

**A qualitative study of urban primary school teachers'
perceptions and experiences of Attention Deficit
Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in the classroom in
KwaZulu-Natal.**

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Declaration: I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology (HPS1) degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

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ABSTRACT

The current qualitative study extends previous research and fills the contextual gap by conducting semi-structured interviews of KwaZulu-Natal, urban primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of ADHD in the classroom which was followed by a thematic analysis of the data collected. Three female primary school teachers from an urban context comprised the sample. Findings revealed that the teachers each had a thorough understanding of ADHD and were at most times able to exert their perceived control, as a result of their experience and knowledge, in a manner that created a positive classroom environment which in turn influenced their perceptions and experiences of ADHD to be positive. The findings further indicated that the teachers felt equipped in most cases due to their experiences with ADHD learners over the years, their personal experiences as well as their own efforts to broaden their knowledge of ADHD by attending external seminars. However, they each indicated this could be improved by receiving training programs from their schools. The findings of this study may encourage further research within different urban contexts of KZN and may further encourage schools to implement compulsory training programs associated with ADHD.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Contextualisation

Teachers are required to assist learners within the classroom when they have problems linked to mental health such as emotional, behavioural or social issues (Rothi et al., 2007). This therefore requires teachers to identify when a learner within the classroom is experiencing mental health issues and to assist them in gaining the support that they need, therefore highlighting the importance of mental health literacy (MHL) amongst teachers (Ballossini, 2019; Rothi et al., 2007). MHL is the beliefs and awareness of mental illness which assist in identifying, managing and intervening through methods of prevention (Jorm et al., 1997 as cited in Vovou et al., 2020). Furthermore, the South African Council for Educators mentions teachers' responsibility in providing learners with an environment that promotes their general well-being (South African Council for Educators, 2020) and the National Policy Framework highlights the need for the skill enhancement of teachers (South African Department of Education, 2006) which may aid in their MHL.

1.2. Rationale

On a global scale, teachers feel the need to attend training programs in order to have the adequate skills in assisting their learners who experience mental health problems within the classroom (Lopes et al., 2009; Rothi et al., 2007). This highlights their lack of knowledge in dealing with mental health issues such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and the possible lack of understanding of their perceptions of mental health within the classroom (Ballossini, 2019; Rothi et al., 2007). This inadequacy of preparation can be identified across international studies (Abed & Shackelford, 2020; Frauenholtz et al., 2017; Greenway & Edwards, 2020; Kratt, 2018; Lawrence et al., 2017; Shelemy et al., 2019) which are similar to South African studies (Kern et al., 2015; Leavett, 2018; Naidoo, 2019; Sikotane, 2016) in that they highlight the lack of training that teachers receive, which is a problem in the field of psychology as to how teachers perceive mental health in the classroom. A reduced MHL may result in teachers to misperceive ADHD and therefore interact

with the learner in a manner that does not support their wellbeing and changes the way in which the teacher experiences the learner within the classroom too (Ballossini, 2019). It is, therefore, important to gain an in depth understanding of primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of ADHD in different social contexts.

The research is therefore relevant in order to gain an in-depth understanding of South African, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) urban primary school teachers' particular perceptions and experiences of ADHD, in the classroom and the extent to which they feel equipped to assist learners within their classroom who experience this disorder. This may add to the existing body of knowledge by bridging the contextual gap in KZN and therefore assist teachers within society to understand the importance of their perceptions of mental health, how what they perceive may impact the way in which they interact with the learners, and the importance of their MHL in assisting and understanding learners with ADHD in the classroom.

1.3. Problem Statement

A reduced MHL is a problem in the field of psychology as it may lead to misperceptions of ADHD and affects the way in which the teacher experiences and interacts with the learner in the classroom. While there is some South African research on this topic, there is a lack of literature on teachers' experiences and perceptions of ADHD in the urban context of KZN; and is therefore important for research to be carried out on the perceptions and experiences of primary school teachers, in the aforementioned context, to fill this gap.

1.4. Purpose Statement

The purpose of the research is to gain an in depth understanding of primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of ADHD, specifically within the urban context of KZN.

1.5. Research Questions

- How do urban primary school teachers in KZN perceive and experience ADHD?

- To what extent do primary school teachers in KZN feel equipped to assist learners with ADHD in the classroom?
- What do primary school teachers in KZN understand about learners with ADHD in the classroom?

1.6. Research Objectives

- To understand how primary school teachers in KZN perceive and experience ADHD.
- To understand the extent primary school teachers in KZN feel equipped to assist learners with ADHD in the classroom.
- To understand what primary school teachers in KZN understand about learners with ADHD in the classroom.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Conceptualisation

- **Mental Health Literacy (MHL):** MHL is the beliefs and awareness of mental illness which assist in identifying, managing and intervening through methods of prevention (Jorm et al., 1997 as cited in Vovou et al., 2020). MHL involves knowledge of preventing, identifying and being aware of when the development of a mental health disorder occurs as well as having the necessary skills to provide support to those who experience mental health issues (Jorm, 2012 as cited in Jorm, 2015). MHL can be increased through personal experiences (Berryman, 2019). For the purpose of this research, MHL will refer to teachers' perceptions and understanding of learners with ADHD in the classroom, their knowledge of the disorder and their ability to identify and support a learner with ADHD.
- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** Pattern of persistent inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity that hinders the development of an individual (American Psychiatric Association, 2013 as cited in Abed & Shackelford, 2020; Greenway & Edwards, 2019; Kindred, 2019). Six or more symptoms of inattention, hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour have to occur for a minimum

period of six months, across two social settings, before a child is twelve years old (Topkin et al., 2015). It is a behavioural disorder which often appears in childhood and at least one learner in a classroom within South Africa experiences this disorder (Naidoo, 2019). For the purpose of this research, ADHD will refer to the behaviour characteristic to ADHD that primary school learners display within the classroom, whether they are formally diagnosed with ADHD or just perceived as having ADHD according to their behaviour that they display.

