KMAN PUBLISHING INSTITUTE
Journal Website

Article history:
Received 09 June 2025
Revised 11 August 2025
Accepted 20 August 2025
Published online 01 September 2025

Journal of Assessment and Research in Applied Counseling

Volume 7, Issue 3, pp 1-9

E-ISSN: 3041-8518

Exploring Motivational Structures Underlying Persistence in Individuals With ADHD

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A r t i c l e I n f o

Article type:
Original Research

How to cite this article:
Gunchai, S., Kuntawong, T., & Sumethokul , P. (2025). Exploring Motivational Structures Underlying Persistence in Individuals With ADHD. *Journal of Assessment and Research in Applied Counseling, 7*(3), 1-9.
http://dx.doi.org/10.61838/kman.jarac.7.3.20

A B S T R A C T

Objective: This study aimed to explore the underlying motivational structures that enable individuals with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to sustain persistence and long-term goal engagement despite attentional and emotional challenges.

Methods and Materials: A qualitative research design was employed to capture the lived experiences of adults and emerging adults with ADHD. Using purposive sampling, 25 participants (14 males, 11 females; aged 18–40) with a formal ADHD diagnosis were recruited from support groups, mental health clinics, and online communities in Thailand. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews lasting 60–90 minutes. The interviews explored personal definitions of persistence, self-regulatory strategies, emotional experiences, and the role of social and cultural contexts. All sessions were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic analysis in NVivo 14 software. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached.

Findings: Analysis revealed three overarching motivational themes: internal drive and self-regulation, external structure and social anchoring, and adaptive coping and resilience-building. Internal processes such as self-determination, emotional self-monitoring, cognitive reframing, and future-oriented thinking enabled participants to stay engaged despite executive function challenges. External supports—including family and peer encouragement, structured environments, feedback from mentors, and cultural values—served as anchoring forces. Adaptive coping strategies, including breaking tasks into smaller steps, using mindfulness and body regulation, and creatively channeling reward sensitivity, further reinforced persistence. These interwoven systems formed a dynamic motivational architecture that participants developed to sustain long-term efforts.

Conclusion: Persistence in ADHD emerges from a complex interaction of personal agency, cultural and social scaffolds, and adaptive resilience

strategies. Understanding these motivational systems can inform culturally sensitive interventions that strengthen self-regulation, leverage social support, and empower individuals with ADHD beyond symptom control.

Keywords: *ADHD; motivation; persistence; self-regulation; qualitative research; cultural context; resilience strategies*

1. Introduction

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is one of the most prevalent and functionally impairing neurodevelopmental conditions, characterized by persistent patterns of inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity that interfere with adaptive functioning across the lifespan (Childress et al., 2023). Although once regarded primarily as a childhood disorder, research now confirms that ADHD frequently persists into adolescence and adulthood, affecting approximately 2.5–5% of adults globally (Childress et al., 2023; Makkar, 2025). In adult populations, ADHD is closely linked to difficulties in occupational stability, academic performance, social relationships, and emotional well-being (Chan & Langberg, 2024; Miranda et al., 2021). These impairments are not only rooted in core symptoms but also reflect associated deficits in executive functioning, emotion regulation, and self-motivation (Barkley & Benton, 2024a, 2024b).

A robust body of evidence underscores the centrality of executive functions in sustaining motivation and persistence among individuals with ADHD (Capodieci et al., 2025; Zhang, 2025). Executive functions such as working memory, planning, and inhibitory control provide the foundation for self-regulation and goal-directed behavior (Barkley & Benton, 2024a; Capodieci et al., 2025). However, adults with ADHD often show heterogeneous profiles of executive deficits, with some exhibiting selective weaknesses and others presenting broader impairments (Carreiro et al., 2023). These patterns complicate the understanding of motivational persistence, as individuals with ADHD may need to compensate for executive vulnerabilities through adaptive strategies or external supports (Afshadi et al., 2023; Ogrodnik et al., 2023).

