

Factors affecting the concentration of school-age children

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ABSTRACT

This study reviews various factors that affect the concentration ability of school-age children through a literature review approach. These factors include internal aspects such as nutrition, sleep quality, and emotional stability, as well as external aspects that include the learning environment, technology use, and social interaction. The results of the analysis showed that children's concentration ability was influenced by a combination of physical, psychological, and environmental factors that were interrelated. Balanced nutrition and good sleep quality play a role in supporting children's cognitive function, while emotional support and a comfortable learning environment can improve their focus during the learning process. This study emphasizes the importance of synergy between parents, educators, and the community in creating an environment that supports the development of children's concentration. These results are expected to be a reference in designing a holistic strategy to improve the quality of education and the development of school-age children.

Keywords: child concentration, nutrition, sleep quality, emotional state, learning environment, technology, social relationships

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INTRODUCTION

The development of school-age children is an important concern for the community, considering that this period is a period full of dynamics in the formation of mindsets, behaviors, and learning abilities. In the process of growth and development, the ability to concentrate is one of the main factors that determine the success of children in undergoing education and daily life. Concentration can be defined as an individual's ability to focus on a specific task or activity within a certain period of time (Ri riwati, 2021). For school-age children, this ability plays a significant role because it affects the way they absorb information, understand learning materials, and complete academic tasks. Unfortunately, the concentration of school-age children is often influenced by various conditions that can support or hinder them. Various studies show that children's ability to focus can be influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include the physical and emotional condition of the child, such as the health of the body, the nutrients they consume, and emotional stability. On the other hand, external factors include the environment where children learn, social relationships with peers, family support, and the influence of technology that is increasingly developing in the modern era.

Nutritional intake is one of the aspects that is closely related to children's concentration ability. Inadequate nutrition can cause children to experience health problems such as anemia, which ultimately has an impact on the brain's ability to work optimally. In addition, sleep quality is also a very influential thing. Children who don't get enough sleep tend to show signs of lack of focus, fatigue easily, and difficulty processing information. Therefore, ensuring that children have a healthy diet and a regular sleep schedule is an important step in supporting their concentration skills. In addition to the physical aspect, the emotional state of the child also plays a big role. Children who feel anxious, stressed, or have emotional pressure tend to have difficulty concentrating in class. Feelings of anxiety can arise due to various things, ranging from too high academic demands, conflicts with peers, to family problems they face at home. When children are in an emotionally unstable state, their brains will find it difficult to focus attention on learning. Therefore, providing emotional support to children through good communication and a harmonious home atmosphere is an important thing for parents and educators to do.

The learning environment is also one of the things that should not be ignored. Children who learn in noisy, disorganized, or unsupportive environments tend to be more easily distracted. For example, an overcrowded classroom or a home full of distractions such as a constantly on television can hinder a child's ability to focus. Therefore, creating a comfortable, calm, and organized learning

environment is one effective way to help children improve their concentration. Technological advances also have a major impact on the concentration ability of school-age children. On the one hand, technology can be used as a learning tool that enriches children's learning experiences. However, on the other hand, uncontrolled use of technology, such as playing gadgets or watching videos indefinitely, can distract children from their important tasks. Excessive use of technology can even lead to dependence, which ultimately reduces the child's ability to focus on things that require high concentration (Rahmayani, 2021). Therefore, timing the use of technology is a step that must be taken to support the development of children's concentration skills. In addition, social relationships with peers can also affect a child's concentration level. Children who have positive social relationships tend to be more confident and able to concentrate well in class. Conversely, children who experience bullying or don't have a playmate may feel depressed, which ultimately interferes with their focus on learning. Therefore, it is important for educators and parents to ensure that children have a supportive and healthy social environment.

No less important, the role of the family in supporting children's concentration skills is also very large. A family that provides attention, support, and motivation can help children feel more confident and focused on their tasks. Conversely, a stressful or inattentive family environment can interfere with the development of a child's concentration skills. Therefore, good communication between parents and children, as well as the presence of parents in accompanying children while learning, is very necessary. In education, educators also have a great responsibility to create a fun learning atmosphere and encourage children to concentrate. Teaching methods that are interactive and involve children directly can help them stay focused throughout the learning process. In addition, providing adequate breaks between learning sessions can also help children restore their energy and improve their concentration skills.