- **Self-efficacy:** Refers to an individuals' perceived ability, competence (Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015) and confidence in performing a specific behaviour (Bandura, 1997; McAllister et al., 2007 as cited in Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015). It is one's perceived ability to exercise control over their surrounding environment (Bandura, 1997). For the purpose of this research, self-efficacy will refer to a teachers' ability to support primary school learners who may exhibit behaviours or formally be diagnosed with ADHD, within the environment of the classroom, as well as to intervene and identify learners with ADHD sufficiently and their confidence in their ability to do so.
- **Teacher:** An educator (Sikotane, 2016) who works in a school with the role and responsibility in providing children with instructions, allowing children to learn within the space of the classroom (Lawrence et al., 2017) and ensuring that the wellbeing of a learner is promoted by providing the learner with the necessary support when it is required (Lawrence et al., 2017; Sikotane, 2016). For the purpose of this research, a teacher will refer to a female primary school educator who has learners with ADHD or who learners exhibit behaviours characteristic to ADHD, within their classroom.
- **Learner:** A child who attends school (Lawrence et al., 2017) to learn to their optimal within the social setting of a classroom (Sikotane, 2016). For the purpose of this research, a learner will refer to a primary school child who may be formally diagnosed with ADHD or who may exhibit behaviours that are associated with the symptoms of ADHD.

2.2. Theoretical Foundation

The key theory which informed this research was Albert Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy involves the way an individual perceives their ability to have control over their environment and their ability to carry out effort to manage and deal with environmental circumstances or challenges. For example, a challenge to teachers in the context of this research would be learners who have or exhibit behaviour associated with ADHD.

The way a teacher perceives ADHD may influence the way in which they attempt to exercise control through their ability to assist the learner experiencing ADHD or exhibiting behaviours associated with ADHD. Therefore MHL and perceptions of ADHD may influence the way in which a teacher is able to exert control (Bandura, 1997) over the classroom environment, specifically over learners with ADHD and in turn their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) may influence how they interact with learners who experience ADHD issues within the classroom. Additionally, self-efficacy may determine whether an individual perseveres through these circumstances that they face, regardless of the restrictions they may experience (Bandura, 1997), which would be the disobedient behaviour of a child with ADHD, and how teachers utilise their knowledge to change the circumstances embedded within the environment in which they find themselves to be. The self-efficacy theory informed this research as it highlights teachers' self-efficacy by referring to the importance of teachers' experiences in their own self-efficacy and how this impacts the environment of the classroom (Bandura, 1997). By applying this theory to the research, it provided insight into the self-efficacy that teachers experience in dealing with ADHD (Ballossini, 2019), faced by their learners within the classroom, and in turn how their perceptions of ADHD influence their level of self-efficacy to assist these learners.

High self-efficacy may lead to an individual to believe in their ability to gain control over their environment and in turn produce change, whereas a low sense of self-efficacy may result in an individual avoiding their ability to produce a change or persevere through a challenge which they may experience (Bandura, 1997). For example, a teacher may perceive themselves as capable in supporting a learner with ADHD in the classroom if they have a high sense of self-efficacy whereas if a teacher has a low sense of self-efficacy, as a result of a lack of a reduced MHL, they

may perceive a learner with ADHD as a challenge and therefore fail to manage and support the learner within the classroom sufficiently which additionally influences the way in which they experience these learners in the classroom environment.

2.3. Critical Review of Literature

2.3.1. Mental Health Literacy (MHL)

MHL may be defined as an individuals' knowledge of mental illnesses which assists the individual to be able to recognise, combat or form strategies to manage the disorder (Jorm, 2015; Jorm et al., 1997 as cited in Vovou et al., 2020). A lack of MHL may result in the inability of the individual to identify or assist another who experiences mental health issues. It is therefore important that teachers have a sufficient MHL in order to identify learners who suffer from mental health issues, such as ADHD, and therefore interact with these learners in a manner that supports their wellbeing (Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015).

Teachers from international studies have highlighted their lack of knowledge with regards to mental health (Armstrong et al., 2019; Berryman, 2019; Frauenholtz et al., 2017; Kratt, 2018; Lawrence et al., 2017; Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015) and within the South African context, findings of various studies performed on South African teachers highlight the lack of MHL, especially with regards to ADHD, amongst teachers. Teachers appeared to have a limited understanding of ADHD within the South African context (Lopes et al., 2009; Naidoo, 2019; Sikotane, 2016). A past study performed in the Western Cape (Perold et al., 2010), one performed in Gauteng (Lopes et al., 2009) and one performed within the rural context of KZN (Naidoo, 2019) each highlight the lack of knowledge teachers had about ADHD. The lack of knowledge of ADHD that many South African teachers appeared to have in the past continues to be a problem in South Africa (Kern et al., 2015; Naidoo, 2019; Sikotane, 2016). This may be seen as problematic as the Department of Education (2001) stress the importance of inclusive education. It is problematic in the field of psychology as a reduced MHL may influence the way in which the teacher perceives ADHD to be and consequently the manner in which he or she interacts with the learner which may result in a lack of support for the learner with ADHD thereby going against the policy of inclusive education (Department of Education, 2001).