Emotional and motivational dysregulation are increasingly recognized as core dimensions of ADHD and crucial predictors of long-term functioning (Barkley & Benton, 2024b; Gabrieli-Seri et al., 2022). Poor emotional control can trigger frustration and task abandonment, while deficits in intrinsic motivation may limit sustained effort on activities with delayed rewards (Afshadi et al., 2023; Gabrieli-Seri et al., 2022). Recent models conceptualize ADHD not only as a disorder of attention but as a complex interaction between impaired time perception, inconsistent reward sensitivity, and challenges with future-oriented thinking (Gabrieli-Seri et al., 2022; Miranda et al., 2020). Individuals with ADHD often struggle to maintain persistence when tasks lack immediate reinforcement, requiring compensatory mechanisms to stay engaged (Afshadi et al., 2023).

Environmental and contextual factors also shape motivational persistence. Supportive relationships and feedback can buffer the effects of self-regulatory difficulties and help sustain goal pursuit (Chan & Langberg, 2024; Ogrodnik et al., 2023). Cultural norms may influence how individuals frame effort and failure; for example, collectivistic values can encourage perseverance through social expectations and family responsibility (Noureddine et al., 2024). At the same time, stigma and misunderstanding about ADHD may undermine motivation by reinforcing negative self-concepts (Köder et al., 2022; Miranda et al., 2021). The rapid integration of digital technologies into daily life adds further complexity; while some digital tools support planning and self-monitoring, others, such as social media and gaming, can exacerbate distractibility and motivational inconsistency (Noureddine et al., 2024; Shuai et al., 2021).

There has been increasing interest in cognitive and behavioral interventions aimed at strengthening motivation and persistence in ADHD. Cognitive training and computer-assisted programs have demonstrated potential in improving executive skills and self-regulatory control, though evidence remains mixed (Hardjasasmita et al., 2023; Robledo-Castro et al., 2022; Trinczer & Shalev, 2024; Wu et al., 2022). Tele-assessment and remote support strategies have emerged to address accessibility issues and allow continuous feedback loops (Capodieci et al., 2025). Likewise, psychological therapies such as cognitive-behavioral interventions focus on reframing failures, building emotional resilience, and creating structured reward systems (Afshadi et al., 2023; Takamatsu et al., 2024). Nonetheless, the lived experiences behind these adaptive processes remain underexplored, particularly in non-Western contexts where cultural norms and family dynamics play a unique role in shaping persistence (Miranda et al., 2021; Ogrodnik et al., 2023).

Emerging evidence also highlights the heterogeneity in functional outcomes among individuals with ADHD, emphasizing that persistence is not a fixed trait but a

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E-ISSN: 3041-8518

dynamic process influenced by personal agency and contextual adaptation (Collado-Valero et al., 2021; Miranda et al., 2020). Some adults leverage intrinsic motivation and future-oriented goals to overcome executive deficits, while others depend heavily on environmental scaffolding and social reinforcement (Carreiro et al., 2023; Chan & Langberg, 2024). Cultural and linguistic diversity further modulates these processes, as bilingual and multicultural experiences have been associated with differences in cognitive flexibility and coping strategies (Köder et al., 2022). However, the interplay between motivational systems, cultural identity, and executive control remains insufficiently understood.

Additionally, the digital age introduces both risks and opportunities for motivational persistence. While structured online mindfulness programs and digital self-management platforms have shown promise for enhancing attention and reducing impulsivity (Pheh et al., 2021; Shuai et al., 2021), other technology-related patterns, such as compulsive gaming and reward-driven app use, may amplify motivational inconsistency (Noureddine et al., 2024). This dual impact underscores the importance of examining how individuals with ADHD selectively integrate or resist technological influences in sustaining long-term goals (Robledo-Castro et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2022).

Despite the growing understanding of ADHD's neurocognitive and behavioral dimensions, there is still a significant knowledge gap regarding the *motivational architecture* that enables some individuals to persist despite chronic attentional challenges. Prior quantitative studies have emphasized executive deficits and treatment outcomes but often fail to capture subjective experiences and self-constructed strategies (Afshadi et al., 2023; Barkley & Benton, 2024a). Qualitative approaches can reveal how individuals conceptualize persistence, regulate their internal states, and draw on social and cultural resources to maintain long-term effort (Miranda et al., 2021; Ogrodnik et al., 2023). Such insights are critical for designing contextually sensitive interventions that move beyond symptom reduction toward empowerment and adaptive functioning (Capodieci et al., 2025; Takamatsu et al., 2024).

