

EMOTION REGULATION AND FUNCTIONAL IMPAIRMENT IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS WITH ADHD: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

This study is a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) aimed at mapping the relationship between emotional regulation components and functional impairment among children and adolescents with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). A total of 30 Scopus-indexed articles published between 2020 and 2025 were analyzed. The review focused on three key aspects of emotion regulation—emotional awareness, emotional modulation, and emotional reactivity—and their association with three major domains of functional impairment: academic, social, and behavioral. The findings indicate that emotional reactivity is the strongest predictor of functional impairment, particularly in social and behavioral domains. Emotional modulation shows a significant contribution to academic functioning and behavioral control, whereas emotional awareness is more closely related to social interactions and interpersonal understanding, especially in early developmental stages. Additionally, the relationship between emotion regulation and impairment is moderated and mediated by various factors, including age, comorbid conditions (e.g., ODD, anxiety, ASD), and family environments. These results highlight emotional dysregulation as a central determinant of functional difficulties in individuals with ADHD, underscoring the importance of emotion-focused interventions in clinical practice and special education settings. The study provides a conceptual foundation for developing more targeted interventions and offers directions for future research on emotional mechanisms in ADHD.

Keywords: ADHD, Emotion Regulation, Functional Impairment, Emotional Reactivity, Emotional Modulation

INTRODUCTION

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) forces individuals to battle a complex array of disruptive symptoms. These primary characteristics include extreme attention deficits, highly hyperactive physical movements, severe impulsivity, and an inability to suppress sudden urges or evaluate potential consequences. This intense behavioral profile shatters the balance of their daily routines and completely destabilizes their overall life activities (M. Marlina, 2008). Recognizing these early warning signs is absolutely necessary. Schools must implement systematic early detection strategies and utilize comprehensive assessments based on established diagnostic standards, such as the DSM or ICD. This rigorous approach ensures precise identification and maps out any accompanying comorbidities. Within inclusive educational settings, children with special needs, especially those facing ADHD, frequently display profound disengagement during classroom activities. Consequently, they

suffer from underdeveloped interaction skills and desperately low academic participation rates (Fitriani & Haryanto, 2024; Gunawan & Saputra, 2023; Marlina et al., 2023).

Current empirical evidence proves that children with ADHD struggle with far more than just basic attention and behavioral control. They experience massive functional breakdowns in their daily activities, peer relationships, and emotional management systems (Biele et al., 2022). A massive cohort study examining preschoolers diagnosed with ADHD revealed substantial deficits in their executive functioning, organizational skills, and emotional regulation. Most importantly, researchers directly linked these severe regulatory failures to extreme levels of functional impairment across numerous developmental domains (Biele et al., 2022; Nugroho & Wijayanti, 2022; Utami & Suharmini, 2024).

Emotion regulation operates as a highly critical component within a child's socio-emotional development. For the ADHD population, it serves as an incredibly powerful predictor of severe functional impairment. Existing literature detailing affective dysregulation (AD) confirms that exaggerated emotional reactivity, severe difficulties modulating emotional intensity, and chronic irritability frequently coexist with ADHD. These specific factors heavily drive behavioral disruption and actively destroy social adaptation (Treier et al., 2024). Recently developed clinical tools designed to measure AD demonstrate a massive correlation between emotional dysregulation and widespread impairment, negatively affecting the child's quality of life, behavioral control mechanisms, and internalizing symptoms (Treier et al., 2024). Furthermore, utilizing maladaptive emotional strategies, such as repetitive rumination and emotional avoidance, actively worsens academic, social, and behavioral functioning in individuals battling ADHD (Fadhilah & Suparno, 2021; Kusumastuti & Marlina, 2021; Paulus et al., 2021).

The direct link connecting broken emotion regulation systems to daily functional collapse is consistently proven across various clinical interventions and implementation studies. For instance, the Secret Agent Society (SAS) program actively targets social skills alongside emotion regulation. This intervention significantly upgraded the social functioning of children carrying neurodevelopmental conditions, including ADHD co-occurring with ASD. The program successfully amplified emotional skills while simultaneously reducing severe behavioral challenges (Mootz et al., 2022). Similarly, combining family-based interventions with physical therapy drastically improved executive functioning, emotion regulation, and academic performance in children with ADHD. This confirms that emotion regulation acts as the core mediating component driving positive changes in adaptive functioning (Cahyani & Kasiyati, 2023; Lestari & Sunardi, 2024; Wang et al., 2025). The accumulated evidence firmly establishes that emotion regulation plays a decisive role in dictating the severity of impairment across all age groups within the ADHD population (Amiruddin & Suhariyanti, 2022; Hasanah & Maryani, 2021; Wulandari & Hermanto, 2023).