A study performed in the Western Cape (Leavett, 2018) mentions that teachers within the study had adequate knowledge of ADHD, incongruent to all of the aforementioned South African studies which highlight the inadequacy of knowledge experienced by the teachers (Kern et al., 2015; Naidoo, 2019; Sikotane, 2016). Teachers felt that they needed assistance in increasing their knowledge to be equipped with the correct information in order to be able to support learners who have ADHD, which speaks specifically to MHL in teachers (Sikotane, 2016), and others felt a lack of knowledge in their ability to identify the symptoms of ADHD as well as differentiating a child with ADHD from one who is disobedient (Naidoo, 2019) thus highlighting their need for an increased MHL. Therefore, the current status of South African teachers' MHL of ADHD seems to be inadequate hence why it is important to gain further information on teachers' most current experiences and perceptions of ADHD, specifically within the urban context of KZN, as there is a lack of literature based on this social context in KZN.

2.3.2. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in the Context of the Classroom

ADHD is a diagnosis that is common amongst children, presents itself before the age of twelve years (Kindred, 2019) and is often misunderstood or is diagnosed incorrectly (Lawrence et al., 2017; Seabi, 2010; Topkin & Roman, 2015). It is important to understand South African primary school teachers' experiences and perceptions of ADHD, specifically within the urban context of KZN, as primary school teachers interact with many learners and shape their environment (Topkin & Roman, 2015) and how teachers interact with or experience these learners is also influenced by the way in which they perceive ADHD to be. Furthermore, the reason for selecting ADHD specifically as a focus area for this study is because the prevalence of ADHD in South African classrooms is high (Leavett, 2018) and it is important to understand the experiences and perceptions that teachers have towards ADHD as they are in a position where identifying (Seabi, 2010) and supporting the learner with ADHD is crucial to the learners well-being.

According to Naidoo (2019), the symptoms of ADHD manifest in the learners' behaviour which is often observed by the teacher within the classroom. A learner who has ADHD may struggle to regulate their emotions (Harpin et al., 2016 as cited

in Leavett, 2018) and may find it difficult to focus on classwork which they are required to complete or to follow instructions which they are required to adhere to (Kindred, 2019; Naidoo, 2019). Additionally, the learner may act impulsively by talking persistently (Kindred, 2019; Naidoo, 2019) and may interrupt the teacher or another learner before they have finished their sentence thus appearing as rude and disruptive to the teacher instead of having ADHD (Kindred, 2019). A reduced MHL may be problematic in that it may influence the way in which a teacher perceives and experiences the behaviours exhibited by a learner who has ADHD in the classroom which is why training in ADHD for teachers is necessary to form a better understanding of ADHD.

2.3.3. Lack of Training

Recent international (Abed & Shackelford, 2020; Frauenholtz et al., 2017; Greenway & Edwards, 2019; Kratt, 2018; Lawrence et al., 2017; Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015; Tavaréz, 2020) and South African studies (Leavett, 2018; Naidoo, 2019; Perold et al., 2010; Sikotane, 2016) are congruent in that they highlight teachers' perceived lack of training and experience in ADHD which hinders their ability to support, understand and identify learners who have ADHD in the classroom. However, an American study by Tavaréz (2020) is inconsistent to the findings of previous studies as the teachers and sources within the study expressed the teachers' competence in being able to assist learners with mental health issues in the classroom, as a result of their sufficient training programs. The findings in this study may have been incongruent to the aforementioned studies due to the different method of data collection, which involved triangulation, where the researcher gained data from multiple stakeholders within the study (Tavaréz, 2020).

However, internationally as according to the literature, the majority of the teachers feel that their role requires greater responsibility identifying and supporting learners who experience mental health issues (Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015) and they perceive their knowledge to be insufficient as a result of a lack of training in mental health experience (Frauenholtz et al., 2017; Kratt, 2018; Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015). Current South African studies (Leavett, 2018; Naidoo, 2019; Sikotane, 2016) have similar findings to the aforementioned two studies in that teachers feel a need for training-based programs in order to feel sufficiently prepared with the correct skills to

assist ADHD learners in the classroom. However, few teachers have learnt strategies to deal with the behaviour of learners with ADHD and this is due to their own efforts to gain knowledge and not a result of implemented training programs within the schools (Lawrence et al., 2017). This poses a problem as many teachers are unable to attend training programs that are not a requirement by the schools and as a result of this teachers may have different perceptions towards learners with ADHD, due to their lack of knowledge, which may influence the way they experience these learners within the classroom (Greenway & Edwards, 2020).

