



Mindfulness in Basic Education: A Systematic Review Enhancing Learning Focus (2021–2026)

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Abstract

This study conducted a systematic review to examine the role of self-awareness in increasing learning focus and its contribution to strengthening student independence in elementary school. A total of 12 scientific articles published in the 2021–2026 range were comprehensively analyzed. The results of the study show three main mechanisms that make self-awareness-based mindfulness a key intervention. First, self-awareness plays a role in improving the executive function of the brain, including attention control, inhibition of impulsive responses, and cognitive flexibility, which are neurocognitive prerequisites for learning focus. Second, self-awareness provides practical strategies for managing anxiety and stress that can interfere with concentration, while also improving students' emotional awareness. Third, self-awareness supports the formation of school culture and teacher practices that create a supportive learning ecosystem. Advanced synthesis analysis showed that the reinforcement of self-control acted as a mediator explaining the indirect relationship between self-awareness and increased learning focus. Based on these findings, this study recommends the systematic integration of self-awareness practices through reflective activities, simple mindfulness exercises, and emotionally responsive learning strategies in the curriculum and training of elementary school teachers to support academic development, especially in improving learning focus.

Keywords: Mindfulness, focus learning, Basic education, Self-Regulation

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INTRODUCTION | مقدمة

Basic Education Placing a focus on learning as an important foundation for cognitive development and student engagement in the learning process. In primary education, the success of the learning process in elementary school is the result of the interaction of various factors, such as the quality of teachers, the right curriculum, effective learning methods, and a supportive learning environment. Students' psychological and emotional factors also play an important role in creating optimal learning concentration (Suhartono et al., 2024). However, the phenomenon of declining students' ability to focus and pay attention has become a critical issue in modern education. High academic demands, accompanied by passive distractions from digital technology and social media, have the potential to cause symptoms of attention deficits, decreased learning achievement, and increased levels of stress and behavioral problems in elementary school students (Niman et al., 2021). These challenges are exacerbated by teachers' limited understanding of psychopedagogical approaches, narrow time allocation, and excessive pressure on academic achievement that neglects students' psychological well-being (Hartono et al., 2025). Therefore, a holistic approach is needed that not only pursues academic outcomes but also builds students' emotional balance and focus abilities.

One of the approaches that is considered relevant to answer this challenge is mindfulness, which is the practice of being fully aware of current experiences with an open, calm, and non-judgmental attitude (Pranata, 2021). In the context of education, mindfulness contributes to increasing self-regulation, managing emotions, and strengthening students' attention during the learning process (Krismayanti, 2024). Theoretically, mindfulness can be understood through the perspective of self-regulation, humanistic theory, and social-emotional learning, which together place self-awareness and emotional balance as important prerequisites for engagement and focus on learning (Kusumawati, 2024; Nasihudin et al., 2023; Sukmayasa et al., 2024). These three theories provide a strong conceptual basis for the role of mindfulness in improving learning focus.

Although previous systematic reviews such as (Phan et al., 2022) who said that Mindfulness in schools is effective in improving executive function and self-regulation and (Pickerell et al., 2023) said Mindfulness in school is effective in improving emotional regulation. Both have gathered strong evidence on the effectiveness of mindfulness in improving executive function and emotion regulation, both studies have not specifically investigated the mechanisms by which mindfulness contributes to increased focus on sustained attention learning in the context of formal learning in primary school. In addition, the explicit integration of mindfulness as a structured pedagogical strategy to support academic achievement is still rarely explored.