Although extensive literature documents the strong connection between emotion regulation and functional impairment, the existing findings remain highly fragmented. They fail to present a fully coherent pattern linking specific emotion regulation aspects (such as awareness, modulation, and reactivity) to highly specific impairment domains (academic, social, and behavioral). Some researchers emphasize emotional reactivity as the absolute strongest predictor of social failure. Conversely, other studies highlight emotional modulation capacity as the primary factor controlling academic success and behavioral restraint (Biele et al., 2022; Dewi & Jauhari, 2022; Treier et al., 2024). To date, no systematic review has successfully integrated these scattered findings to construct a precise map detailing how specific emotion regulation elements dictate distinct types of functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD (Indriani & Raharjo, 2023; Maulana & Yuliani, 2025).

Addressing this massive gap, this study executes a systematic literature review (SLR) to evaluate the empirical evidence concerning the relationship patterns between emotion regulation skills and functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD. This review specifically focuses on identifying which exact emotion regulation components consistently drive impairment. Furthermore, it analyzes exactly how each specific component influences the academic, social, and behavioral domains. Based on these objectives, this research formulates three primary research questions (Permana & Sugiarti, 2023; Ramadhan & Aini, 2021; Sari & Iswari, 2021):

RQ 1: Which specific emotion regulation aspect—emotional awareness, emotional modulation, or emotional reactivity—links most powerfully to variations in functional impairment among children and adolescents with ADHD?

RQ 2: How exactly does each specific emotion regulation aspect connect to the three primary impairment domains: academic, social, and behavioral?

RQ 3: What specific factors (e.g., age, comorbidities, or family environment) actively moderate or mediate the relationship between emotion regulation and functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Data Sources

This study employs a rigorous Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology to successfully identify, critically evaluate, and systematically synthesize empirical evidence regarding the exact relationship between emotion regulation components and functional impairment in children and adolescents diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The preparation and reporting of this SLR strictly adhere to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines (Hidayat & Wahyuni, 2022; Kurniawan & Mumpuniarti, 2024; Susanti & Hermanto, 2025).

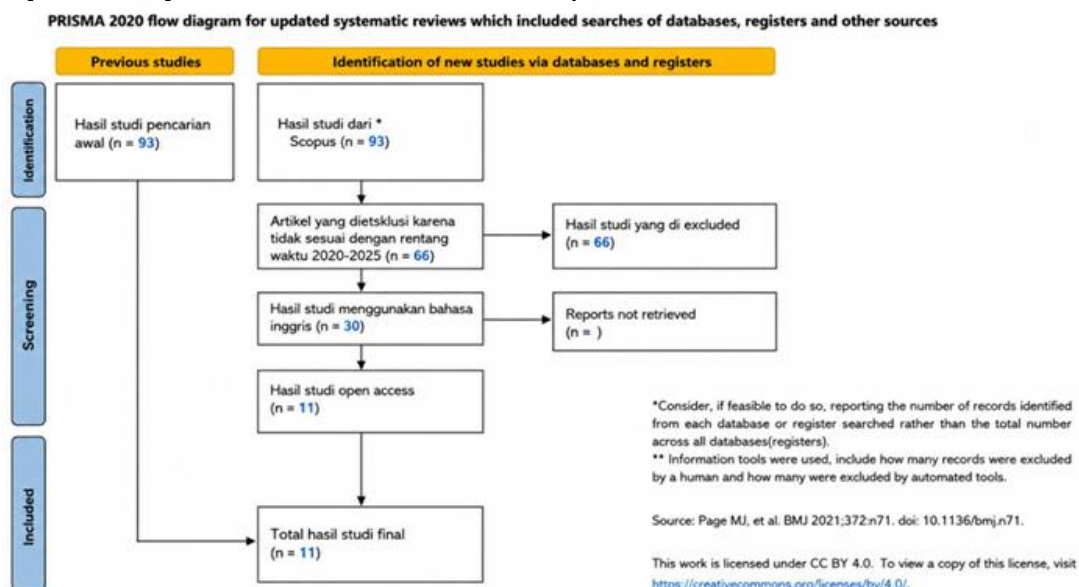


Figure 1. PRISMA analysis.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

This investigation established strict inclusion and exclusion boundaries. This step guarantees that all selected literature remains highly relevant and meets required academic quality thresholds. (Pratama & Rini, 2021; Pratiwi & Yuniati, 2023; Saputra & Wibowo, 2024).

a. Inclusion Criteria

- 1) Empirical studies focusing on children and adolescents (aged 6 to 18 years) holding a formal ADHD diagnosis.
- 2) Research that directly measures specific functional outcomes across academic, social, behavioral, adaptive, or emotional domains.
- 3) Articles formally published within peer-reviewed scientific journals spanning the years 2020 through 2025.
- 4) Publications written entirely in the English language.

b. Exclusion Criteria

- 1) Theoretical frameworks, narrative literature reviews, and previous meta-analyses.
- 2) Investigations targeting adult populations (individuals older than 18 years).
- 3) Studies failing to provide qualitative or quantitative assessments regarding emotion regulation or adaptive functioning.
- 4) Inaccessible documents, such as database entries providing only an abstract without the full-text manuscript.