Given these gaps, the present study seeks to explore the motivational structures underlying persistence in individuals with ADHD by examining their lived experiences and adaptive strategies within the Thai cultural context.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study adopted a qualitative design with an exploratory and interpretive orientation to gain an in-depth understanding of the motivational structures that support persistence in individuals with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). A purposive sampling strategy was employed to recruit participants who could provide rich, first-hand insights into their lived experiences of sustaining effort and motivation despite attentional and behavioral challenges. The study population consisted of adults and late adolescents (aged 18–40) formally diagnosed with ADHD and living in Thailand. Participants were required to have received an ADHD diagnosis from a licensed mental health professional, possess sufficient verbal communication skills to engage in reflective discussion, and express willingness to share their personal experiences. Recruitment occurred through ADHD support groups, mental health clinics, and online communities.

In total, 25 participants (14 males and 11 females) took part in the study. The sample size was not predetermined but guided by the principle of theoretical saturation; interviews were continued until no new conceptual insights emerged and data adequacy was reached. Participants varied in their educational backgrounds and occupational status, ensuring diversity and enhancing the transferability of findings.

2.2. Measures

Data were collected through semi-structured, in-depth interviews designed to explore how individuals with ADHD sustain motivation and overcome obstacles to persistence. An interview guide was developed based on a review of the literature and expert consultation with clinical psychologists specializing in ADHD. Key areas of inquiry included personal definitions of persistence, strategies used to maintain motivation, environmental or social influences, emotional factors, and experiences with failure and recovery.

Interviews were conducted in Thai by the first author and trained research assistants with graduate-level backgrounds in psychology. Sessions were held either face-to-face in a private setting or through secure video conferencing platforms, depending on participant preference and accessibility. Each interview lasted between 60 and 90

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minutes and was audio-recorded with informed consent. Field notes were also taken to capture contextual details and nonverbal cues. All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and, where necessary, translated into English while preserving cultural nuances and meaning.

2.3. Data Analysis

A thematic analysis approach was used to identify and interpret underlying patterns and structures related to motivation and persistence among individuals with ADHD. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-step framework: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts, (2) generating initial codes inductively from the raw text, (3) searching for broader themes by clustering related codes, (4) reviewing and refining themes for coherence and distinctiveness, (5) defining and naming themes to capture their essence, and (6) producing a final thematic structure integrated with representative participant quotations.

To support rigorous analysis and systematic organization of qualitative data, NVivo 14 software was utilized for coding, data management, and visualization of relationships between themes. Throughout the process, analytic memos were kept to document decisions, emerging interpretations, and reflexive considerations. Credibility was enhanced by peer debriefing among the research team and member checking with a subset of participants to validate the accuracy and resonance of emerging themes.

3. Findings and Results

The study sample consisted of 25 adults and late adolescents with a formal diagnosis of ADHD residing in Thailand. Of these, 14 participants were male (56%) and 11 were female (44%). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 40 years (mean age = 27.8 years), with the largest proportion falling between 21 and 30 years (n = 13; 52%), followed by those aged 31–40 years (n = 8; 32%), and a smaller group between 18 and 20 years (n = 4; 16%). Regarding educational background, 10 participants (40%) had completed a bachelor's degree, 7 (28%) held a master's degree, 5 (20%) were pursuing undergraduate studies, and 3 (12%) had completed secondary education. In terms of occupational status, the sample included 8 full-time employees (32%), 6 part-time or freelance workers (24%), 5 university students (20%), 3 entrepreneurs (12%), and 3 currently unemployed individuals (12%). This diversity in age, gender, and professional background allowed for rich, varied perspectives on the motivational processes underlying persistence in ADHD.