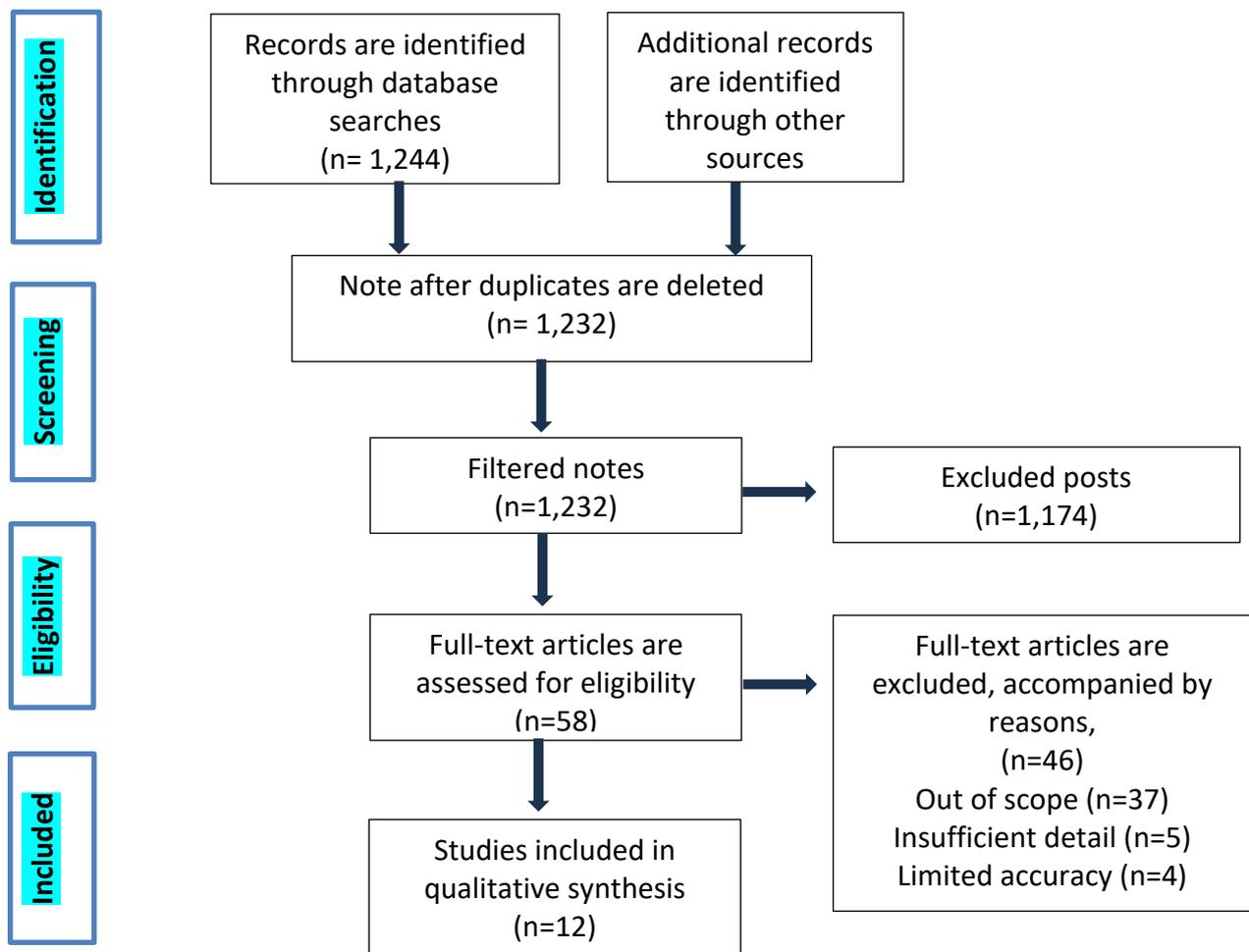
Based on the description above, this study aims to systematically review the results of research on the effectiveness of mindfulness in improving students' learning focus in primary education. Through this review, it is hoped that a comprehensive understanding of the role, contribution, and determining factors of the successful implementation of mindfulness in the context of elementary school learning will be obtained. The expected contribution of the research is to provide a conceptual and practical foundation for the development of learning models or strategies that integrate awareness to support the learning focus and social-emotional well-being of elementary school students in a balanced manner.

METHOD

منهج

The systematic review process in this study follows the guidelines of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA). The flow of article selection and screening is presented in the form of a PRISMA flowchart that describes the stages of identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of articles in a transparent manner which aims to synthesize evidence from various previous studies to answer research questions comprehensively (Zannurrain et al., 2024). Integration with bibliometric analysis aims to map the research landscape, detect publication trends, and visualize and measure relationships between concepts (Irawan & Purwasih, 2024). This approach is taken to provide a comprehensive and objective picture of the development of research on mindfulness in the context of primary education, particularly in relation to increased learning focus.

The systematic review process in this study follows the guidelines of Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA).



