ADHD – Research Document

This is a document for my personal research about ADHD

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Definition

ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects a person's ability to focus, regulate impulses, and manage energy levels. It is typically diagnosed in childhood but can continue into adulthood.

What causes ADHD

ADHD is linked to differences in brain structure and function, particularly in areas controlling attention and impulse regulation. It has a strong genetic component but can also be influenced by environment, prenatal factors, and early childhood experiences.

How is ADHD Diagnosed

ADHD Diagnosis: A Quick Summary

1. **Clinical Evaluation**

- A doctor (psychiatrist, psychologist, or paediatrician) assesses symptoms based on standardized criteria.
- Must show persistent symptoms (for at least 6 months) that interfere with daily life.

2. **DSM-5 Criteria**
   - Symptoms are checked against the **Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5)**.
   - Must have **at least 6 symptoms** (for children) or **5 symptoms** (for adults) of **inattention** and/or **hyperactivity-impulsivity**.

3. **History & Interviews**
   - Questions about behaviour at home, school, or work.
   - Interviews with parents, teachers, or partners (for kids and sometimes adults).

4. **Behavioural Questionnaires**
   - Common tools: **Vanderbilt Assessment Scale, Conners Rating Scale, ASRS (Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale)**.

5. **Rule Out Other Conditions**
   - Doctors check for anxiety, depression, learning disabilities, or other issues that might mimic ADHD.

Final Diagnosis: If symptoms are **consistent, impairing daily life, and not better explained by another condition**, ADHD is diagnosed.

Symptoms of ADHD

- **Inattentive Type:** Difficulty focusing, forgetfulness, trouble following instructions, and poor organization.
- **Hyperactive-Impulsive Type:** Excessive talking, restlessness, impulsivity, difficulty waiting turns, and acting without thinking.
- **Combined Type:** A mix of inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive traits.

Difficulties when working/studying with ADHD

1. Distractions and Multitasking
2. Difficulty with Organization and Prioritization
3. Time management challenges
4. Impulsivity and Decision-Making
5. Cognitive Overload
6. Technical Challenges
7. Physical Discomfort
8. Social and Communication Challenges

Strategies to Mitigate These Difficulties

While these challenges are significant, there are strategies and tools that can help individuals with ADHD use computers more effectively:

- **Focus Apps**: Tools like Freedom, StayFocusd, or Cold Turkey can block distracting websites.

- **Task Managers**: Apps like Todoist, Trello, or Notion can help with organization and prioritization.

- **Timers and Alarms**: Using timers (e.g., Pomodoro Technique) to manage time and take regular breaks.

- **Customized Workspaces**: Organizing files, bookmarks, and desktop icons to reduce clutter.

- **Assistive Technology**: Text-to-speech software, speech-to-text tools, or ADHD-specific apps can aid productivity.

Research Questions

1. What are the most common challenges individuals with ADHD face when working or studying on a laptop?

2. How does the use of a laptop impact focus and productivity for people with ADHD compared to traditional pen-and-paper methods?

3. What strategies do individuals with ADHD use to stay focused and productive while working or studying on a laptop?
4. How effective are digital tools (e.g., focus apps, timers, task managers) in helping individuals with ADHD manage their work or study tasks?
5. What types of training or interventions could help individuals with ADHD improve their laptop use for work or study?
6. How can employers or educators better support individuals with ADHD in optimizing their laptop use for productivity?

Competitive Analysis

Forest (https://chromewebstore.google.com/detail/forest-stay-focused-be-pr/kjacjjdnoddnpbbcjilcajfhhbdhkpgk)

- Helps you stay focused by growing a virtual tree when you avoid distractions.

- If you visit a blocked site, your tree dies

Strengths:

- Gamifies focus with a visual reward (growing a tree).

- Creates emotional accountability (tree dies if distracted).

Weaknesses:

- Inflexible (tree dies even for necessary site visits).

- Limited to blocking all distractions, not specific sites.

StayFocusd (Chrome)
(https://chromewebstore.google.com/detail/stayfocusd-block-distract/laankejkbhbdhmipfmgcngdelahlfoji)

- Limits time on distracting sites (like social media).

- You can block entire sites or just specific pages.

Strengths:

- Highly customizable (block specific sites or pages).

- Strict time limits help enforce discipline.

Weaknesses:

- Can feel too restrictive for some users.

- No gamification or positive reinforcement.

Clockify (Chrome, Firefox) (https://clockify.me/)

- Tracks time spent on different tasks.

- Useful for ADHD folks who struggle with time perception.

Strengths:

- Tracks time spent on tasks, great for time management.

- Free and easy to use across devices.

Weaknesses:

- Requires manual input for tasks, which can be tedious.

- No blocking or focus-enhancing features.

Speechify (Chrome, Firefox)
(https://speechify.com/?utm_campaign=partners&utm_content=rewardful
&via=linhtham&gad_source=1)

- Reads text aloud, great for people with ADHD who struggle with reading long content.

- You can also use famous people voice to help understand the content.

Strengths:

- Reads text aloud, helpful for ADHD or reading difficulties.

- Offers engaging voices (e.g., celebrities) for better engagement.

Weaknesses:

- Premium features (like celebrity voices) can be expensive.

- May not work well with complex or formatted text.

Orestis Interview

Interview Transcript: ADHD & Digital Productivity

Background & Diagnosis

The interviewee was diagnosed with ADHD at age 11, which provided clarity regarding lifelong focus challenges and occasional anger issues (though the latter's connection to ADHD remains unclear). They note that ADHD is neurodevelopmental—present from childhood—and runs in their family (father and brother also have it). Environmental factors, including parental relationships, influenced their experience.

They emphasize that while ADHD is increasingly self-diagnosed, it should not be stigmatized or used as an excuse. For them, it's a minor obstacle rather than a debilitating condition. However, they express concern about trivialization, noting that some individuals exaggerate or falsely claim ADHD for personal gain, which undermines those with legitimate needs.

Interview Questions & Responses

1. Do you prefer working with a pen and paper or computers/internet-accessible devices?

"I strongly prefer digital tools. Computers streamline organization, editing, and access, which aligns with my need for efficiency and flexibility."

2. Do you prefer websites with all information visible at once or content that reveals progressively?

"Progressive disclosure is critical. Information overload overwhelms me, whereas step-by-step presentation aids focus and retention."

3. Do you prefer videos, audio, or text for learning? Why?

"Videos are ideal—they offer unambiguous, visual demonstrations. Text can be misinterpreted, but concise bullet points are acceptable. Audio alone lacks engagement."

4. What design elements distract you most on websites/apps?

"High-contrast visuals, auto-playing videos, and comment sections derail my attention. Sidebar clutter is particularly disruptive."

5. How valuable is hiding non-essential page elements?

"Highly valuable (7/10). Customizable interfaces would mitigate sensory overload while preserving functionality."

6. Do you use any ADHD-focused apps/extensions?

"An ad blocker is essential. I avoid rigid scheduling tools, as I operate impulsively—reserving structure only for major tasks."

7. How do notifications affect your focus?

"They're intrusive. I silence non-urgent alerts but assess others contextually."

8. Do intermittent breaks help? Describe your approach.

"Yes—5-minute breaks hourly boost productivity and creativity. Without them, mental fatigue sets in."

9. Do you fidget? Examples and impact?

"Constantly. A customized keycap provides tactile stimulation. While sometimes distracting, it often aids concentration."

Closing Perspective

"ADHD, for me, is a mild inconvenience requiring adaptation, not accommodation. Its impact varies widely, and societal

misperceptions—both stigmatization and romanticization—do a disservice to those managing it authentically."