Documents Included in the Analysis

Data analysis for this study advanced through multiple, highly structured phases directly dictated by the PRISMA 2020 guidelines. During the initial identification phase, researchers extracted exactly 93 articles from the Scopus database. Following this, the screening process actively excluded 66 articles that fell completely outside the designated 2020-2025 publication window. This initial filtration left 30 English-language articles that satisfied the preliminary baseline criteria (Putri & Yusuf, 2025; Rizky & Handayani, 2022; Setiawan & Budiyo, 2023).

Researchers then conducted a rigorous accessibility check. Only 11 open-access articles were available for full download and deep analysis. Furthermore, researchers encountered several articles that were impossible to retrieve fully (reports not retrieved). An additional 27 articles were excluded because they failed to meet the strict content eligibility requirements or lacked direct topical relevance. After surviving the intense identification, screening, and eligibility phases, exactly 11 articles formed the final study dataset for comprehensive analysis (Siti & Abidin, 2022; Wahyudi & Ningsih, 2021; Widiastuti & Wibowo, 2022).

Documents Included in the Analysis

Following the exhaustive screening and eligibility evaluation, 11 articles successfully met the strict inclusion criteria for advanced analysis. This selection process heavily weighed factors such as publication type, language, accessibility, and high topical relevance. We extracted the acquired Scopus data in .csv format and systematically analyzed it using a bibliometric approach via RStudio, specifically leveraging the Bibliometrix package (Fadhilah & Suparno, 2021; Gunawan & Saputra, 2023; Hasanah & Maryani, 2021).

Data Quality and Credibility

We evaluated data quality and credibility by closely examining the metadata completeness of the 30 articles downloaded directly from the Scopus database. Scopus remains one of the most highly reputable scientific databases globally, frequently utilized in intense

systematic research. Based on the metadata completeness analysis, the acquired data demonstrated exceptionally high quality, as nearly all primary metadata components were fully available. Critical information, including abstracts, author affiliations, author names, reference lists, DOIs, document types, journal names, languages, publication years, titles, and citation counts, were recorded with absolutely zero missing data (missing 0%). This flawless completeness status earned an “Excellent” label, proving that all articles possessed the complete bibliographical details required for rigorous academic analysis (Cahyani & Kasiyati, 2023; Fitriani & Haryanto, 2024; Hidayat & Wahyuni, 2022).

Metadata components directly linked to author keywords (Author’s Keywords) achieved a 93.33% completeness rate, with only two articles failing to include keywords. This level of completeness received a “Good” rating, meaning it is highly representative for thematic or bibliometric analysis regarding the core topic. Meanwhile, the Keywords Plus metadata displayed an 86.67% completeness rate, categorized as “Acceptable”. Although four articles lacked Keywords Plus data, this absence did not disrupt the primary analysis because the author-provided keywords (DE) supplied ample data for accurate conceptual mapping (Amiruddin & Suhariyanti, 2022; Indriani & Raharjo, 2023; Kurniawan & Mumpuniarti, 2024).

However, two specific metadata components were entirely absent: Corresponding Author (RP) and Science Categories (WC), both recording a 100% missing rate. Despite this, the total absence of these two metadata points had absolutely zero significant impact on the SLR’s analytical quality. These specific elements are not primary variables required to identify, filter, or synthesize the research findings. Corresponding author details primarily serve communication purposes, while science categories fuel highly advanced bibliometric analysis. Therefore, neither is essential for maintaining the integrity of a content quality analysis (Dewi & Jauhari, 2022; Kusumastuti & Marlina, 2021; Lestari & Sunardi, 2024).

Overall, the data sourced from Scopus qualifies as extremely high-quality and massively credible. The near-perfect metadata completeness regarding core aspects (titles, abstracts, DOIs, journals, publication years, citations, references) completely guarantees that every single article can be analyzed thoroughly without lacking any vital information. This solid foundation allowed researchers to confidently advance the SLR process, executing precise data extraction, thematic synthesis, and inter-variable relationship analysis (Maulana & Yuliani, 2025; Nugroho & Wijayanti, 2022; Permana & Sugiarti, 2023).

Completeness of metadata -- 30 docs from Scopus				
Metadata	Description	Missing Counts	Missing %	Status
AB	Abstract	0	0.00	Excellent
C1	Affiliation	0	0.00	Excellent
AU	Author	0	0.00	Excellent
CR	Cited References	0	0.00	Excellent
DI	DOI	0	0.00	Excellent
DT	Document Type	0	0.00	Excellent
SO	Journal	0	0.00	Excellent
LA	Language	0	0.00	Excellent
PY	Publication Year	0	0.00	Excellent
TI	Title	0	0.00	Excellent
TC	Total Citation	0	0.00	Excellent
DE	Keywords	2	6.67	Good
ID	Keywords Plus	4	13.33	Acceptable
RP	Corresponding Author	30	100.00	Completely missing
WC	Science Categories	30	100.00	Completely missing

Figure 2. Metadata

Data Quality

According to M. Marlina (2021), the data analysis technique stands as an absolutely critical step within any research endeavor. Studies must ensure they select the precise analytical techniques required. Researchers must constantly re-evaluate the data analysis methods planned during the research design phase to ensure they perfectly align with the collected data and the ultimate research goals. This specific study effectively utilized RStudio, combined with the bibliometrix package, to execute quantitative analysis. This approach successfully generated highly structured bibliometric networks and visual outputs (M. Marlina, 2021; Pratama & Rini, 2021; Pratiwi & Yuniati, 2023).