It is therefore important that teachers' perceptions are not distorted so that they are able to provide ADHD learners with a supportive environment (Abed & Shackelford, 2020) and that sufficient training is accessed by teachers, in order to heighten their perceived self-efficacy (Mazzer & Rickwood, 2015), which contributes to their perceptions and experiences of children with ADHD. A lack of knowledge, as a result of insufficient training (Naidoo, 2019), may be problematic in the field of psychology as the teachers' subjective perceptions may subsequently influence the way in which they interact and experience a learner with ADHD in the classroom. It is therefore important that further research is carried out on primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of ADHD, specifically within the urban context of KZN, as there is a lack of research within this social context.

2.3.4. Teachers' Understanding, Experiences and Perceptions of ADHD in the Classroom

Teachers' interactions and experiences of learners with ADHD can often influence their perceptions and future interactions with learners who appear to have or who are formally diagnosed with ADHD (Lawrence et al., 2017). Additionally, the type of training related to ADHD, classroom experience as well as teachers subjective experiences of ADHD may contribute to how they perceive a learner with ADHD to be (Greenway & Edwards, 2020; Lawrence et al., 2017) as well as how the teacher perceives their self-efficacy in supporting a learner with ADHD (Leavett, 2018). It is therefore important that teachers have a good understanding of ADHD so that learners' feel supported within the classroom and so that the teachers perceive ADHD positively (Cuffe et al., 2015 as cited in Sikotane, 2016).

Many teachers from different social contexts, internationally and within the South African context, feel challenged when they describe their experiences of teaching children with ADHD and this highlights their lack of understanding of ADHD (Sikotane, 2016). Findings from a study on foundation phase teachers' perceptions of ADHD in the Gauteng province (Lopes et al., 2009), support the above mentioned finding in that teachers in this context appear to have a limited understanding of ADHD which informs their experiences and perceptions of the learners with ADHD (Kern et al., 2015). Additionally, teachers that participated in a study in the Western Cape expressed their feelings of frustration as a result of a lack of understanding thus having a low sense of perceived self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) which in turn influenced how they perceived the learners with ADHD in their classroom (Leavett, 2018).

Subsequently, due to a lack of understanding, teachers may perceive learners with ADHD negatively (Leavett, 2018; Sikotane, 2016). Sikotane (2016) supports this in his findings where teachers from rural schools in the Umtunzini circuit of KZN, reported their experiences of learners in their classroom with ADHD as negative. These perceptions often stem from the lack of knowledge and understanding of ADHD (Kern et al., 2015; Leavett, 2018; Naidoo, 2019). Due to this lack of knowledge, teachers often stigmatise ADHD (Kern et al., 2015; Leavett, 2018; Naidoo, 2019) by associating behaviour that is observed as disobedient, with what they perceive to be as symptoms of ADHD or they misperceive an ADHD learner as being insolent (Naidoo, 2019), without identifying that the learner perhaps has ADHD. For example, teachers label learners with ADHD as lazy (Sikotane, 2016), disruptive, irritating (Leavett, 2018) and perceive them as misbehaving which affects how they interact with the learner (Lawrence et al., 2017).

A misconception related to the academic performance of a learner with ADHD is that they perform poorly in academics (Naidoo, 2019). This is a problem as learners who may have ADHD and perform well in their academics may be perceived as disobedient by the teacher and may not receive the necessary support from the teacher. Therefore, a reduced MHL is a problem as it often leads to misperceptions of ADHD and affects the way in which the teacher experiences and interacts with the learner in the classroom. While there is some South African research on this topic,

there is a lack of literature on the urban context of KZN therefore it is important for research to be carried out on the perceptions and experiences of primary school teachers, in the aforementioned context, to fill this gap.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Paradigm

The most appropriate paradigm for this research study is the interpretivist paradigm. It is a paradigm that aims to gain a deeper understanding of an individual and the way in which the individual interprets their surrounding environment and the social phenomena within that environment, in order for their multiple created realities and experiences to be viewed and deeply understood through the interpretivist lens of the researcher (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Maree et al., 2020; Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Each individual experiences their own reality differently and from this it can be deduced that by gaining multiple perspectives of different realities, as experienced by each individual, the researcher is able to provide a meaningful understanding of the social phenomena as experienced by the individual (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

This paradigm is therefore relevant to the research as the research aimed to study teachers within their social contexts, that being the classroom, to gain an in-depth understanding as to how they each subjectively experience mental health issues such as ADHD faced by learners and how they make sense of their surroundings, which would involve learners, through their social role of being a teacher. The paradigm informed the study to be a phenomenological study that is qualitative in nature, as the knowledge assisted the researcher in gaining a deeper and meaningful understanding of the social world through the perceptions of the individuals experiencing the situation (Maree et al., 2020). Epistemology refers to the details of the social phenomena as subjectively experienced and described by the individual whose reality is shaped by their perceptions and the meaning they make of the social phenomena (Maree et al., 2020). The epistemological position involved the researcher using the knowledge teachers have of the social phenomena around them, by gaining a deeper insight from perspectives and experiences of teachers, in this case, perspectives based on their understanding of learners with ADHD within their classroom and how well they perceive ADHD in order to assist learners who

experience this disorder. The research provided a deeper understanding as to how teachers make sense of their subjective experiences of ADHD within the classroom and the meaning that the individual makes of the context (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017) that they perceive and experience through the behaviour of their learners.