Table 1

Main Themes, Subthemes, and Concepts

Main Theme	Subtheme	Concepts (Open Codes)
1. Internal Drive and Self-Regulation	Self-Determination	Desire to prove capability; personal responsibility; inner competition; striving for self-identity; goal ownership
	Emotional Self-Monitoring	Tracking emotional fluctuations; recognizing frustration triggers; calming strategies; adaptive self-talk
	Cognitive Reframing	Turning failure into learning; reinterpreting challenges; growth mindset; normalizing setbacks
	Future-Oriented Thinking	Visualizing success; linking effort to long-term goals; imagining improved self; anticipation of reward
	Self-Compassion and Acceptance	Forgiving mistakes; positive self-affirmation; embracing ADHD identity; reducing self-criticism
2. External Structure and Social Anchoring	Supportive Relationships	Encouragement from family; peer accountability; mentorship; emotional validation
	Environmental Structuring	Organized workspace; visual reminders; time blocking; digital productivity tools; external reward systems
	Social Role Expectations	Meeting work demands; academic performance pressure; maintaining parental trust
	Feedback and Guidance	Constructive feedback; therapist coaching; progress check-ins; learning from experts
	Cultural Values and Norms	Thai collectivism influence; respect for authority; stigma navigation; cultural motivation for perseverance
3. Adaptive Coping and Resilience-Building	Strategic Task Management	Breaking tasks into steps; prioritization; scheduling energy peaks; micro-goals
	Emotional Resilience	Stress tolerance; bouncing back after failure; handling criticism; positive risk-taking
	Experiential Learning	Learning from past mistakes; trial-and-error adaptation; self-designed coping tactics

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E-ISSN: 3041-8518

	Mind–Body Regulation	Breathing and mindfulness practices; physical activity as reset; sleep and nutrition awareness
	Reward Sensitivity Rechanneling	Replacing impulsive rewards with meaningful incentives; gamification of tasks; immediate reinforcement

Main Theme 1 — Internal Drive and Self-Regulation

Self-Determination

Participants consistently described a strong personal determination to overcome ADHD-related challenges and to prove their capability. They spoke of "wanting to show I can finish what I start, not just drift away" (Participant 4) and a sense of *inner competition* to outperform their own previous limits. Several linked persistence to a need for *goal ownership*, noting that when tasks felt self-chosen rather than externally imposed, their motivation was stronger. One participant explained, "If it's my own goal, I will fight to get it done, even if it's hard to stay focused" (Participant 11).

Emotional Self-Monitoring

Interviewees described *tracking emotional fluctuations* to stay productive. They learned to *recognize frustration triggers*—for instance, noisy environments or critical comments—and to use *calming strategies* such as deep breathing or stepping away briefly. Adaptive *self-talk* was often used to reframe setbacks: "I tell myself it's okay to get upset, but I can reset and continue" (Participant 6). This deliberate emotional check-in helped prevent abrupt task abandonment.

Cognitive Reframing

A central process supporting persistence was the *reinterpretation of failure*. Instead of internalizing mistakes as proof of inadequacy, participants practiced *turning failure into learning* and adopting a *growth mindset*. "I used to think failing meant I was lazy," said one participant, "but now I see it as data on what didn't work" (Participant 9). Normalizing setbacks allowed them to persist despite ADHD's unpredictability.

Future-Oriented Thinking

Many participants used vivid mental imagery to remain committed. They described *visualizing success*—such as imagining graduation, job completion, or financial stability—and *linking effort to long-term goals*. Anticipating reward was crucial; as one participant noted, "I picture how proud I'll feel when I finish. That keeps me from quitting" (Participant 17).

Self-Compassion and Acceptance

A transformative pattern involved *forgiving mistakes* and *embracing ADHD identity*. Individuals moved from harsh self-criticism toward self-affirmation: "Before, I'd beat myself up for being distracted. Now I tell myself, 'It's part of me, but not all of me'" (Participant 23). Accepting their neurodiversity reduced shame and created mental space for persistence.

Main Theme 2 — External Structure and Social Anchoring

Supportive Relationships

Relationships were repeatedly cited as anchors for motivation. Family encouragement, *peer accountability*, and mentorship provided both emotional safety and practical check-ins. "My sister calls every night and asks if I did what I planned," one participant shared, "It's annoying but helpful" (Participant 2). Several highlighted that knowing someone believed in their potential fueled persistence.

