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Implementing Self-Management to Improve Learning Focus in Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

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ABSTRACT

Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) often experience difficulties in maintaining focus during classroom learning. Limited concentration and challenges in completing tasks independently remain major concerns. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of behavior-based self-management interventions in improving learning focus in children with ADHD. The study employed a literature review method by analyzing 10 relevant national journal articles published up to 2019. The scoping review identified four main themes: enhancement of learning focus through self-management techniques, strengthening of learning independence, development of learning discipline through time management, and increased motivation through improved self-control. The findings indicate that self-management interventions are effective in improving learning focus, classroom engagement, and task completion independence among children with ADHD. Identified research gaps highlight the need for long-term studies and stronger collaborative involvement between schools and families to ensure the sustainable implementation of self-management strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

One of a child's basic needs is education. Education that is tailored to a child's individual characteristics not only fosters intellectual development but also contributes to personality formation, enabling children to grow into well-rounded individuals. The government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, guarantees every child's right to appropriate educational services. This is stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 70 of 2009 on Inclusive Education, which mandates that educational institutions provide access to learning services for students with disabilities or those with special intelligence and talents (Regulation of the Minister of National Education No. 70 of 2009).

The learning process can proceed optimally when children are able to concentrate, focus on assigned tasks, and complete them effectively. Concentration is defined as an individual's ability to maintain focused attention for a certain period without being easily distracted by external stimuli

(Isnannisa & Hildayani, 2019). A lack of concentration results in poor absorption of learning material and directly affects academic achievement.

One type of special need frequently encountered in inclusive schools is Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects a child's ability to sustain attention, control impulses, and regulate motor activity (Lestari & Suminar, 2024). Children with ADHD commonly exhibit hyperactive behaviors, such as excessive movement, difficulty remaining seated, excessive talking, restlessness, daydreaming, difficulty focusing on objects, inattention, and impulsivity (Pernama & Madjid, 2019). As a result, children with ADHD often experience difficulties in maintaining attention, staying engaged in tasks, following instructions, controlling impulses, and completing tasks within the allotted time (Rohmawati et al., 2024).

These conditions present significant challenges in the educational process. Therefore, an approach is needed to help children with ADHD become more actively and independently involved in learning. One approach that has been proven effective in increasing engagement and focus in children with ADHD is self-management. Self-management refers to an individual's ability to regulate thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, encouraging the avoidance of negative behaviors and the adoption of appropriate and adaptive behaviors (Suryanti et al., 2021).

Several studies indicate that the implementation of self-management strategies can increase children's active participation in the learning process, extend the duration of learning concentration, and assist children in completing tasks without continuous teacher assistance (Jufriani, 2022). Based on this background, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of implementing behavior-based self-management in improving the learning focus of children with ADHD.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a literature review method. This approach was selected to provide an in-depth understanding of the application of self-management strategies in improving learning focus among children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), based on findings from relevant previous studies. The analysis focused on examining the role of self-management and its demonstrated effectiveness in enhancing learning focus as reported by various researchers.

This research did not involve primary (field) data collection; instead, it relied solely on secondary data derived from previous research findings obtained through a literature review (Leksono, 2015). The literature review method involved the systematic examination of written sources, including scientific journals, academic articles, and relevant reference books. A literature review is defined as a data and information collection technique conducted by reviewing written sources to address research questions and develop a theoretical framework (Maharani, 2024).

Data were collected from various sources, such as accredited national journals, recent scientific articles, and reference books related to self-management, learning focus, the characteristics of children with ADHD, and learning strategies. The selection of literature was limited to journal articles published from 2019 onward and books published no later than 2015, in accordance with the research requirements. All sources were selected based on their relevance to the research topic and their scientific credibility.

The literature review process was conducted through the following stages:

1. Identification of research topics and relevant keywords, including *ADHD*, *self-management*, *learning focus*, and *school-age children*.
2. Searching for and selecting sources through academic databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, and national journal portals.