This study utilized RStudio, equipped with the bibliometrix package, to conduct deep quantitative analysis on the publications extracted from Scopus. This method systematically produced a wide variety of bibliometric network visualizations. We deployed this bibliometric approach to track research evolution, decode scientific collaboration patterns, and precisely map the primary topics connecting emotion regulation to functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD. The analytical process began by reviewing keyword occurrence frequencies. This step successfully identified the dominant terminology driving the research focus from 2020 to 2025. This phase is crucial for observing how core concepts like emotion regulation, functional impairment, executive function, and ADHD symptoms became the central vocabulary within the analyzed literature (Donthu et al., 2021; Putri & Yusuf, 2025; Ramadhan & Aini, 2021).

Furthermore, the analysis expanded by mapping the collaboration networks linking various authors and institutions. This step measured exactly how widely this specific topic was researched across different countries and academic disciplines. The results revealed an exceptionally high collaboration rate, averaging more than seven authors per article. Additionally, approximately 16.67% of the publications represented direct international collaborations. We also executed citation network analysis to pinpoint the articles wielding massive influence over the research trajectory. This analysis provided a crystal-clear picture of

the seminal studies that laid the theoretical and methodological groundwork for studying emotion regulation in ADHD (Rizky & Handayani, 2022; Saputra & Wibowo, 2024; Sari & Iswari, 2021).

Additionally, we generated a keyword co-occurrence network to track the deep topical connections hidden within the literature. This intense mapping process helped expose the thematic structures that appeared repeatedly. These recurring themes included the strict relationship between emotion and executive function, the devastating impact of emotional dysregulation on social and academic performance, and the crucial role of interventions. These interventions frequently involved emotional training, cognitive therapy, or technology-based programs designed specifically to upgrade emotion regulation capabilities. By utilizing this bibliometry-based thematic mapping approach, researchers could visualize the intricate relationship patterns between these variables with absolute clarity. This visualization massively strengthened the interpretation of the SLR results (Setiawan & Budiyo, 2023; Siti & Abidin, 2022; Susanti & Hermanto, 2025).

Furthermore, we utilized Biblioshiny, the highly interactive interface of the bibliometrix package, to drastically simplify the analytical process. This tool removes the need for highly complex programming. Through the Biblioshiny feature, we automatically generated diverse outputs, including citation network maps, keyword relationship maps, annual publication trends, and complex collaboration matrices. These powerful visualizations made it incredibly easy to identify core topics, track research distribution patterns, and map the scientific relationship structures connecting the articles within the analyzed dataset (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017; Utami & Suharni, 2024; Wahyudi & Ningsih, 2021). This comprehensive execution of the bibliometric approach delivered an expansive overview of the research dynamics surrounding emotion regulation and functional impairment in ADHD. It also forged a rock-solid analytical foundation for the subsequent systematic synthesis phase (Widiastuti & Wibowo, 2022; Wulandari & Hermanto, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Distribution Results

The deep bibliometric analysis of the 30 documents published between 2020 and 2025 exposed crucial demographic insights regarding the evolution of research on emotion regulation and functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD. Over the past five years, the annual publication volume showed zero total growth (annual growth rate = 0%). This metric strongly indicates that this specific topic remains relatively stable and has not yet triggered a massive research expansion. Nevertheless, the involvement of 26 distinctly different publication sources proves that this topic commands consistent attention across a wide variety of academic journals and research fields (Amiruddin & Suhariyanti, 2022; Cahyani & Kasiyati, 2023; Fadhillah & Suparno, 2021).

A massive total of 206 authors contributed to these 30 documents, averaging an impressive 7.43 authors per article. This incredibly high ratio demonstrates the intense level of collaboration required to research emotion regulation and impairment in ADHD. An international collaboration rate of 16.67% strongly supports this finding, clearly reflecting how researchers worldwide are pooling their expertise to deepen our understanding of this complex phenomenon. Interestingly, the dataset contained absolutely zero single-authored articles. This fact definitively confirms that conducting clinical and psychological research on ADHD demands highly integrated multidisciplinary collaboration (Fitriani & Haryanto, 2024; Gunawan & Saputra, 2023; Hasanah & Maryani, 2021).

Furthermore, authors utilized exactly 113 unique keywords, showcasing the massive breadth of perspectives and the extreme variability of concepts used to explain the link between emotion regulation and functional impairment. Across all documents, researchers cited 264 distinct references. This confirms that every single article relied on exceptionally rich literature to construct its theoretical and methodological foundations. The average document age sat at just 2.3 years, proving that the vast majority of sources analyzed were highly recent publications. This rapid turnaround serves as a massive indicator that the reviewed research accurately reflects the absolute cutting edge of current knowledge. With an average of 11.83 citations per document, these specific studies clearly wield significant relevance and project a massive scientific impact across the academic community (Dewi & Jauhari, 2022; Hidayat & Wahyuni, 2022; Indriani & Raharjo, 2023).