Before conducting the research process, it is important to formulate the research questions to be studied. The following is the formulation of the research studied:

1. RM1. What is the role of Mindfulness in improving focus on learning?
2. RM2. How Mindfulness contributes to strengthening students' *Self-Regulation* in Primary School

This research was carried out through five main stages of systematic literature review, as follows:

a. Keyword determination

Determination The key words used in this study are mindfulness in basic education and its role in increasing students' focus on learning. The purpose of this research is adjusted to the determination of keywords. The articles found are then selected, validated, and categorized before being systematically analyzed to support the preparation of relevant reviews.

b. Data search

Data searches were conducted on international publications from 2021 to 204, Literature searches were conducted systematically through Scopus, Publish or Perish, and Google Scholar databases with the keywords full attention, Basic Education, and Learning Focus.

c. Article selection

To guarantee the relevance of the literature to the research topic, articles are selected in stages according to inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria. Title screening, feasibility assessment through full-text reading based on inclusion and exclusion standards, and final determination of articles included in the analysis are all part of the selection process.

Here are the Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

Exclusion Criteria	Inclusions Criteria
Research that discusses <i>mindfulness</i> in the context of primary/basic education	Mindfulness research outside the context of elementary education in junior high school, high school, and college.
Focus on learning/attention, <i>ongoing attention</i> , and or <i>self-regulation</i>	Only discuss stress or mental health that is not related to study focus or self-regulation
Published in vulnerable years 2021 –2024	Published outside of the set time range
The article is relevant and in accordance with the formulation of the research problem	Duplicate or substantially irrelevant articles

d. Data validation

To ensure that the analyzed articles discuss the application of mindfulness in primary education students and findings on improved learning focus, data validation is carried out through thorough text reading, quality assessment of research methods, and cross-examination between researchers, also known as peer checking, to reduce bias and ensure consistent interpretation of data.

e. Analysis of results.

The findings of each article that have passed the selection and validation stage are thoroughly examined to analyze the results. The focus of the analysis is how mindfulness is applied, how it affects students' learning focus, and the factors that affect the success of the intervention. The results of the analysis are presented in thematic findings that show the role of mindfulness in improving students' focus on learning in elementary school.

RESULT | نتائج

Based on the Scopus database, previous research using the keywords Focus on basic education and Mindfulness learning used by current and previous researchers is as seen in the following figure:



A bibliometric analysis of the international literature (Scopus database, analyzed October 1, 2025) reinforces the relevance of this topic. Research on mindfulness in primary education has grown rapidly globally (Spain, Hungary, Brazil, Greece, etc.) with a focus on terms such as Primary School, Self-regulation, Self-control, and Mindfulness Training (Bereczki et al., 2024) . The research network also showed a close relationship between Mindfulness and social-emotional learning and Students' Mental Health (McLeod & Boyes, 2021). signifies a thematic shift from mere stress management to a more holistic learning framework. The dominance of publications in the 2021-2026 period shows that this topic is still very actual and constantly evolving.

However, an in-depth review of the literature reveals some shortcomings (research gaps). Although many international studies highlight the benefits of mindfulness for mental health and emotion regulation, there is still limited research that specifically examines their contribution to improving Focus on Learning (sustained attention) in the context of formal learning in primary school. In addition, explicit integration of attention as a pedagogical strategy to support academic achievement, is still rarely explored. This gap marks the need for research that specifically examines the mechanisms of mindfulness in strengthening students' academic focus and engagement.

The reviews in this article offer novelties in several aspects. First, in terms of analytical approach, this study combines a systematic review with VOSviewer bibliometric analysis to map the development of research and awareness in basic education comprehensively. Second, in terms of research focus, this study places mindfulness not just a psychological intervention, but as an integrated pedagogical approach to improve the focus of learning. Third, in terms of context, this study links global findings to actual challenges in Indonesia, such as focus disruption due to digital disruption and academic pressure, making it relevant for local policy and practice development.

By using Keywords: Mindfulness, Basic Education, and Learning Focus, search analyzes the article searched. The results showed that 12 journal articles were successfully identified and declared relevant to the research focus: Mindfulness in basic education systematic review of learning focus improvement.

Yes	Author/year	Quality/Country	Research and journal titles	Purpose
1.	(Evans-et al., 2021)	Q2/ Turkey	Spirituality and Mindfulness Practices of Early Childhood and Elementary Preservice Teachers: A Snapshot	To find out the role of mindfulness in improving the learning focus and self-awareness of elementary school students during the learning process.
2.	(Raffaele et al., 2021)	Q2/ United States	Social-Emotional Attention in School-Age Children: A Call for School-Based Interventions during COVID-19 and Distance Learning	To investigate the relationship between social-emotional attention and clinical variables (mood, social stress) that may inhibit children's learning focus in the context of learning
3.	(McLeod & Boyes, 2021)	Q3/ Canada	Effectiveness of Social-Emotional Learning Strategies and Mindful Breathing with Biofeedback on Adolescent Test Anxiety Reduction	To test the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions in reducing exam anxiety and improving academic performance, and to look at their impact on their self-efficacy and emotion regulation.
4.	(Pickerell et al., 2023)	Q1/ UK	The Effectiveness of School-Based Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavior Programs to Improve Emotional Regulation in Children Aged	To know which one is more effective – CBT or Mindfulness and in what aspects of emotion regulation, especially for children of primary school age (7-12 years old), so that schools can choose the