By understanding the various factors that affect the concentration of school-age children, it is hoped that all parties, both parents, educators, and the community, can work together to create an environment that supports children's growth and development. Good concentration not only helps children achieve academic achievements, but also provides important provisions for them to face challenges in the future. Efforts to improve children's concentration ability must be carried out thoroughly, paying attention to the physical, emotional, social, and environmental aspects of their learning environment. Thus, children can grow into intelligent, confident individuals, and ready to face the ever-evolving world.

METHODS

This research method uses a literature review approach to analyze factors that affect the concentration of school-age children. Literature review was chosen because it allows for the collection, evaluation, and synthesis of information from a variety of relevant sources, so that it can provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic without involving direct experimentation. The research process is designed systematically so that the results can be critically evaluated by readers and allow replication by other researchers. The research begins with the identification and selection of relevant literature. The literature used includes scientific journals, academic books, research reports, conference articles, and policy documents related to the concentration of school-age children. These sources are obtained through searches in various academic databases such as PubMed, ScienceDirect, JSTOR, and Google Scholar, as well as available digital libraries. The search was conducted using key keywords such as "concentration of school-age children," "factors that affect children's attention," and "environmental influences on children's focus on learning." These keywords are also combined with other relevant terms to expand the scope of the search. The research is focused on literature published in the last 10 years to ensure that the data used is current and relevant.

Once the search process is complete, the literature found is filtered based on relevance and quality. Inclusion criteria include publications that address the factors of concentration of school-age children directly, use empirical data, or provide in-depth theoretical analysis. Publications that are less relevant or do not meet quality criteria, such as not going through a peer-review process or not providing verifiable data, are excluded from the analysis. The filtered literature was then further analyzed to identify the main findings, methods used, and research gaps. The analysis process is carried out by reading and recording important information from each source that has been selected. Records include aspects such as the methodology used, the research sample, the location of the study, and the reported results. This information is then organized into appropriate themes, such as internal

factors (e.g. nutrition, physical health, and emotional state) and external factors (e.g. learning environment, social relationships, and the influence of technology). This organization is carried out to make it easier to identify patterns and trends in the literature, as well as to facilitate the preparation of research synthesis results.

In the next stage, the findings from the analyzed literature are compared to identify similarities, differences, and relationships between factors. This process is carried out by considering the background of the methodology of each study, so that the results obtained can be validated based on the context of each research. In addition, special attention is paid to studies that present quantitative data to measure the influence of various factors on the concentration of school-age children. The findings from the study are used to support stronger, data-driven conclusions.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

The Role of Nutrition in Supporting Children's Concentration

Nutrition supports brain development and children's concentration abilities. The human brain is a very complex organ, and in order to work optimally, it needs adequate energy intake and nutrients. During the growth period, children's nutritional needs become more important because the brain develops rapidly, both in terms of structure and function. By ensuring adequate and balanced nutritional intake, parents can support children's cognitive development and focus skills, which are indispensable for learning and daily activities (Suriyati et al., 2021). Balanced nutrition plays a major role in supporting optimal brain function. Different types of nutrients, such as complex carbohydrates, proteins, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals, are necessary to ensure the brain can develop properly. Complex carbohydrates, for example, provide stable energy for the brain. As a highly metabolically active organ, the brain needs a consistent supply of energy in order to be able to work properly. Complex carbohydrate sources such as whole wheat, brown rice, and potatoes help keep blood sugar levels stable, so children can stay focused for longer. Protein is also needed by the brain to help form neurotransmitters, which are chemicals responsible for transmitting signals between nerve cells. Neurotransmitters such as dopamine and serotonin greatly affect mood and concentration ability. Protein can be obtained from foods such as fish, chicken, eggs, nuts, and dairy products. In addition, healthy fats, especially omega-3 fatty acids, are essential for building the structure of brain cells. Omega-3s can be found in fatty fish such as salmon and tuna, as well as chia seeds and walnuts. Vitamins and minerals, such as B vitamins, iron, zinc, and magnesium, are also needed to support brain function. Iron, for example, plays a role in transporting oxygen throughout the body, including the brain. Iron deficiency can lead to fatigue and decreased concentration. Therefore, iron-rich foods, such as red meat, liver, spinach, and nuts, are highly recommended for children.

