is effective to address emotional regulations (Theodorou et al., 2024). However, the previous research focusing on emotion regulation in adolescents, notwithstanding its value often reveals significant implementation and contextual gaps that this proposed school-based study aims to address.

In years gone by, studies on psychological interventions for emotional skills have frequently been conducted in clinical settings or relied on specialized external personnel that making them difficult to sustain and scale within resource-limited junior high environments. A major gap lies in the lack of detailed reporting on implementation strategies—previous publications often describe what intervention was done but fail to detail how it was practically integrated into the school's existing structure. This omission creates a fidelity gap that making it challenging for other schools to replicate the success. Furthermore, many existing programs neglect to account for the unique developmental phase of early adolescence (junior high), where social dynamics, peer influence, and the transition to greater autonomy significantly impact engagement. Previous studies often failed to assess the specific "school-based strategies" needed for teacher training, communication with parents, and integration into non-academic subjects (such as physical education or advisory periods). This represents a crucial missed opportunity that hindering the effort to build truly sustainable and ecologically valid emotion regulation programs.

Addressing this need, the research team implemented a community service program that utilized psychoeducation on emotion regulation. This intervention serves as a psychological treatment aimed at significantly increasing participants' knowledge, understanding, and practical ability to manage their own emotions. Adolescents were the target participants because their emotional conditions tend to be unstable during this developmental stage. To ensure the intervention matched the characteristics of early adolescence, the community service was specifically aimed at junior high school students. Furthermore, the selection of the host school was based entirely on the institution's cooperation and readiness to implement the psychoeducation program. This proposed study—School-based strategies for implementing psychoeducation on emotion regulation in junior high students—is critically important because it shifts the focus from merely proving efficacy (does the intervention work?) to rigorously examining effectiveness and implementation (can the intervention be done well in a real-world setting?). With centering the research on implementation strategies, this study provides the practical, granular data necessary for policymakers and school administrators. Specifically, it seeks to identify cost-effective and teacher-friendly protocols for psychoeducation delivery that addressing the historical barrier of requiring expensive and specialized external personnel. This is vital for transforming emotion regulation training of school mental health services. At last, this research provides the roadmap for effective mental health interventions to all junior high students, promote long-term mental health literacy and prevent future social and academic difficulties.

Method

The study employed a pilot experimental study design to conduct a preliminary examination of a new and innovative approach to psychoeducation for adolescents. This design was specifically chosen to assess the feasibility and initial efficacy of the intervention before scaling up to a larger as more complex trial (In, 2017). The target participants for this program were students at Junior High School Hasanuddin 06 Semarang Indonesia, aged 13–15 years, which matches with the critical developmental stage of early adolescence. The selection of this specific location was based on three key practical considerations: its relatively easy accessibility for the research team, the availability of necessary logistical resources, and the strong cooperation and willingness of the school administration to facilitate the program's



Figure 1. Illustration of junior high school environment (Generated by AI).



Figure 2. Data collection process (Documented by authors).

for preliminary data, the small sample size and lack of a control group categorize the study as a pilot can generate foundational data to more controlled trials.

The program activity was implemented using a conventional psychoeducation approach that placed a strong emphasis on active, two-way interaction between the presenter and the audience. This method went with passive lecturing by integrating active learning techniques, primarily through interactive question-and-answer sessions and dynamic group discussions. The presenter's role was deliberately structured as the central source of learning information, but also as a facilitator of critical thinking. The researchers continuously tested the extent of the students' general knowledge and recognition of the presented psychoeducational material through short, targeted Q&A sessions. These interactions specifically focused on assessing how well students understood the basic concept of emotions and their ability to empathize with both themselves and others regarding emotional states. To enhance engagement and motivation, the researcher intentionally incorporated a reward system, providing small incentives for students who actively participated in the question-and-answer sessions. This strategy was designed to motivate quieter students to overcome hesitation, increase their interest in the material, and encourage the open expression of personal opinions and experiences. The primary outcome measure for the study was the improvement in the students' knowledge. This was assessed using a standardized pretest and posttest system, each consisting of 10 questions which was validated by expert in the field. These questions were specifically formulated to cover the core domains of the psychoeducation, including the types of emotions, effective emotion regulation strategies, and practical ways to achieve emotional stability and provide quantitative data on the program's immediate educational efficacy (**Figure 3**).