The teacher was the insider by expressing how he or she feels about ADHD within the classroom and as the researcher who values symbolism, an in-depth understanding of KZN, urban primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of ADHD in the classroom was gained. The deeper understanding of their experiences and perceptions was utilised to gain a broader and in depth perspective about what teachers understand about ADHD (Ballossini, 2019), in the urban context of KZN, as well as the meaning that they make of these realities of ADHD that they experience and perceive through symbolic interactions with the learners in the classroom. As the researcher, the ontological position to stand with is idealism which states that one may be aware of their perceived reality as a result of their own thoughts shaped by various experiences that they formulate by constructing their own meanings, as a result of social interactions and how they hold these meanings and symbols within their mind (Maree et al., 2020). Social reality (Maree et al., 2020) is constructed by multiple perspectives of different people which is why the researcher interviewed different teachers in order to act as an observer of their direct, multiple experiences and gain a deeper understanding as to how they construct their own meaning of ADHD, within the classroom, as a result of their multiply perceived social interactions with learners who have ADHD.

As a researcher one values theoretically rich information and subjective experiences to better phenomena within society and gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena (Maree et al., 2020). Multiple perspectives and subjectivity is valued which were obtained from the teachers as they were potential aiders in bettering the existing body of knowledge of MHL of ADHD within the classroom. The research provided deeper insight into the way teachers make sense of ADHD within the classroom, experienced by their learners, that they may encounter and how their realities are reconstructed as a result of their subjective experiences and perceived reality which is moulded by their interactions with the learners and shapes how they experience these learners and in turn how they perceive ADHD in the classroom.

3.2. Research Design and Approach

A qualitative research strategy was used to address the research purpose and objectives of the study. A qualitative research approach focuses on social settings where interaction occurs and how the individuals of these contexts create meaning within these contexts, through their symbolic interactions, that shape the way in which they perceive the social phenomena within the context that they are situated within (Maree et al., 2020).

Therefore, a qualitative research strategy was best suited to address the research purpose and objectives, as the purpose of the research was to gain an in-depth understanding as to how urban primary school teachers, in KZN, perceive and experience ADHD in the classroom. Thus, the classroom is viewed as the social, naturalistic setting in which the teachers interact with the learners and through these symbolic interactions, how the teachers make meaning of their interactions and the way in which these social interactions, with learners who have ADHD, shape their experiences and perceptions of ADHD.

Additionally, the research topic was approached inductively, where the researcher gained an in depth, overall, common understanding and knowledge of teachers' individual experiences and perceptions of learners with ADHD within the classroom. A descriptive, phenomenological, cross-sectional research design was used in which all the teachers' experiences and perceptions, that were common in the study, of ADHD were deeply understood at one point in time of the study and described as to how they each perceive and experience ADHD as a result of their lived, shared experience of learners who have ADHD within their classroom.

3.3. Population

The population of the study consisted of South African female primary school teachers within the urban context of KZN, who have learners with ADHD or who display behaviour characteristic to ADHD, in their classroom.

3.4. Sampling Method

The unit of analysis includes individual female teachers within KZN, South Africa who have learners with ADHD or who display behaviours characteristic to ADHD. Furthermore, the sample for the study consisted of three teachers from urban primary schools within KZN. According to Maree et al (2020), non-probability purposive sampling is a qualitative sampling method where the participants for the research study are selected by means of particular inclusion criteria or due to various qualities possessed by the participant (Etikan et al., 2016) that are determined before the sample is gathered (Patton, 2002 as cited in Maree et al., 2020). When using non-probability sampling, the researcher utilises methods of subjectivity to select the various constituents that form the sample and purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants that the researcher believes will provide theoretically, rich information pertaining to the purpose of the study (Etikan et al., 2016).

The sampling method that was used for the research was the non-probability, purposive sampling method. This sampling method was used as it included particular inclusion criteria where the participants were required to be female primary school teachers, who have learners with ADHD within their classroom or that they perceive to display behaviour that is characteristic to ADHD, within an urban setting of KZN. The reason for choosing purposive sampling was because the researcher personally knew teachers from primary schools, within the urban context of KZN who each were, on the assumption of the researcher, able to provide a deeper understanding of the research problem with regards to the context of this research. Moreover, the researcher purposely selected individual teachers who were easy to contact and the researcher ensured that each teacher either teaches learners with ADHD or learners who display behaviour that is characteristic to ADHD. Each teacher was selected by means of purposive sampling and was recruited to form the sample so that the data that emerged could provide a deep understanding of the teachers' perceptions and experiences of learners with ADHD in the classroom.

Three participants were recruited for the purpose of the research study. The reason as to why a sample size of three participants were selected is because the study is qualitative in nature and according to Vasileiou et al (2018), small sample sizes are often used within

qualitative research studies as the researcher is able to obtain a deep and meaningful understanding from the experiences of fewer participants, which is more important than having a greater number of perceptions' of participants, based on the same phenomena. The researcher was able to gain better insight into the deep, meaningful experiences of each participant and three female primary school teachers were sufficient to get a deep and meaningful understanding of their unique perceptions and experiences of ADHD learners within their classroom.