Environmental Structuring

Participants crafted external systems to offset distractibility. They mentioned *organized workspaces*, *visual reminders*, and *time-blocking techniques* supported by alarms or apps. Digital productivity tools created a sense of structure: "I use a timer app; it keeps me aware and prevents spiraling into social media" (Participant 7). Others implemented small *external rewards*—like taking a short break or eating a favorite snack after completing tasks.

Social Role Expectations

Some participants persisted out of a perceived duty to meet societal and family expectations. "As the eldest son, I can't fail at work; people depend on me," one man explained (Participant 15). Cultural values of responsibility and maintaining family honor, especially strong in Thai society, were internalized as motivators.

Feedback and Guidance

Constructive feedback from supervisors, therapists, or teachers gave direction and maintained momentum. Participants appreciated *progress check-ins* and *learning from experts*. "My coach reminds me where I improved, and that keeps me going when my brain wants to wander" (Participant 5). Such feedback converted vague effort into measurable progress.

Cultural Values and Norms

Several participants reflected on cultural influences, describing how Thai collectivism and respect for authority shaped their persistence. "In Thailand, you're expected to keep going, even if it's hard," said one participant (Participant 19). Others noted navigating *stigma* but also using cultural ideals of perseverance as motivational fuel.

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Main Theme 3 — Adaptive Coping and Resilience-Building

Strategic Task Management

Breaking tasks into smaller, *micro-goals* was a widely shared survival strategy. Participants relied on *prioritization* and *scheduling energy peaks*. "I do my hardest work in the morning before I'm drained," one noted (Participant 13). Others found satisfaction in crossing off steps on a to-do list, creating visible progress that boosted motivation.

Emotional Resilience

Building *stress tolerance* and *bouncing back after failure* were core aspects of persistence. Many participants described "getting used to failing but still standing up" (Participant 21). Others highlighted *positive risk-taking*—daring to attempt difficult tasks despite previous setbacks.

Experiential Learning

The iterative process of *trial-and-error adaptation* emerged strongly. Participants often experimented with strategies, discarded what failed, and refined what worked. "I've tested so many apps and planners; only two really work for me now," said one (Participant 8). This flexible learning reduced discouragement.

Mind–Body Regulation

Managing physical and mental states was critical. Interviewees practiced *breathing and mindfulness*, exercised to "reset the brain," and monitored *sleep and nutrition*. "If I sleep late, my focus is gone; so I protect bedtime fiercely" (Participant 1). These actions helped stabilize attention and emotional balance.

Reward Sensitivity Rechanneling

Many reframed their natural *reward sensitivity* to support persistence. Instead of impulsive distractions, they created immediate and meaningful incentives: "I gamify my work—points, colors, badges. It sounds silly but it tricks my brain" (Participant 20). Using reward systems turned a potential ADHD challenge into a motivational strength.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study explored the motivational structures that enable individuals with ADHD to persist in the face of attentional and emotional challenges. Through in-depth qualitative analysis of Thai adults and emerging adults with ADHD, three interrelated motivational systems emerged: internal drive and self-regulation, external structure and social anchoring, and adaptive coping and resilience-building. These findings contribute a culturally grounded understanding of persistence in ADHD and extend current theoretical and empirical models of self-regulation and motivation in neurodiverse populations.

One of the most salient findings was the role of internal drive and self-regulation, expressed through self-determination, emotional self-monitoring, cognitive reframing, and future-oriented thinking. Participants frequently described a personal sense of agency and ownership of goals, echoing evidence that intrinsic motivation is critical for sustaining effort in ADHD (Afshadi et al., 2023). Self-directed goal setting and a drive to prove capability can compensate for executive vulnerabilities by mobilizing self-initiated persistence (Barkley & Benton, 2024a, 2024b). Emotional self-monitoring was another core element; participants' awareness of frustration triggers and use of calming strategies parallels findings that emotion regulation acts as a protective factor against task disengagement (Afshadi et al., 2023; Barkley & Benton, 2024a). Similarly, cognitive reframing—turning failure into learning and normalizing setbacks—supports the theoretical perspective that ADHD-related motivational impairment can be mitigated through self-reflection and adaptive meaning-making (Gabrieli-Seri et al., 2022; Miranda et al., 2020). Future-oriented thinking, such as visualizing success and linking current effort to long-term reward, also aligns with models of temporal motivation suggesting that reward delay aversion in ADHD can be counterbalanced by strengthening future self-continuity (Gabrieli-Seri et al., 2022; Zhang, 2025).