Nutritional deficiencies in children can have a detrimental impact on their ability to focus. One common form of nutritional deficiency is anemia, which is usually caused by iron deficiency. Anemia can cause children to feel tired, lethargic, and have difficulty concentrating. Research shows that children with anemia often have learning difficulties and have lower academic achievement than children with adequate iron levels. In addition to anemia, deficiencies in certain vitamins can also affect brain function. For example, vitamin B6, B12, or folate deficiency can interfere with the production of neurotransmitters needed to maintain mood and concentration. Vitamin D, often referred to as the sun vitamin, also plays a role in supporting brain health. Vitamin D deficiency has been linked to mood disorders and decreased ability to focus. In children who are deficient in omega-3 intake, research shows that they are more prone to attention deficit disorder or hyperactivity. Omega-3 plays a role in increasing brain plasticity and maintaining cognitive function, so insufficient intake can hinder brain development and children's learning ability.

An unbalanced diet and excessive consumption of processed foods can also have a negative impact on children's ability to concentrate. Foods high in sugar, saturated fat, and salt are often easy choices, but excessive consumption can affect brain function. Sugary foods, for example, can cause a spike in blood sugar followed by a drastic drop, making it easy for children to feel tired and have difficulty focusing. In addition, fast and processed foods tend to be low in nutritional value but high in calories, so they are not able to meet the nutritional needs of the brain. Research (Larozza et al., 2023) showed that children who frequently consumed fast food tended to have lower academic scores and difficulty in tasks that required high concentration. The content of food additives, such as dyes and preservatives, can also affect children's behavior. Several studies indicate a link between these additives and increased hyperactivity in children. An unhealthy diet is also often associated with sleep

disturbances, which in turn affects the ability to concentrate. Children who lack sleep tend to be more easily distracted, have difficulty following instructions, and experience a decrease in motivation in learning.

To support children's ability to focus, it is important for parents to provide a nutrient-rich and balanced diet. Breakfast, for example, plays a big role in determining a child's energy and focus throughout the day. A breakfast consisting of complex carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats, such as whole-grain bread with peanut butter and fruit slices, can provide enough energy to start the day off on a good note. Healthy snacks can also help children stay focused between major meal times. Snack options such as yogurt with chunks of fruit, hard-boiled eggs, or almonds can provide additional energy without causing a spike in blood sugar. Avoiding high-sugar snacks such as candy and soft drinks is highly recommended because of their effects that can interfere with concentration. In addition, make sure your child gets enough water. Mild dehydration can affect cognitive function, so children need to be taught to drink water regularly. Parents can also offer a variety of healthy drinks such as fruit juice without added sugar or infused water to attract children's interest.

A regular and varied diet is also important to meet children's nutritional needs. At every meal, make sure there are sources of complex carbohydrates, protein, healthy fats, and fruits and vegetables. Getting children into the habit of eating with their family can also encourage good eating habits and introduce various types of food. Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids also need to be included in the child's daily menu. If your child doesn't like fish, fish oil supplements can be an alternative, but make sure they are used according to your doctor's recommendations. Maintaining a balance between a healthy diet and physical activity can also help support a child's concentration. Physical activity can increase blood flow to the brain and help children focus more while studying. Therefore, it is important to encourage children to play outdoors or exercise every day.

Ensuring that children get enough and quality nutrition is an important step to support their concentration ability. By providing a balanced diet, avoiding excessive processed foods, and encouraging healthy eating habits, parents can help children reach their full potential, both academically and in daily activities. This support will not only be beneficial for childhood, but will also form a solid foundation for their health and well-being in the future.