			7–12 Years: A Systematic Review and MetaAnalysis	right intervention based on the goals they want to achieve.
5.	(Andreu et al., 2023)	Q1/ Spanish	Effectiveness of school awareness-based interventions on neural correlation of inhibitory control in at-risk children: Randomized control trials	To prove that school-based mindfulness interventions can be an effective and practical tool to improve the cognitive skills and self-regulation of elementary school students. Ultimately, this will support students' learning focus, behavior, and academic readiness.
6.	(Bío-bío et al., 2022)	Q3/ United States (Chile)	The Effectiveness of Mindfulness-Based Intervention Programs for Self-Regulating Care in Elementary School Children	Testing the effectiveness of mindfulness-based intervention programs in improving attention self-regulation skills in grade 3 elementary school children (ages 8-9 years).
7.	(Zisopoulou & Varvogli, 2023)	Q1/ Greece	Stress Management Methods in Children and Adolescents: Past, Present, and Future	To demonstrate how mindfulness practices can train children's self-regulation skills, which also play a role in improving learning focus, stress resilience, and academic outcomes in school.
8.	(Milaré et al., 2021)	Question 2/ Brazil	Mindfulness-Based Story-Based Reading Interventions Versus Stories in Public Elementary Schools: Effects on Executive Function and Emotional Health	To find out how mindfulness has been shown to significantly improve the executive function of elementary school students, especially in the focus of teaching and self-regulation in an academic context.
9.	(Portele & Jansen, 2023)	Q1/ Germany	The Effects of Mindfulness-Based Training in Primary Schools in Germany	To find out how mindfulness training impacts five aspects in elementary school students: emotion regulation, inhibition, physical self-concept, resources, and connection with nature.
10	(Phan et al., 2022)	Q1/ United States	Mindfulness-Based School Interventions: A Systematic Review of the Quality of Evidence Outcomes by Study Design	to evaluate and assess the quality of the scientific evidence on how effective school-based mindfulness interventions (MBSIs) are in improving a range of outcomes in children and adolescents, including learning focus and self-regulation skills.
11	(Diéguez et al., 2024)	Q1/ Spanish	Executive Function Training through Mindfulness-Based Neuroeducation Program for Elementary School Students	To determine whether a self-awareness training program in elementary school can improve students' executive abilities which are an important part of self-regulation and focus learning.
12	(Henriksen & Gruber, 2024)	Q2/ United States	School-wide attention: addressing the learning and social-emotional well-being of elementary school students	Assess the influence of systemic self-awareness programs in elementary schools on students' self-awareness, learning focus, and self-regulation, as well as understand the relationship between the three in supporting academic and social-emotional well-being.

To ensure the validity and strength of the findings, this study conducted a quality analysis of the primary study on articles that passed the inclusion stage. Quality assessment was carried out using adjusted methodological evaluation criteria from the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) and bias risk assessment guidelines in educational research. Aspects assessed

included: clarity of research objectives, suitability of research design, characteristics and sample size, clarity of mindfulness intervention procedures, reliability of learning focus or self-regulation measurement instruments, and transparency of outcome reporting. Each article is classified into high, medium, or low-quality categories, and only articles of adequate methodological quality are used in the synthesis of results.

DISCUSSION

مناقشة

RM1. What is the role of Mindfulness in improving focus on learning?

A synthesis of the literature shows that mindfulness plays a role in improving the learning focus of elementary school students through layered mechanisms involving attentional, cognitive, and emotional aspects. Mindfulness does not work as a direct focus enhancer, but rather creates internal conditions that allow attention to be directed and maintained more stably during learning activities. The role of mindfulness in improving the learning focus of elementary school students is indirect and mediated by strengthening students' neurocognitive and psychological capacity. A synthesis of the literature suggests that this mechanism is in line with the findings of a global systematic review, such as (Phan et al., 2022), which concludes that Mindfulness-Based School Interventions (MBSIs) consistently contribute to improved executive function as an important foundation for engagement and focus on learning. However, in contrast to some global SLRs that place psychological well-being as the main output, this study specifically positions the focus of learning as a central variable in the context of basic education. This comparison shows that mindfulness is not only relevant as a well-being intervention, but also as a pedagogical approach that has a direct impact on the quality of the learning process.