The second major theme, external structure and social anchoring, underscores the importance of environmental scaffolding and social feedback in sustaining persistence. Participants' emphasis on supportive relationships resonates with previous findings showing that interpersonal encouragement and accountability bolster motivation among individuals with ADHD (Chan & Langberg, 2024; Ogrodnik et al., 2023). Structured workspaces, visual reminders, and time-blocking techniques reported by participants reflect well-established behavioral interventions for executive deficits, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy's emphasis on environmental adaptation (Takamatsu et al., 2024). Social role expectations also surfaced strongly; participants described persistence shaped by cultural values such as familial duty and maintaining social reputation. This finding complements evidence suggesting that collectivistic contexts can frame perseverance as a moral and relational obligation (Miranda et al., 2021; Noureddine et al., 2024). Feedback from mentors, therapists, and supervisors was described as a motivational catalyst by giving structure and

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progress validation; similar observations have been documented where performance feedback and coaching predict occupational and academic success in ADHD (Capodieci et al., 2025; Chan & Langberg, 2024). Additionally, the study highlights how cultural beliefs in Thailand, particularly respect for authority and persistence through adversity, may interact with self-regulation processes. While cultural pressures can sometimes induce shame or stigma, they can also foster resilience when reframed as collective support (Köder et al., 2022; Miranda et al., 2021).

The third theme, adaptive coping and resilience-building, reveals how participants transform vulnerability into sustainable functioning. Strategic task management—breaking tasks into micro-goals, scheduling around energy peaks, and prioritizing—closely mirrors behavioral activation and time-management training recommended for ADHD (Afshadi et al., 2023; Barkley & Benton, 2024a). Emotional resilience, including the ability to bounce back after setbacks and tolerate stress, connects with research showing that targeted interventions in emotion regulation reduce functional impairment (Barkley & Benton, 2024b; Takamatsu et al., 2024). Experiential learning through trial and error also resonates with adaptive self-experimentation models, where individuals test and refine personalized strategies until sustainable routines emerge (Ogrodnik et al., 2023). Mind–body regulation practices—such as mindfulness, exercise, and sleep hygiene—reported by participants are consistent with evidence that physiological self-regulation supports attention control and reduces impulsivity (Hardjasasmita et al., 2023; Pheh et al., 2021). Interestingly, many participants reframed ADHD-related reward sensitivity as a strength by gamifying tasks and designing immediate incentives; this reflects an innovative adaptation supported by theoretical work on optimizing reinforcement schedules for ADHD (Gabrieli-Seri et al., 2022; Wu et al., 2022).

These findings add nuance to existing models by showing that motivational persistence in ADHD is neither purely neurobiological nor solely externally imposed; it emerges from a dynamic interplay between internal self-motivation and external contextual scaffolds. They also underscore the importance of cultural and environmental fit. While most research on ADHD motivation is grounded in Western, individualistic frameworks, our participants illustrated collectivistic and culturally embedded motivational systems, such as linking success to family honor and using hierarchical respect to maintain discipline (Miranda et al., 2021; Noureddine et al., 2024). This cultural grounding enriches global conceptualizations of ADHD self-regulation and suggests that interventions must be adapted to local sociocultural contexts.