Sleep Quality and Its Relationship with Concentration

Sleep quality supports many aspects of life, including the ability to study and concentrate. In the lives of school-age children, sleep is not only a physical break, but also an important process for mental recovery and memory improvement. Sufficient and quality sleep duration can improve a person's learning ability, especially children. Sleep helps the process of memory consolidation, which is the reinforcement of information that has been learned throughout the day. When a child gets enough sleep, his brain is better able to store new information and connect it with pre-existing knowledge. Conversely, insufficient sleep or poor sleep quality can interfere with this process, making it difficult for the child to understand or remember the subject matter. Sleep needs vary depending on age. School-age children generally need between 9 and 11 hours of sleep each night to support their growth and development. However, many children do not get the ideal duration of sleep due to heavy activities, the use of electronic devices before bedtime, or certain sleep disorders. Long-term sleep deprivation can lead to decreased grasping power, reduced problem-solving skills, and impaired decision-making.

Several sleep disorders often occur in school-age children, including insomnia and sleep apnea. Insomnia is a condition in which a person has difficulty falling asleep or maintaining sleep for a long time. In children, insomnia is often caused by anxiety, stress due to schoolwork, or irregular sleep habits. Children who experience insomnia tend to feel tired throughout the day, which ultimately affects their performance in school. Sleep apnea, on the other hand, is a sleep disorder characterized by periodic cessation of breathing during sleep. This condition is usually caused by a blockage of the airways, such as due to enlarged tonsils. Children with sleep apnea often experience fragmented sleep disorders, which means they don't get enough good sleep. As a result, they are often sleepy during the day, have difficulty concentrating, and sometimes exhibit hyperactive behavior. In addition, there are also sleep disorders such as parasomnia, which include walking during sleep or intense nightmares. While they don't always have a direct impact on a child's sleep quality, these disorders can cause discomfort that disrupts their healthy sleep patterns (Sid & Ain, 2024).

Sleep deprivation has serious consequences for children's academic performance and attention ability. When a child does not get enough sleep, his brain becomes less efficient in processing information. As a result, children may have difficulty keeping up with lessons in class, especially in subjects that require high concentration such as math and science. Sleep deprivation also affects children's ability to concentrate for long periods of time, making them more easily distracted. Not only that, sleep deprivation can lead to a decrease in children's ability to manage emotions. Children who are sleep-deprived are more prone to stress and often show signs of irritability or tend to withdraw from social interactions. Overall, this combination of cognitive and emotional disorders can make it difficult for children to perform well in school. Research shows that children who experience chronic sleep deprivation tend to have lower scores than their peers who get enough sleep. In addition, sleep deprivation is also associated with an increased risk of impulsive behavior, which can affect their social relationships with peers (Wati et al., 2021).

There are various ways that can be applied to help children get enough and quality sleep. One of the first steps is to establish a consistent sleep schedule. By keeping the same bedtime and waking up every day, including on weekends, the child's body will get used to a regular sleep pattern. This habit can help them feel more refreshed when they wake up in the morning. Creating a comfortable sleeping environment is also very important. The child's bedroom should be free from distractions such as noise, excessive light, or uncomfortable temperatures. Using dark curtains, keeping the room temperature cool, and ensuring a clean and comfortable bed can improve the quality of children's sleep. Also, limit the use of electronic devices before bedtime. The blue light emitted by gadget screens can inhibit the production of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep cycles. Parents can help by setting a rule not to use electronic devices at least an hour before bedtime. Adequate physical activity during the day can also support better sleep at night. Children who are physically active tend to feel more tired at night, making it easier to fall asleep. However, avoid activities that are too strenuous or stimulating before bedtime because they can make it difficult for children to relax. Diet also has an influence on sleep quality. Giving a healthy snack before bedtime, such as warm milk or fruit, can help your child feel comfortable and calm. Instead, avoid giving foods or drinks that contain caffeine, such as chocolate or soft drinks, as they can keep your child awake. It is important for parents to monitor the signs of sleep disorders in children. If a child shows symptoms such as snoring loudly, waking up frequently at night, or looking very sleepy during the day, consult a doctor or sleep specialist for the right solution.

By understanding the effects of sleep duration and quality, identifying possible sleep disorders, and implementing effective strategies to ensure children get enough rest, parents can help children reach their full potential academically. Encouraging healthy sleep habits early on not only supports children's performance in school, but also contributes to their physical and mental health in the long run.