A message was sent out to each participant that the researcher had in mind to see if they were interested in the study and if they taught learners with ADHD or learners who they may have perceived to display behaviours characteristic to ADHD. The researcher broke down what was expected from the potential participant in the message and each primary school teacher who met the aforementioned criteria, who agreed to participate in the study, were kindly requested to each provide the researcher with their email address so that the researcher was able to communicate the details of the research study through an email. The researcher confirmed a suitable date via messenger, for each participant, in order for the semi-structured interviews to take place individually as per each confirmed time and date.

Subsequently, each participant was sent an email with a briefing of what the study was going to entail and an additional document was attached to gain the participants' informed consent to participate in the study. The attached document that was sent in each individual email instructed each teacher to sign the two forms of consent (see appendix A) in agreement to participate in the study and then each teacher were requested in the email to scan the signed documents and email them back to the researcher prior to the video call meeting.

3.5. Data Collection Methods

Qualitative data collection is a recurring process (Maree et al., 2020) and it involves methods that are qualitative in nature, such as interviews, which allow the researcher to gain deeper, detailed insight of the social phenomena under study, as experienced by the participants of the research (Gill et al., 2008). Furthermore, different types of interviews include structured interviews, semi-structured interviews as well as unstructured interviews

(Gill et al., 2008; Maree et al., 2020) and for the research that was conducted, the researcher utilised a semi-structured interview.

A qualitative, semi-structured interview consists of open-ended questions which the researcher initially asks by following an interview schedule in order to guide the interview and as the participants provide their answers, there is a space of flexibility (Gill et al., 2008) where further questions are probed by the researcher. According to Arsel (2017), probing allows an interviewer to obtain additional information from an interviewee whilst simultaneously allowing the interviewee to be autonomous by the way in which they express themselves and by allowing autonomy through a semi-structured interview, enables the researcher to gain deep and meaningful data that is able to support the research objectives that are associated with the social phenomena that the researcher is studying (Gill et al., 2008).

Elaboration probing involves the researcher asking the participant to tell them additional information about what they have mentioned in their answer whereas clarification probing involves the researcher repeating a summed up version of what the participant said in order to confirm the information that the researcher gathered from the participant (Maree et al., 2020). It is therefore important for the researcher to listen carefully throughout the interview process (Maree et al., 2020). Additionally, where structured interviews are rigid, semi-structured interviews appear more relaxed and allow the researcher to gather additional, detailed information that the participant may mention which may have not been asked as an initial open-ended question as set in the interview schedule (Gill et al., 2008).

During the interview, the data that the researcher gains from the semi-structured interview is known as the primary source of data which is first hand data that is collected directly from participants and is gathered once the participants provide their in-depth, detailed answers to the open-ended questions that are prompted by the researcher (Maree et al., 2020). Once the data has been gathered, it is critical that the data is anonymised and secured within a folder that is protected by a password, if the data is saved within a laptop file (Maree et al., 2020).

3.6. Application of Data Collection Method

The data was collected by means of a non-face-to face, semi-structured (Maree et al., 2020) online video Skype interview that was audio recorded due to the social distancing measures of the nationwide lockdown. The reason for the utilisation of this method of data collection was so that the researcher was able to guide the interview in order to gain the necessary information pertaining to the research objectives by allowing each teacher to express themselves in a manner that was not as rigid as a structured interview and which allowed meaningful and descriptive data to be gathered from their perceptions and experiences that were described as prompted by the set interview, semi-structured, open-ended questions which therefore allowed each teacher to provide the researcher with a deeper understanding of their experiences and perceptions of ADHD learners in the classroom. Each semi-structured interview occurred over a video Skype call and each participant individually participated in the interview at their given date and time, which was flexible to their schedules as well as the researchers.

The researcher ensured to be familiar with the research questions of the study beforehand and before the researcher asked the open-ended questions in the semi-structured interview, the researcher first built a space of comfort so that a sense of rapport was established between the researcher and the individual teacher so that each teacher, per interview, was able to express themselves in a space that they did not feel discomforted in. The semi-structured interview schedule (Maree et al., 2020) consisted of ten open-ended questions (see Annexure B) pertaining to the purpose of the research which was so that each teacher was able to individually express their personal experiences and perceptions of ADHD in the classroom as well as the extent to which they felt equipped to assist learners within their classroom who experienced ADHD. The researcher selected a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions so that each teacher was not restricted by the amount of information they were able to provide the researcher with and it allowed them to lead the narration of the interview itself.

The researcher then guided the interview with the semi-structured questions that the researcher had set out in the interview schedule by starting off with basic, general questions to ease the participant into the interview, to more specific, detailed open-ended

questions that required deeper thinking on the teachers' behalf. Additionally, when the researcher received a response which required more depth and detail, the researcher subsequently probed the participant with probing questions, where the teacher being interviewed was to elaborate on what they had said about their experiences, perceptions or feelings in greater detail. The researcher was attentive and whilst listening, noted down non-verbal cues or verbal cues that were observed as significant to what was being said by the teacher. This aided in gaining greater insight into the responses that lacked depth and therefore assisted in producing deep and meaningful data of each teachers' experiences and perceptions of learners who have ADHD or whom they perceived to have ADHD, within the classroom.