This study's data analysis was performed using SPSS software, involving descriptive statistics and a paired t-test. The paired t-test was the primary inferential method employed to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores following the psychoeducation intervention. The psychoeducation program did not undergo a formal review/ethics approval process, but course lecturer provided guidance during the program's preparation and offered evaluations after implementation for safety and ethical reasons.

Results

The demographic data reveals that the study involved a total of 36 participants, comprising both males and females. The age range of the respondents was between 13 and 15 years old, which is a crucial phase of adolescence marked by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. This age group is particularly vulnerable to emotional fluctuations that making it an ideal population for interventions for emotional regulation skills improvements. With focusing on junior high

implementation within their curriculum schedule. The study assessed the intervention's effectiveness under actual conditions in 8 May 2025. A total of 36 students from the 8th grade participated in this study (**Figure 2**). The sampling technique used was simple random sampling ensuring that every eligible student had an equal chance of being included and minimizing selection bias within the study population. The core research structure was defined by a one-group pretest-posttest design. This quasi-experimental model permitted the researchers to measure changes in the participants' knowledge and understanding before and immediately after the intervention (during 2 hours of intervention), providing a direct indication of the program's impact (Capili & Anastasi, 2024). Though this design is effective



Figure 3. The completion of data collection process (Documented by authors).

school students, the results of the study showed a mean score difference of -25.5 between the pretest and posttest evaluations, with 21 degrees of freedom. The p-value of 0.001 indicated a statistically significant difference that suggesting the psychoeducation intervention had a profound impact on the students' knowledge regarding emotional regulation (**Table 1**). This finding underscores the potential of interventions in adolescents' emotional intelligence and well-being. Equipping junior high school students with the knowledge and skills can serve an important aspect in promoting mental health and resilience during this critical developmental stage. The significant p-value confirms that the observed effects are unlikely to be due to chance that lending credibility to the intervention's effectiveness.

Table 1. Data analysis.

							95% Confidence Interval		
		Statistic	df	p	Mean Difference	SE Difference	Lower	Upper	Effect size
Pretest	Posttest	-3,71	21.0	0.001	-25.5	6.86	-39.7	-11.2	-0.791

Discussion

The study found that psychoeducation is effective to improve the students' knowledge in emotional regulation in junior high school environment. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research indicating that health education, particularly psychoeducation enhanced students' outcomes in various aspect (Savell et al., 2024; Ghorpade & Kamble, 2025). Meaningful social connections and supportive relationships are essential for mental health that providing individuals with self-security, belonging, and a support system (Holt-Lunstad, 2024). The mental health of undergraduate students is a critical element of their overall well-being, given the numerous academic, social, and personal challenges they often face (Valdés et al., 2022). Psychoeducation which provided individuals with information and resources about mental health has emerged as an effective approach for promoting mental well-being and reducing stigma (Sarkhel et al., 2020). This recent study emphasize that the maturation of these organs is also one of the genetic factors that affect the emotional state of adolescents. The types of emotions described by researchers are positive emotions and negative emotions. Positive emotions are feelings that make feel happy, comfortable, or happy (Fredrickson, 1998). Negative emotions, on the other hand, are feelings that make uncomfortable or sad (Renna, 2021). Negative emotions can help to be more alert, learn, and grow stronger. The study recommended that students practice breathing exercises and catharsis, techniques that help regulate emotions by engaging in positive activities.