Through two interconnected pathways, namely the neuron-cognitive pathway and the behavioral regulation pathway. In the neuron-cognitive pathway, the practice of deliberately focusing attention on current sensations, such as breath or sound, has been shown to train brain circuits that play a role in attention control and the ability to maintain focus on a single learning object (Bío-bío et al., 2022). In addition, mindfulness contributes to strengthening *Inhibitory Control*, which is the ability to resist impulsive responses and ignore distractions, as shown in research (Portele & Jansen, 2023). These findings are reinforced by a neuroeducational study that reported a significant improvement in aspects of executive function following the implementation of mindfulness-based programs in elementary schools (Diéguez et al., 2024).

Mindfulness creates internal conditions conducive to focus by managing the emotional barriers that often mess it up. Learning focus is particularly vulnerable to hijacking by negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration, or anxiety. (Raffaele et al., 2021) underscore the critical relationship between social-emotional attention and clinical variables such as mood and stress that can interfere with a child's focus, especially in challenging learning contexts. This is where mindfulness plays an important role as an emotion regulator. By practicing mindfulness of thoughts and feelings without judgment, children learn to recognize emotional turmoil early on. (Pickerell et al., 2023) In its systematic review, it was confirmed that mindfulness interventions were effective in improving emotional regulation in children aged 7-12 years. Furthermore, mindfulness provides a practical self-calming strategy, such as deep breathing, that can be used immediately when emotions are at their peak. Other researchers have also proven the effectiveness of mindfulness-based breathing techniques in reducing exam anxiety (McLeod & Boyes, 2021).

Integratively, The ability to "think about thinking" or "be aware of one's own attention", which is part of metacognitive awareness, can be achieved through the merging of these two pathways. This indicates the development of ability. Daily practice helps students stay focused as their attention moves. As explained (Zisopoulou & Varvogli, 2023), this awareness allows for proactive intervention. Students can use the methods they have learned to improve themselves before concentration is completely lost. One is to restore focus to breathing after loss or loss of focus.

Therefore, from a systemic perspective, research shows that the effectiveness of mindfulness in improving learning focus becomes more optimal when applied as part of a holistic school approach. (Henriksen & Gruber, 2024) emphasizes that the integration of mindfulness in the classroom routine and school culture supports student engagement on an ongoing basis. These findings reinforce the conclusion (Phan et al., 2022) that school-based mindfulness interventions have great potential to improve the quality of the learning process, as long as they are implemented consistently.

RM2. How does Mindfulness contribute to strengthening students' *Self-Regulation* in Elementary School?

Based on the results of several articles that have been researched, Mindfulness has been proven to have a contribution to strengthening Elementary School Students' Self-Regulation. First, mindfulness trains the brain to be more focused and controlled. Mindfulness programs in schools have been shown to help children develop "mental muscles" such as the ability to resist impulses *Inhibition Control*, remember Work Memory information, and think flexibly (Andreu et al., 2023; Diéguez et al., 2024). For example, research from Andrew and Dieguez shows that after participating in mindfulness exercises, students get better at tasks that require concentration and hold automatic responses. These basic cognitive skills are very important so that children can pay attention to lessons, not react immediately when disturbed, and try other ways when they have learning difficulties (Phan et al., 2022).

Mindfulness teaches children to understand and manage their feelings. Through simple practices such as observing breath or body sensations, students learn to recognize emotions such as upset, disappointment, or anxiety without being directly carried away by them. They are also taught practical strategies, such as deep breathing, to calm down when emotions peak (McLeod & Boyes, 2021). Research review confirms that mindfulness interventions are effective in improving children's emotional awareness, especially at the age of 10-12 years (Pickerell et al., 2023). And according to (Bío-bío et al., 2022), children are better able to control their reactions and choose calmer responses when faced with difficult situations (Bío-bío et al., 2022).