Another key contribution of this study lies in its focus on self-constructed resilience strategies. While digital cognitive training and tele-assessment programs have been studied as formal interventions (Capodieci et al., 2025; Robledo-Castro et al., 2022; Trinczer & Shalev, 2024), participants demonstrated organic use of technology—such as productivity apps, digital reminders, and self-designed reward systems—to maintain engagement. This reflects a pragmatic integration of technology, counterbalancing the risk of digital distractions like gaming and social media (Noureddine et al., 2024; Shuai et al., 2021). Moreover, our participants' strategies go beyond symptom management, pointing to an emerging narrative of self-efficacy and neurodiverse identity acceptance. Such acceptance parallels research advocating for strength-based models of ADHD that emphasize adaptive potential rather than deficit frameworks (Carreiro et al., 2023; Miranda et al., 2020).

Clinically, the findings reinforce the critical role of emotion regulation training and future-self scaffolding in therapeutic contexts. Our participants' narratives confirm that helping individuals anticipate delayed rewards, visualize future selves, and reframe failure fosters persistence (Afshadi et al., 2023; Gabrieli-Seri et al., 2022). Interventions could integrate cognitive-behavioral strategies with culturally appropriate motivational anchors, such as family-based support systems and socially meaningful goals (Chan & Langberg, 2024; Noureddine et al., 2024). Additionally, adaptive technology use should be deliberately taught rather than assumed; without guidance, individuals may be vulnerable to the very distractibility digital tools can exacerbate (Shuai et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2022).

Finally, the emphasis on self-compassion and acceptance marks an important psychological dimension. Participants who shifted from self-blame to acceptance reported increased emotional space to persist, echoing emerging therapeutic frameworks that integrate self-compassion into ADHD interventions (Barkley & Benton, 2024b; Miranda et al., 2021). This finding calls for therapeutic paradigms that normalize neurodiversity and validate lived struggles while promoting resilience.

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E-ISSN: 3041-8518

5. Limitations & Suggestions

While this study provides rich insights into the motivational architecture underlying persistence in ADHD, several limitations should be considered. First, the sample size, though adequate for qualitative saturation, was limited to 25 participants from Thailand, potentially constraining the transferability of findings to other sociocultural contexts. The reliance on self-report interviews may have introduced recall bias or selective disclosure, as participants could underreport socially undesirable coping mechanisms or overemphasize strategies perceived as adaptive. Additionally, the study did not systematically stratify participants by ADHD presentation (predominantly inattentive, hyperactive-impulsive, or combined), which might influence motivational patterns (Carreiro et al., 2023; Miranda et al., 2020). Furthermore, while cultural insights emerged organically, a more explicit cross-cultural comparative design would strengthen the generalizability of culturally embedded motivational constructs. Finally, although digital tools were frequently mentioned, this study did not objectively examine their effectiveness, and participants' accounts may not reflect actual performance outcomes.

Future studies should expand on these findings by integrating mixed-methods approaches to validate qualitative themes quantitatively and explore their predictive power for functional outcomes such as academic achievement, occupational success, and well-being. Comparative cross-cultural research is warranted to determine how motivational persistence operates across societies with varying individualistic and collectivistic orientations. Longitudinal designs could examine how motivational strategies evolve across developmental transitions—from adolescence into adulthood or from university to the workforce—and how they interact with life events. Investigating ADHD subtypes and comorbidities, such as anxiety or depression, may also clarify whether certain motivational strategies are more effective for specific profiles (Chan & Langberg, 2024; Makkar, 2025). Moreover, future studies could explore how technological interventions and self-designed digital tools align with or diverge from formal cognitive training programs, offering user-driven insights for digital therapeutics.

In clinical and educational practice, it is essential to move beyond symptom suppression toward empowering self-directed persistence. Clinicians should incorporate goal ownership, future-self visualization, and emotional self-monitoring into therapy, fostering adaptive motivational systems. Psychoeducation for families can leverage collectivistic values positively by turning social expectations into supportive accountability rather than stigma. Occupational and academic support services should integrate structured environmental scaffolding, flexible task management tools, and technology coaching. Finally, cultivating self-compassion in ADHD interventions can help individuals reduce shame, embrace neurodiversity, and sustain motivation across life domains.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to all those who cooperated in carrying out this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

Funding

This research was carried out independently with personal funding and without the financial support of any governmental or private institution or organization.

Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed in this article.

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JARAC Assessment and Research in Applied Counseling
E-ISSN: 3041-8518