The first interview was shorter than expected, whereas the last two interviews took longer than expected as some teachers provided more information than what was expected by the researcher. Subsequently, this resulted in the researcher having to probe for greater detail of the additional information that was an extension of the questions in order to understand the teachers' experiences and perceptions of ADHD learners in the classroom and the extent to which they felt equipped to deal with these learners which was the main objectives and purpose of the research study. During the interview, the researcher had to clarify some of the answers that were provided by the teachers in order to ensure that the researcher did not miss what was said when the video call lagged. Furthermore, at the end of each interview the researcher asked the teachers if there was anything important that was not mentioned during the interview that they may have wanted to add and once the teachers clarified that they were happy or any additional questions they had were answered, the researcher immediately saved the audio-recording of each interview in a Cloud file that connected to the researchers laptop and was secured with a passcode in order to ensure confidentiality.

3.7. Data Analysis Methods

Qualitative data analysis that is done through a phenomenological lens is a cyclical process of interaction where the researcher aims to understand social phenomena from the perspective of another individual and how they experience this social phenomena which involves the researcher to interpret and analyse how the individual makes sense of a social phenomenon, as well as their feelings, experiences and understanding of it (Maree et al.,

2020). Furthermore, inductive, thematic analysis allows the researcher to gather various themes embedded within the primary data which form the findings of the research (Maree et al., 2020).

This form of inductive, thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) involves various steps which the researcher adheres to during the analysis of the primary data and it is important for the researcher to utilise their knowledge, in a flexible manner, in order to determine what a theme is within the data set. According to Patton (1990, as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2006), themes which are extracted from the data, that they are connected to, pertains to the inductive approach and Braun & Clarke (2006) mention the importance of a theme in that it highlights a significant pattern of response from the participant and is related to the primary research question of the study.

Braun and Clarke (2006) identify a number of steps for the process of thematic analysis which include the researcher to familiarise themselves with the data set, to generate initial codes, identify themes, review these themes, define and name the themes and subsequently produce a research report of the analysis. Verbal data collected by means of an interview should be transcribed verbatim, accounting for verbal remarks as well as non-verbal cues, before the researcher proceeds with executing the thematic analysis process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Additionally, the researcher generates initial codes by systematically marking data that relates to the topic of the study (Braun & Clarke, 2006) through the use of line-by-line coding which is when the researcher deeply engages with the data closely and focuses on each line (Williams & Moser, 2019) where segments that are significant, are identified and marked as coded extracts (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Additionally, Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight the importance of organising these coded extracts into theme piles and subsequently refining each theme when engaging in the step of reviewing each theme, where the researcher identifies whether there is a sufficient amount of data to support the potential themes identified within each coded extract or whether additional themes emerge. Following the step of reviewing themes, themes are defined and named which are used for analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.8. Application of Data Analysis Methods

The researcher personally transcribed the data, verbatim, from each audio recording. This included marking the non-verbal cues such as looking away from the camera and verbal utterances, such as coughing or laughing, that may have been significant to what the teacher said. During the transcribing process, the researcher had to play the audio recordings repetitively in order to listen and transcribe every detail of the interview without missing information that each teacher provided the researcher with. Each individual transcript was kept within a different folder which was marked with the pseudonym that represented the teacher that the specific interview was conducted with.

Through immersion, the researcher engaged in an iterative process of reading over the data with which the researcher familiarised themselves with, in a manner that resulted in the researcher to become familiar with the data that pertained to the teachers' experiences and perceptions of ADHD. The process of re-reading through each individual transcript was time-consuming and once the researcher felt familiar with the text of the transcripts, the researcher then utilised the digital highlighter on their laptop to identify segments of data that were significant relating to teachers' experiences and perceptions of ADHD learners in the classroom. The researcher identified these segments by using the process of line-by-line coding so that each segment was highlighted for extraction.

The segments that were highlighted in the same colour were then copied and pasted into a separate folder in the laptop which was labelled with a coded, umbrella word which represented the segments of extracted information within that specific folder of which some came out of transcripts that matched themes that were in the literature review. The researcher then played the active role as the analyser by organising the extracted segments under each coded file into theme piles that had shared meaning in relation to the teachers' experiences and perceptions of learners with ADHD. This was done by drawing out a thematic map and connecting segments of information to formulate broader themes that provided the researcher with information to the research objectives, which were to understand the teacher's perceptions and experiences of learners with ADHD as well as the extent to which they felt equipped to deal with these learners .

The themes were then reviewed and fine-tuned for the potential emergence of additional themes and upon refinement, the researcher realised that various extracts of the data had better fitted underneath an already existing theme and so the process was cyclic in rearranging and refining each theme so that the necessary extracts in relation to teachers' experiences and understandings, were grouped in a fitting manner.

4. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Presentation of Findings

The following themes arose from the research:

4.1.1. Theme one: What teachers understand about ADHD in the classroom

Each teacher provided their own understanding of ADHD and described this using their knowledge of the main behaviours such as impulsivity, inattention, hyperactivity, forgetfulness, aggression and a lack of social skills that learners with ADHD display in the classroom.