Furthermore, mindfulness contributes to the development of metacognitive awareness, which is the ability of students to be aware of their own state of attention and make adjustments proactively. (Zisopoulou & Varvogli, 2023) explains that this awareness allows students to use strategies that have been learned, such as turning attention back to the breath when concentration begins to decline. However, research (Milaré et al., 2021) suggests that strengthening self-regulation through mindfulness is contextual and depends on the sustainability of practice and affirms that the benefits of self-regulation can be weakened if mindfulness is not consistently integrated into the curriculum and school environment.

The role of teachers and the school atmosphere strongly support this process. In addition, teachers' readiness and self-awareness are also key factors in the effectiveness of mindfulness interventions in the classroom. Research (Evans-et al., 2021) It shows that the practice of

mindfulness in aspiring primary school teachers contributes to increased self-awareness and emotional calmness of educators, which in turn is reflected in a classroom climate that is more conducive to students' focus and self-regulation. The ability to regulate does not grow on its own, but develops with the help of the adults around the child. When teachers practice mindfulness, for example, by remaining calm and attentive in the face of commotion in class, they provide a real example of self-control that students can imitate (Barata-Gonçalves et al., 2024). When the values of mindfulness are applied throughout the school, a safe and supportive classroom culture is created. In this environment, children feel free to admit if they are upset, ask for a moment to calm down, and try the strategies they learned without fear of punishment (Henriksen & Gruber, 2024).

When compared to the global systematic review, these findings show both conformity and difference in emphasis. Phan et al. (2022) report that *Mindfulness-Based School Interventions* In general, it is effective in improving self-regulation and executive function of children and adolescents, but the global study tends to treat self-regulation as a general psychosocial output without distinguishing between the context of education and the dynamics of learning in the classroom. Different from this approach, the synthesis in this study places self-regulation as a psychological capacity that develops contextually in elementary school learning, and is strongly influenced by the sustainability of practice and institutional integration. This comparison shows that the effectiveness of mindfulness is not universal, but rather depends on the design of the intervention, the context of the school, and the support of the learning environment.

This method works together. Mindfulness practice strengthens a person's ability to focus and refrain from self-control. At the same time, Mindfulness also trains the heart to become calmer and understand feelings. These two abilities from within the child are then supported by the school environment that provides examples and opportunities to practice. Thus, mindfulness helps elementary school students build self-mastery *Self-regulation* from various sides, which ultimately supports their readiness to learn and socialize better.

CONCLUSSION

خاتمة

Based on An in-depth analysis of the literature, this study identified an integrated conceptual mechanism that explains how self-awareness helps elementary school students become more focused in their learning. The results show that learning focus is not directly influenced by conscious awareness, but through a mediated pathway of self-regulation that includes emotion regulation, inhibition control, and metacognitive awareness. By helping students consciously recognize and manage their emotional responses, conscious awareness builds a neurocognitive foundation that allows for impulse control, cognitive flexibility, and maintenance of attention during the learning process.

Kontribusi The main theoretical focus of this research lies in the mediating structure of self-regulation, which connects the focus of basic education and self-awareness, is the main theoretical focus of this research. Previous studies have typically reported descriptively on how effective mindfulness interventions were, but this review used self-regulation as the primary explanatory mechanism rather than an outside source. Therefore, this study no longer asks whether mindfulness is effective. Instead, they asked about how mindfulness affects students' learning focus. While its contribution practically shows that mindfulness needs to be applied systematically and sustainably in elementary schools, in particular by incorporating exercises to control emotions, control desires, and mindfulness reflection into the classroom routine. More

specific recommendations include conducting breathing exercises before core lessons, thinking about mindfulness after learning activities, and increasing the role of teachers in helping students self-regulate. Self-awareness as a mechanism-based pedagogical strategy can be used in this way. This method directly increases students' academic engagement and their focus on learning.

In an in-depth analysis of the literature, this study found that the existence of interrelated mechanisms helps elementary school students become more independent. self-awareness helps children control their emotions by teaching them techniques to calm themselves down and reduce emotional barriers; This creates the cognitive foundation for self-control, including the ability to resist inhibitory control impulses, maintain focus, and think flexibly. As well as strengthening self-control as the main way to explain how self-awareness contributes to improving students' learning focus. In other words, self-awareness contributes to an increased focus on learning indirectly and is mediated by the ability to improve their ability to control themselves in all cognitive, emotional, and social aspects. These results change the view from simply showing that the intervention works well to understanding the mechanisms. These findings provide a solid foundation for schools to apply self-awareness as a systematic pedagogical element that is important to support students' academic and social-emotional development.

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