The Effect of Emotional State on the Ability to Focus

A person's ability to concentrate is greatly influenced by his or her emotional state. In children, this condition becomes more complex because they are still in the stage of psychological and social development. Emotions are closely related to the way the brain processes information, and emotional instability can hinder a child's ability to learn and concentrate. In this discussion, we will explore various factors that affect a child's emotional state, such as stress, anxiety, family conflicts, and social pressure, as well as how to create an environment that supports emotional stability.

Stress and anxiety are the two main factors that affect the ability to focus. Children who experience emotional distress often find it difficult to focus on their tasks, both at school and at home. Prolonged stress can cause children to feel mentally exhausted, which ultimately reduces their ability to process information properly. On the other hand, anxiety often fills children's minds with worries, so they can't concentrate on the things that matter. For example, a child who faces high academic pressure may feel anxious about failing or not being able to meet the expectations of parents and teachers (Zulinda, 2020). When this happens, children often experience disruptions in the learning process because their focus is divided between dealing with anxiety and completing tasks. Research shows that children who have high levels of anxiety tend to have difficulty understanding the subject matter, because their minds are filled with excessive worry. The impact of stress and anxiety can also be seen in the physical condition of the child. They may experience sleep disturbances, changes in appetite, or decreased energy, all of which affect their ability to focus. Therefore, it is important to

understand that stress and anxiety not only impact a child's mental health, but also directly affect their cognitive abilities.

A stable emotional state provides a strong foundation for children to study well. When children feel calm and emotionally secure, they can focus their attention on the learning process without the distraction of negative emotions. Conversely, emotional instability can create major barriers to learning. Children who feel angry, sad, or anxious often find it difficult to grasp new information or complete tasks that require high concentration. Emotional stability also helps children to develop confidence and the ability to manage stress. When children feel confident, they are more likely to face challenges with a positive attitude, which ultimately increases their ability to learn. In addition, children who have good emotional stability are better able to manage their time effectively, which is an important skill in learning. Teachers and parents have a big role to play in helping children achieve emotional stability. By creating a supportive environment, such as rewarding their efforts and providing encouragement when they face adversity, children can learn to better manage their emotions. Positive relationships between children, teachers, and parents also help create an atmosphere conducive to learning (Yumni et al., 2021).

Family conflict and social pressure are two factors that are often overlooked but have a significant impact on a child's emotional state. Tensions in the family, such as arguments between parents or lack of attention from family members, can make children feel emotionally insecure. When children feel that their home is not a comfortable place, they tend to bring this emotional burden into their learning environment. In addition to family conflicts, social pressure can also affect the psychological condition of children. In today's digital age, children often face pressure to meet certain social standards, both through direct interaction with peers and through social media. Children who feel incapable of meeting these expectations may experience feelings of inferiority, which ultimately affects their ability to focus on learning. The impact of family conflicts and social pressures can be seen in various forms. Some children may show symptoms such as aggressiveness, withdrawing behavior, or even academic difficulties. In the long term, this condition can affect children's psychological development and inhibit their potential to develop optimally.

To help children achieve emotional stability and improve their focus skills, it is important to create an emotionally supportive environment. This can start at home, where parents can create an atmosphere full of warmth and care. Spending time with your child, listening to their concerns, and providing emotional support are some simple steps that can help your child feel safe and valued. In schools, teachers can play a role in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment. By paying attention to each child's emotional needs, teachers can help them feel more comfortable and confident in the learning process (Zulinda, 2020). In addition, schools can also provide programs that aim to improve students' emotional well-being, such as counseling or extracurricular activities that help children develop social and emotional skills. The role of the community is no less important. By creating a positive and supportive social environment, children can learn to better deal with social pressures. A community that provides support and appreciation for children's successes, both large and small, can help them develop confidence and the ability to manage emotions. Efforts to create an emotionally supportive environment should also involve the introduction of relaxation and stress management techniques, such as meditation, exercise, or creative activities. These activities not only help children feel more emotionally calm, but also improve their ability to focus and process information.

Emotional conditions have a great influence on a child's ability to focus and learn. Stress, anxiety, family conflicts, and social pressure are some of the factors that can hinder a child's psychological development and concentration ability. However, by creating an emotionally supportive environment, whether at home, school, or in society, children can develop their ability to manage emotions and learn more effectively. With the right support, children can reach their full potential and face life's challenges with more confidence.