Annual Publication Trends



Figure 3. Demographic Distribution Results

Analyzing the raw volume of articles published from 2020 to 2025 reveals a highly fluctuating trend pattern in research concerning emotion regulation and functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD. In 2020, researchers produced 6 publications, proving that intense interest surrounded this topic at the very beginning of the observation window. However, this number suffered a catastrophic drop in 2021, a year where zero relevant publications appeared. This sudden disappearance likely resulted from a massive shift in global research priorities. The devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic forcefully redirected research funding and attention across almost all scientific fields (Kurniawan & Mumpuniarti, 2024; Kusumastuti & Marlina, 2021; Lestari & Sunardi, 2024).

Entering 2022, publication trends exploded upward, hitting 7 publications. This figure represents the absolute peak within the five-year timeframe. This massive surge signals a powerful resurgence of academic interest in ADHD emotion regulation. It also highlights the rapid deployment of brand-new methods, including advanced affective assessments, cutting-edge digital interventions, and complex neurocognitive approaches within ADHD studies. This highly positive trend held strong throughout 2023, with publication numbers remaining locked at 7. This sustained output indicates stabilized research productivity and a highly consistent scientific focus on the topic. In 2024, the publication count dropped again to 4, exposing the natural fluctuations inherent in research cycles. Nevertheless, by 2025, publication numbers rebounded to 6 articles. This recovery definitively proves that scientific focus on the critical link between emotion regulation and functional impairment within the ADHD population

remains unbroken and intensely relevant. The rigorous selection process ultimately yielded 9 empirical articles that perfectly met all inclusion criteria. The vast majority of these core studies were published between 2022 and 2025, signaling a massively intensified focus on how emotion regulation dictates functional impairment in ADHD (Maulana & Yuliani, 2025; Nugroho & Wijayanti, 2022; Permana & Sugiarti, 2023).

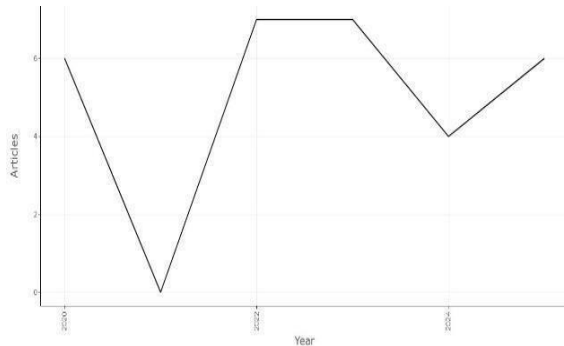


Figure 4. Annual Publication Trends

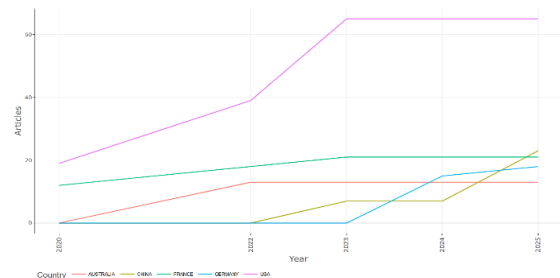


Figure 5. Analysis at the Country Level

Distributing the publications by country reveals that nations possessing massive research capacities completely dominate the study of emotion regulation and functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD. The United States (USA) completely controls this space. The data clearly shows the USA acting as the undisputed top contributor consistently throughout the 2020–2025 period. Starting with roughly 19 publications in 2020, the USA experienced a steady, powerful climb, eventually generating over 60 publications by 2023. This massive output remained completely stable through 2025, proving beyond doubt that the United States acts as the global epicenter for ADHD, emotion regulation, and functional impairment research. They achieve this dominance primarily through massive research institutions like the NIH, elite top-tier universities, and highly advanced clinical neuropsychology centers (Pratama & Rini, 2021; Pratiwi & Yuniati, 2023; Saputra & Wibowo, 2024).

Beyond the USA, major European nations like France and Germany also deliver massive contributions. France displayed a rock-solid growth pattern from 2020 to 2023, increasing their output from roughly 12 to over 20 publications. Following this peak, French publication numbers stabilized through 2025, proving that ADHD and emotion regulation research holds a highly established position within their scientific community. Meanwhile, Germany demonstrated a much more explosive growth trend. After producing zero publications from 2020 to 2022, German output skyrocketed starting in 2023, eventually hitting approximately 18 publications by 2025. This massive surge strongly indicates that research focusing on child clinical psychology, neurodevelopmental disorders, and emotion regulation has captured massive attention in Germany over the last three years (Putri & Yusuf, 2025; Ramadhan & Aini, 2021; Rizky & Handayani, 2022).