Emotional development refers to an individual's reaction to various daily feelings which influences their perspective in problem-solving, decision-making, and overall behavior (Rahal & Fosco, 2025). As individuals, especially adolescents, are highly susceptible to emotional influence, it's common to find that their emotion regulation skills are often underdeveloped (Morris et al., 2007). In this study, the researcher employed the interactive question-and-answer method as a strategy to gauge the students' initial knowledge of emotion regulation. This activity was designed to deliver material in a one-way lecture and engage students in dynamic discussion. Through this interactive approach, students were encouraged to reflect on their personal experiences and accurately identify different types of emotions, such as anger, anxiety, fear, and happiness. This process helped students recognize and label each emotion they experience, which is foundational to managing those emotions. Finally, at the close of the material delivery session, students were given time for written reflection to express their current feelings on paper. This activity aimed to provide a safe and positive outlet for students to acknowledge and validate their feelings (**Figure 4**). The specific activity of having students engage in written reflection to express their current feelings serves a key therapeutic function rooted in the psychologist's understanding of emotional processing and catharsis (Kadam et al., 2024). The psychologist designs this task to act as a containment and validation mechanism. Rather than simply allowing feelings to remain internal and disorganized, the act of writing forces the adolescent to externalize and label their emotional state, moving from a vague feeling to a concrete concept (Lai et al., 2023). The psychologist understands this externalization is the first step toward cognitive mastery—it reduces the overwhelming quality of intense emotions. Furthermore, by framing the writing as a "safe and positive outlet," the psychologist implicitly validates the adolescent's subjective emotional experience that reinforcing the idea that all feelings are acceptable, even if the resulting behaviors are not (Olmos-Ochoa et al., 2021). This written reflection facilitates a mild, controlled form of catharsis for the symbolic release of tension without requiring public disclosure. This writing-based emotional expression process benefits junior high school students by enhancing their ability to convey their feelings when confronted with various issues.

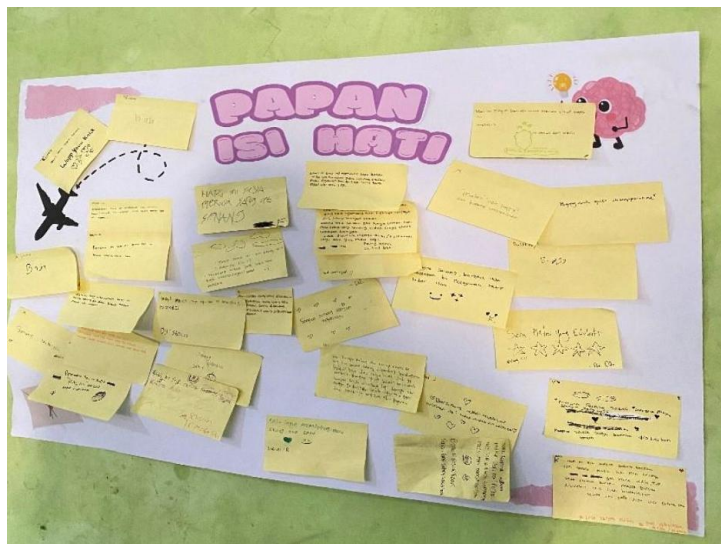


Figure 4. Writing expression by students in junior high school (Documented by authors).

The program being implemented—emotion regulation in adolescents through psychoeducation—necessitates a collaborative and distinct role for both psychologists and general healthcare professionals. Psychologists are central to this process as they possess the specialized expertise to design, implement, and evaluate the core psychoeducation program. They utilize their knowledge of developmental psychology to the adolescent stage, employing therapeutic modalities like Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) principles to teach specific emotion management skills, cognitive restructuring, and techniques for reflective practice (e.g., catharsis and written expression) (Halder & Mahato, 2019; Larsson & Zetterqvist, 2024; Santos et al., 2024). Their role extends to clinical assessment, fidelity of the intervention, and analyze the resulting data to measure changes in emotional stability. Conversely, healthcare professionals (such as nurses, pediatricians, and school counselors) should make an integration and sustainability of the program within the broader community or school

setting (Richter et al., 2022; Kirnan et al., 2025). They act as the front-line facilitators who observe the practical application of the learned skills, provide ongoing, informal support, and serve as the referral gateway. Their role involves identifying adolescents whose emotional instability signals a need for deeper, individualized psychological intervention. This early identification is fundamental for making certain of persistent mental health issues are treated appropriate way.