Learning Environment and Its Effect on Children's Concentration

The optimal learning environment for children is a place that can stimulate their curiosity and creativity. A space like this should be designed with the needs of the child in mind, including physical factors such as lighting, temperature, and layout. A simple and functional space arrangement can prevent distractions and help children focus more. In addition, the colors used in the classroom also affect the mood and attention level of the child. Soft colors like blue or green can create a calm

atmosphere, while bright colors like yellow can stimulate energy and enthusiasm for learning (Wati et al., 2021). Another important factor is the existence of learning materials that are in accordance with the child's ability level. Books, stationery, and other learning aids should be within reach of the child so that they can easily access them without hindrance. A supportive learning environment also allows for a space for healthy social interaction. Children need to have a place to discuss or cooperate with classmates, which can improve communication and problem-solving skills (Aimang et al., 2022).

External distractions such as noise are one of the biggest obstacles in the learning process. Noise from vehicles, electronic devices, or activities in the vicinity can distract children from their main tasks. Research shows that children who study in noisy environments tend to have difficulty understanding information, even when the duration of their learning is extended. Therefore, it is important to ensure that the study room is located in a location away from noise sources or equipped with sound suppression. In addition to noise, the uncontrolled use of technology is also a big challenge. Technology such as cell phones, tablets, and computers can be tools that support learning, but if not used wisely, they can interfere with the child's focus. Playing games or accessing social media during study time can lead to a decrease in the quality of concentration and productivity. Therefore, parental and educator supervision is urgently needed to ensure technology is used positively. For example, by limiting the time spent on the device or choosing educational applications that support learning.

A comfortable and organized study space has a significant impact on a child's ability to concentrate. The comfort of the study room includes not only physical aspects such as ergonomic chairs and desks, but also includes a calm and orderly atmosphere. Children tend to concentrate more easily if their study space is clean, tidy, and free of items that are not relevant to learning. The placement of furniture also has a great influence on the comfort of learning. For example, a study desk placed close to a window can provide enough natural light, while a well-designed chair can prevent physical fatigue (Yumni et al., 2021). In addition, the existence of shelves or drawers to store stationery and books can help children keep their study space tidy. When children get used to an organized environment, they will also have an easier time organizing their minds, which ultimately improves their concentration skills. No less important is to give a personal touch to the child's study room. Let your child add decorative elements such as pictures, posters, or their favorite objects in the classroom. This can create a sense of belonging that makes them more motivated to learn.

Teachers and schools have a great responsibility in creating a supportive learning atmosphere. Teachers are figures who often interact directly with children, so the approach used in teaching greatly affects the level of concentration of students. Engaging teaching methods, such as using educational games or project-based approaches, can help children stay focused and motivated throughout the learning process. On the other hand, schools as educational institutions must also ensure that the facilities provided support children's learning. Clean classrooms, good lighting, and adequate air circulation are some of the factors that need to be considered. In addition, schools can also provide special areas for independent learning or extracurricular activities that involve students' creativity. Communication between teachers, students, and parents also plays a key role in creating an ideal learning environment. With good communication, teachers can understand the needs of students more deeply and adjust their teaching approach. Parents can also support the learning process by creating a conducive learning atmosphere at home, for example by setting scheduled study times and ensuring that children get enough rest time.

A well-designed learning environment can have a significant positive impact on a child's concentration. By creating a comfortable, distraction-free, and organized learning space, children can learn more focused and effectively. Teachers and schools also play an important role in supporting this process through engaging teaching methods and adequate facilities. Meanwhile, supervision of the use of technology also needs to be carried out to ensure that these tools support, not hinder, the child's learning process. With the joint efforts of various parties, children can grow and develop in a learning environment that supports their best potential.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study provides an understanding of the importance of paying attention to various aspects that affect the concentration of school-age children. Various factors, both from the child and the surrounding environment, have a great influence on their ability to focus and learn optimally. This study highlights that efforts to support children's concentration must include aspects of nutrition, sleep quality, emotional health, and a conducive learning environment. By identifying and

understanding these factors, it is hoped that parents, educators, and the community can work together to create conditions that support the overall growth and development of children. This support will help them not only in achieving academic achievement, but also in facing future challenges as individuals who are ready to develop.

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