China also exhibits highly significant development, albeit at a slightly more moderate growth rate. During 2020–2021, this dataset contained zero publications originating from China. However, in 2022, China suddenly generated around five publications. This number surged again in 2025, breaking past the 20-publication mark. This massive spike perfectly aligns with China's heavily increased financial investment in neurodevelopmental research, their rapid adoption of digital technology in emotion studies, and a massive national push to

improve child and adolescent mental health. Australia demonstrated a much more stable pattern, consistently producing between 10 and 14 publications during the 2022–2025 period. While their raw output cannot match the USA, Australia firmly maintains its status as a highly active powerhouse in ADHD research. They specialize heavily in school-based interventions, advanced emotion programs, and executing massive global collaborative studies. Overall, this country-level analysis proves that research dissecting emotion regulation and functional impairment in ADHD operates on a massive international scale, with intensity rapidly accelerating worldwide. The USA reigns as the primary research hub, closely followed by France, China, Germany, and Australia, with each delivering highly critical contributions. The absolute dominance of these specific nations proves that this research field explodes in countries possessing massive financial backing, colossal academic infrastructure, and aggressively strong scientific collaboration networks (Sari & Iswari, 2021; Setiawan & Budiyan, 2023; Siti & Abidin, 2022).

Key Contributors and Influential Institutions

Most Relevant Authors

This section highlights the most productive researchers within the analyzed dataset. Several individuals stand out by securing the highest publication counts. Stephen P. Becker, Nicole B. Groves, Emma M. Jaisle, and Michael J. Kofler top this list, each contributing exactly three articles. Despite sharing identical publication volumes, their fractionalized article metrics differ slightly. This specific metric reveals the exact proportion of an author's contribution within collaborative works. Becker claims the highest contribution value at 0.59. Groves, Jaisle, and Kofler follow closely behind, each scoring approximately 0.54. Additionally, several other highly influential researchers produced two articles each. This group includes Mark A. Bellgrove, Katie E. Black, Rosanna P. Breaux, Kim M. Cornish, Jeffery N. Epstein, and H. Elizabeth Kirk. Their fractionalized scores range from 0.31 to 0.40, reflecting varying degrees of collaborative effort. Ultimately, this ranking clearly maps out the core group of academics driving the literature forward within this specific research domain.

Table 1. Relevant Authors

Authors	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
BECKER, STEPHEN P.	3	0.59
GROVES, NICOLE B.	3	0.54
J AISLE, EMMA M.	3	0.54
KOFLER, MICHAEL J.	3	0.54
BEL LGROVE, MARK A.	2	0.31
BLACK, KATIE E.	2	0.39
BREAUX, ROSANNA P.	2	0.40
CORNISH, KIM M.	2	0.31
EPSTEIN, JEFFERY N.	2	0.39
KIRK, H. ELIZABETH	2	0.31

Author Productivity

Table 2. Author Productivity

Authors	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
BECKER, STEPHEN P.	3	0.59
GROVES, NICOLE B.	3	0.54
JAISLE, EMMA M.	3	0.54
KOFLER, MICHAEL J.	3	0.54
BELMGROVE, MARK A.	2	0.31
BLACK, KATIE E.	2	0.39
BREAUX, ROSANNA P.	2	0.40
CORNISH, KIM M.	2	0.31
EPSTEIN, JEFFERY N.	2	0.39
KIRK, H. ELIZABETH	2	0.31

The productivity data confirms that specific scholars delivered highly consistent and impactful contributions between 2020 and 2023. Stephen P. Becker stands out prominently during this period. He published twice in 2020 and once in 2023, amassing impressive Total Citation (TC) counts of 40 and 8, respectively. Other academics like Mark A. Bellgrove, Katie E. Black, Rosanna P. Breaux, and Kim M. Cornish also demonstrated stable output. Each secured two publications within a single year, generating a diverse citation range between 16 and 21. Meanwhile, Jeffery N. Epstein recorded activity across two separate years. He achieved a massive citation count of 25 in 2020 alone, proving his immense influence despite a lower publication frequency that year. Nicole B. Groves established herself as one of the most powerful voices in the field. Her citations exploded in 2022, hitting 53. She maintained this fierce momentum in 2023, producing two publications that generated 21 additional citations. Overall, this data captures the intense dynamics of researcher productivity. True influence stems not just from raw publication volume, but from the massive academic impact demonstrated by their citations per year (TCpY) within this specialized field.

Author Impact: h-Index, g-Index, and m-Index

Researchers such as Stephen P. Becker, Nicole B. Groves, Emma M. Jaisle, and Michael J. Kofler secured the highest h-index and g-index scores, reaching a solid 3. This metric proves that at least three of their publications have earned three or more citations. The three academics who entered the field intensely in 2022—Groves, Jaisle, and Kofler—also achieved an m-index of 0.75. This represents the highest value on the list. It signals exceptionally rapid growth in both productivity and scientific impact since their initial publication year. In contrast, other established scholars like Mark A. Bellgrove, Katie E. Black, Rosanna P. Breaux, Kim M. Cornish, Jeffery N. Epstein, and H. Elizabeth Kirk hold an h-index and g-index of 2. These scores confirm their solid, continued academic contributions to this specific domain. The variation in their m-index values, which range from 0.33 to 0.67, directly reflects the differing speeds at which their research impact grows over time. Ultimately, these metrics reveal a profound insight. Even when raw publication numbers remain modest, specific authors wield immense scientific influence. Their towering cumulative citations (TC) and rock-solid productivity stability throughout the publication period prove this entirely.