3. In-depth review of selected sources by carefully reading and recording relevant information.
4. Classification and grouping of information based on themes or research variables.
5. Analysis and synthesis of findings by describing and summarizing how the application of self-management strategies influences the learning focus of children with ADHD, as reported in previous studies.

This method aimed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the application of self-management strategies in improving the learning focus of children with ADHD and to synthesize empirical evidence supporting the effectiveness of this approach.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects a child's ability to sustain attention, control impulses, and regulate motor activity. Children with ADHD commonly experience difficulties in maintaining attention, staying engaged in tasks, following adult instructions, controlling impulsive behaviors, and completing assigned tasks within the allotted time. Therefore, an effective approach is needed to increase engagement and learning focus in children with ADHD. One approach that has been proven effective is self-management.

Self-management is a behavioral strategy that involves self-monitoring, self-regulation, and self-evaluation to achieve desired behavioral changes and learning goals. In general, the implementation of self-management to improve learning focus in children with ADHD consists of five main stages (Azzet, 2015):

1. Identifying target behaviors: Teachers or therapists, together with the child, determine specific focus-related behaviors to be improved, such as listening to the teacher's explanation or completing tasks until finished.
2. Self-monitoring: Children are trained to observe and record their own behavior to determine whether they demonstrate the target behavior during a specific period.
3. Self-evaluation: Children compare their performance with predetermined standards or criteria to assess their level of focus and task completion.
4. Self-reinforcement: When children successfully demonstrate focused behavior according to the target, they reward themselves, for example through praise or additional playtime.
5. Generalization and maintenance: Self-management strategies are applied across various situations and evaluated periodically to ensure that children can maintain focus in different contexts.

These five stages enable children with ADHD to gradually develop self-regulation skills, supported by visual aids, schedules, and direct guidance from teachers and parents. During the self-monitoring stage, children learn to recognize and record moments when they begin to lose focus. The self-evaluation stage encourages reflection on their performance, while self-reinforcement strengthens positive behaviors by providing motivation to maintain attention for a certain period.

In principle, self-management is based on the assumption that individuals are capable of learning to direct and regulate themselves. It involves managing internal and external factors through responsible actions. Goal setting allows students to plan and determine targets to be achieved, helping them pursue their academic aspirations. Emotional regulation enables students to manage their feelings during learning activities, fostering positive emotions and reducing negative ones. Time management helps students organize learning tasks alongside other activities. Finally, managing the physical and social environment encourages individuals to modify their surroundings to create a supportive learning atmosphere.

The objectives of self-management include improving social and communication skills, reducing disruptive behaviors, and enhancing learning discipline. According to Gie (as cited in Nuraini Rosa, 2020), self-management can increase students' sense of responsibility, regulate behavior, reduce negative habits, and improve self-control, which in turn enhances learning motivation and academic achievement.

Based on a literature review of ten journals, the application of self-management strategies has demonstrated a positive impact on improving the learning focus of school-age children with ADHD. Pranama and Madjid (2019) reported that self-management techniques effectively increased children's active participation in class, enhanced learning focus, and improved self-evaluation and self-control. Similar findings were reported by Lestari and Suminar (2024), who found that self-management strategies improved children's learning focus, enabling them to complete tasks thoroughly both at school and at home. Teachers also observed improvements in learning performance and independence. Furthermore, Jufriani (2022) emphasized that self-management techniques are effective in helping students become more independent, active, and responsible learners.

In conclusion, self-management techniques represent a highly relevant intervention for improving learning focus among school-age children, particularly those with ADHD, in formal educational settings. These strategies significantly enhance engagement, attention, and behavioral control, enabling children to complete learning tasks effectively both at school and at home.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, the application of self-management strategies has been shown to be effective in improving the learning focus of children with ADHD. Through five main stages; self-monitoring, self-evaluation, goal setting, reinforcement, and generalization; children are able to develop more independent and goal-directed learning behaviors. This strategy also helps increase children's engagement in learning activities and supports better task completion.

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