The most significant methodological limitation is the absence of a control or comparison group (a group that receives standard care or no intervention). This design makes it impossible to definitively attribute the observed increase in knowledge only to the psychoeducation program. The change could be influenced by extrinsic factors such as simply taking the pre-test (the testing effect), general maturation/development over time, or other concurrent school activities (history threat). Other limitation is the small of sample size which came from a single school. Though simple random sampling was used within that school, the selection of just one specific school limits the external validity of the results. The findings may reflect specific characteristics, curricula, or cultural norms of that single institution and may not be generalizable to other schools or different adolescent populations in Indonesia or elsewhere. The study measures an increase in knowledge and understanding of emotion regulation. Even though important, this is a surrogate outcome and does not confirm an actual change in behavior (the ability to practically regulate emotions in real-life situations).

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that psychoeducation significantly increased students' knowledge and understanding of emotions and emotion regulation. Students effectively grasped the basic concepts of emotions, including both positive and negative types. The catharsis experienced during the program further helped students recognize emotional triggers, and they learned to control and express emotions flexibly using simple relaxation techniques, such as honest written reflection. The highly significant statistical difference between pretest and posttest scores confirms that the education delivered was both efficient and effective. Thus, this service program successfully made a tangible contribution to applying psychology to improve community welfare, particularly by enhancing the mental health, social skills, and emotional intelligence of the participating students. Future research must transition from the pilot's one-group design to a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT). Participants should be randomly assigned to either the Intervention Group (receiving psychoeducation) or a Control Group (receiving standard school activities or a waitlist). With comparing the outcome scores of both groups, researchers can more confidently isolate the true effect of the psychoeducation program and eliminate threats from historical events or natural maturation. The study should recruit a significantly larger sample size (e.g., N=100+) to increase the study's statistical power and enhance the reliability of the p-value. The study should be replicated across multiple, diverse junior high schools (e.g., urban, rural, public, private) within Semarang or across different regions of Indonesia. This would greatly enhance the generalizability of the findings and ensure the intervention is effective among schools.

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AI statements

The authors declared that this manuscript is entirely the original work of the authors. No generative Artificial Intelligence tools were used in any part of the text production, data interpretation, or formulation of conclusions. However, AI was only employed for generating one visual illustration.

Author declaration

All authors were involved in various aspects of the publication, including study design, project implementation, data analysis, and manuscript preparation.

Availability of data and materials

All data are fully disclosed in this manuscript for transparency.

Competing interests

The authors declared that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Ethical clearance

This project has met ethical approval because it poses no risk to any of the participants involved in the program's implementation.

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Publishers and journal's note

This article is compelling as it introduces an innovative approach using psychoeducation to prevent psychological issues in junior high school students. Despite its straightforward design, the study provides significant contribution into the program's effectiveness as a pilot study.

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Authors' perspective

Innovation points

- Practical strategies must focus on cost-effectiveness and resource efficiency to ensure the program can be sustained long-term without excessive reliance on external specialists.
- Successful implementation requires determining whether emotion regulation psychoeducation is most impactful when integrated directly into existing health, life skills, or advisory curricula.
- The effectiveness of the strategies hinges on adequate training and fidelity monitoring for school personnel (teachers and counselors) delivering the psychoeducation content.

Potential areas of interest

- To what extent does a school-based psychoeducation program, focused on emotion regulation, improve students' academic performance, social competence, and reduction in disciplinary incidents?
- How do the perceived benefits and challenges of psychoeducation implementation differ among key stakeholders (students, teachers, and school counselors)?
- What is the optimal delivery model (e.g., group setting, classroom curriculum integration, virtual format) for psychoeducation programs focused on emotion regulation within the junior high school setting?

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