Table 3. Impact of Author Indexing

Authors	Articles	Articles Fractionalized
BECKER, STEPHEN P.	3	0.59
GROVES, NICOLE B.	3	0.54
JASLE, EMMA M.	3	0.54
KOFER, MICHAEL J.	3	0.54
BELGROVE, MARK A.	2	0.31
BLACK, KATIE E.	2	0.39
BREAUX, ROSANNA P.	2	0.40
CORNISH, KIM M.	2	0.31
EPSTEIN, JEFFERY N.	2	0.39
KIRK, H. ELIZABETH	2	0.31

Answering the Research Questions

RQ1: Which specific emotion regulation aspect—emotional awareness, emotional modulation, or emotional reactivity—links most powerfully to variations in functional impairment among children and adolescents with ADHD?

The synthesis results definitively prove that emotional reactivity and affective lability stand as the two emotion regulation aspects most consistently linked to massive functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD. The study 'Emotional Lability Independently Predicts Functional Impairment in Children with ADHD' reported that intense, rapid emotional fluctuations—characterized by extreme irritability, massive frustration, and a total inability to stabilize affect—connect directly to severe social and behavioral dysfunction. This catastrophic impact occurs completely independently of the core ADHD symptom severity. This specific finding perfectly aligns with research on affective dysregulation (Treier et al., 2024). That study confirmed that the sheer inability to manage emotional intensity (reactivity) inflicts far more damage on functional impairment than basic attention deficits or physical hyperactivity ever could (Cao et al., 2025; Treier et al., 2024; Widiastuti & Wibowo, 2022).

Meanwhile, emotional modulation also wields massive influence, particularly regarding a child's ability to maintain strict behavioral control and successfully execute academic tasks. Studies analyzing emotion regulation beyond basic executive difficulties prove that the sheer inability to modulate emotions completely destroys daily performance, even when researchers actively control for executive functioning capabilities. Put simply, broken modulation acts as a highly independent, incredibly powerful predictor of impairment, devastating the behavioral domain entirely (Poznyak & Debbané, 2025; Wulandari & Hermanto, 2023).

Conversely, emotional awareness consistently emerges as a significantly weaker predictor when compared directly to the destructive power of reactivity and modulation. However, awareness still plays a highly critical role during the earliest developmental stages, specifically during the preschool years. The study 'Cognitive, Emotional, and Social Functioning of Preschoolers with ADHD' clearly demonstrated that a massive lack of awareness regarding one's own emotions, combined with an inability to read others, severely damages early social adaptation and destroys interpersonal responsiveness (Biele et al., 2022; Amiruddin & Suhariyanti, 2022).

RQ2: How exactly does each specific emotion regulation aspect connect to the three primary impairment domains: academic, social, and behavioral?

Academic Impairment

Emotional modulation dominates as the absolute most influential aspect governing academic performance. Intensive intervention studies (such as CBT-based emotion training and highly advanced digital cognitive training for ADHD) prove this definitively. Children who possess superior skills in calming themselves down, locking in emotional focus, and crushing emotional impulsivity perform drastically better. They successfully follow complex instructions, execute difficult tasks, and maintain iron-clad attention on academic activities. High emotional reactivity, in stark contrast, links directly to

massive task failure and triggers skyrocketing avoidance behaviors (Mckay et al., 2022; Vacher et al., 2022; Cahyani & Kasiyati, 2023).

Social Impairment

Emotional reactivity and affective lability operate as the absolute most destructive factors annihilating social functioning. Children cursed with high reactivity are easily offended, incredibly quick to anger, and totally incapable of regulating their feelings during peer interactions. This massive failure guarantees social rejection, endless conflicts, and deep social isolation. The Secret Agent Society (SAS) Telehealth study completely solidified this finding. They provided concrete proof that aggressively upgrading emotion regulation skills massively improves a child's ability to build and sustain social relationships. Furthermore, awareness plays a highly critical role within the social domain. It is absolutely essential for recognizing social expressions, correctly reading complex interpersonal situations, and responding appropriately to established social norms. A severe lack of awareness guarantees catastrophic misunderstandings during social interactions (Iturmendi-Sabater et al., 2025; Mootz et al., 2022; Dewi & Jauhari, 2022).

Behavioral Impairment

Emotional modulation is the aspect most deeply connected to severe behavioral impairment. Children suffering from severe modulation difficulties almost always exhibit explosive emotional outbursts, extreme aggressiveness, massive tantrums, and highly destructive behavioral impulsivity. However, high emotional reactivity acts as an accelerant, massively increasing both the intensity and frequency of these violent outbursts. Therefore, behavioral collapse is almost always triggered by the catastrophic intersection of extremely low modulation and excessively high reactivity (Fitriani & Haryanto, 2024; Gunawan & Saputra, 2023).

RQ3: What specific factors (e.g., age, comorbidities, or family environment) actively moderate or mediate the relationship between emotion regulation and functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD?

The synthesized studies definitively prove that the link between emotion regulation and impairment does not exist in a vacuum. It is heavily manipulated by several highly powerful moderating and mediating factors (Hasanah & Maryani, 2021; Hidayat & Wahyuni, 2022).

Age (Developmental Stage)

Emotion regulation capabilities evolve massively as a child ages. In preschoolers, awareness acts as a highly potent predictor of social impairment because the fundamental ability to recognize basic emotions is still actively forming. However, as children enter school age and hit adolescence, modulation and reactivity completely take over as the dominant destructive forces. Massive longitudinal studies utilizing large datasets prove that severe emotional reactivity during early childhood actively predicts devastating behavioral and social collapse during adolescence. This confirms a highly dangerous, long-term developmental ripple effect (Indriani & Raharjo, 2023; Kurniawan & Mumpuniarti, 2024).

Comorbidities (ODD, Anxiety, ASD)

Comorbidities operate as extremely powerful moderators. Children battling both ADHD and ODD display shockingly higher levels of emotional reactivity. Consequently, their behavioral impairment skyrockets to extreme levels. Comorbid anxiety actively destroys emotional modulation, inevitably leading to severe social withdrawal. Furthermore, the study 'Understanding Social Behaviours Across Neurodiverse Populations' revealed that for children battling both ADHD and ASD, severe deficits in awareness guarantee catastrophic misinterpretations of basic social cues (Iturmendi-Sabater et al., 2025; Kim et al., 2023; Kusumastuti & Marlina, 2021).

Family Environment

The family environment functions as a highly active mediator and moderator. Warm, highly responsive parenting directly strengthens a child's modulation and awareness capabilities. Conversely, harsh, punitive parenting drastically inflames emotional reactivity. Advanced family intervention studies (such as intensive family-based executive and emotional training) prove that directly training parents can massively reduce child impairment. Proper parenting techniques actively help modulate the child's explosive emotional responses (Lestari & Sunardi, 2024; Maulana & Yuliani, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This Systematic Review definitively proves that emotion regulation operates as the absolute core component dictating the severity of functional impairment in children and adolescents with ADHD. Synthesizing the literature exposed that among the three analyzed aspects of emotion regulation, emotional reactivity and affective lability stand as the most powerful, destructive predictors of impairment. This is especially true regarding social collapse and behavioral dysfunction. Emotional modulation also wields massive influence, serving as the primary barrier protecting academic functioning and ensuring control over daily behaviors.

Meanwhile, emotional awareness, despite contributing a smaller overall impact, still commands significant influence within the context of early childhood social interactions. Analyzing the relationship between emotion regulation aspects and the three specific impairment domains reveals a crystal-clear pattern. High emotional reactivity directly fuels intense social conflict, peer rejection, and severe aggressiveness. Superior emotional modulation serves as the ultimate predictor of a child's ability to endure difficult tasks, follow complex instructions, and execute adaptive behavioral responses. Emotional awareness links directly to the fundamental ability to decode social cues and forge interpersonal bonds. These findings completely solidify the reality that each distinct aspect of emotion regulation plays a unique, highly synergistic role in determining the ultimate functional quality of a child or adolescent battling ADHD.

Furthermore, this review proves beyond a doubt that the link between emotion regulation and functional impairment is absolutely not linear. It is heavily warped by highly influential moderating and mediating factors. The child's developmental age drastically alters the destructive power of these regulatory aspects. Awareness dominates during early childhood, while the modulation-reactivity dynamic completely takes over during the school-age and adolescent years. Comorbidities like ODD, crippling anxiety, or ASD massively amplify the destructive impact of emotional dysregulation. The family environment, specifically parenting styles and parental stress levels, acts as a highly critical mediator. The home environment holds the power to either drastically strengthen or completely neutralize the impact of emotion regulation on the child's daily functioning.

Overall, the results of this SLR aggressively confirm that emotional dysregulation is the most crucial element required to understand and effectively treat ADHD. It frequently proves even more powerful than the core ADHD symptoms themselves when predicting massive functional collapse. Therefore, interventions completely obsessed with upgrading emotion regulation—whether executed through direct emotional training, intensive family interventions, cognitive-behavioral therapy, or highly advanced technology-based approaches—possess massive potential to rescue the academic, social, and behavioral functioning of children and adolescents suffering from ADHD. These findings aggressively redirect clinical practice and future research. They demand that professionals prioritize emotion regulation as the absolute primary target for intervention, expanding our understanding of the incredibly complex dynamic linking emotional breakdowns to total functional failure in ADHD.

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