4.1.1.1. Sub-theme one: Behaviours teachers perceive that they feel are associated with ADHD

Participant 1: *"They are the ones that are always chewing on their pens or rocking on their chairs"*

"You would be doing your work and suddenly the hand would go up and he would be asking you about the weather yesterday"

Participant 2: *"They picked up bits of your instruction but because their mind has gone off on so many tangents"*

4.1.2. Theme two: Teachers' experiences and feelings of children with ADHD in the classroom

Teachers had positive and negative experiences with ADHD learners in the classroom. The ADHD learners' behaviour contributed to whether the teachers had positive or negative experiences and the teachers had also indicated the way in which Ritalin contributed to a child behaving negatively or positively in the classroom therefore altering each teachers' personal experience. Additionally, each teacher indicated the way they felt about having an ADHD learner in their classroom.

4.1.2.1. Sub- theme one: Experiences that are positive

Participant 1: *"...other days they can be absolute angels"*

Participant 2: *"There are times when these children are extremely funny and that's probably their saving grace"*

Participant 3: *"...when I look at them and I see somebody use skills I teach them...on their own, I can't tell you what feeling it gives me as a teacher. It is an amazing feeling."*

4.1.2.2. Sub-theme two: Experiences that are negative

Participant 1: *"I do sometimes feel that there are those that are pushing the boundaries just because they'll get defiant because they don't feel like doing the work"*

Participant 2: *"If they find someone they can relate to...it's not a positive one...it's um them getting up to mischief. Being disruptive in the classroom"*

"...without their medication that becomes worse"

"He would antagonise children"

Participant 3: *"...worst ADHD child I have ever experienced in my whole entire life"*

“She would take one swipe and throw all her books, her pencil bags, her everything would just go flying from the classroom”

4.1.2.3. Sub-theme three: How teachers feel about having an ADHD child in the classroom

Teachers felt comfortable with having learners with ADHD in their classroom however also felt apprehensive when experiencing a new learner with ADHD in their classroom and sometimes felt drained. Participant one expressed her feelings of frustration when ADHD learners pushed their boundaries and all three participants indicated that they felt better about having an ADHD child with parental support.

Participant 3: *“It’s not easy teaching ADHD kids. It really really isn’t easy.”*

4.1.3. Theme three: Teachers’ perceived self-efficacy

Teachers expressed their feelings of competence and whether they felt equipped to deal with and exert control over ADHD learners in the classroom.

4.1.3.1. Sub-theme one: High perceived self-efficacy

Participant 1: *“I’ve not reached a point where I feel at a complete dead end with any of my kids”*

Participant 2 agreed that she felt that her ability to support and assist ADHD learners in the class was due to having a sense of humour and understanding by stating *“I would like to think that because of the personal experiences I have had, that it has helped me to have more input and understanding as to how they work.”* She further indicated that she tries her best to support the ADHD learners’ well-being.

Participant 3 expressed that she has the skills to support the ADHD learners in the classroom. *“I feel totally equipped cause I see it as a challenge...not in a negative way but in a positive way”*

“I do feel that I help them”

“...I try and give them the skills”

4.1.3.2. Sub-theme two: Low perceived self-efficacy

Participant 1: *“You don’t always, like I say, feel fully equipped”*

“...sometimes you do feel a little bit out of your depth”

Participant 2: *“There’s always going to be some that slip through your fingers that uh as much as you try...it doesn’t work”*

4.1.3.3. Sub-theme three: How teachers exert control over children with ADHD in the classroom

The three teachers each had their own ways of exerting control. For most learners they were able to successfully control however they felt that there was always the odd ADHD learner whom they struggled to control or support.

Participant 2: “You have to remind them of their parameters and your expectations of behaviour”

Both **Participant 2** and **Participant 3** indicated they felt deep pressure helped calm the ADHD learner and all three participants placed ADHD learners in the front of the classroom to reduce disruptive behaviour.

4.1.4. Theme four: How teachers feel about training programs or support groups for ADHD

All three participants indicated the importance of training and support groups in assisting teachers to have a greater understanding of ADHD and felt that their schools could support them more.

Participant 1: *“I definitely feel there’s always benefit to having workshops”*

4.2. Interpretation of findings

The researcher sought to understand urban primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of ADHD in the classroom in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

Based on the above information, from what the teachers have indicated and described, all three teachers have an overall good understanding of what ADHD is as well as the behaviours presented by learners in the classroom that are associated with ADHD. In relation to the presenting problem, the findings indicate that although they feel that there is a lack of training and support from the school, they seem to have an overall positive perception towards learners with ADHD in the classroom. This can be due to their increased MHL of ADHD as a result of their own experiences and personal efforts to broaden their knowledge of ADHD by attending workshops and seminars.

Although the teachers indicated they had positive and negative experiences with the ADHD learners, their increased mental health literacy assisted them to interact with ADHD learners in a manner that supported the learners' wellbeing which in turn improved their experience of each learner in the classroom. Furthermore, although each teacher indicated that they experienced feelings of exhaustion and frustration when having learners with ADHD in their classroom, their perceived self-efficacy, knowledge and understanding allowed them to exert control over ADHD learners in the classroom, at most times, which improved their experience of these learners. The findings indicated that they had experienced both a low and high perceived self-efficacy however their ability to exert control and support or assist ADHD learners in the classroom indicates their higher perceived self-efficacy, despite challenges they may sometimes experience therefore influencing their experiences and interaction with ADHD learners to be positive, as a result of their increased understanding.

4.3. Findings in Context

4.3.1. Theme one: What teachers understand about ADHD in the classroom

The findings of this study indicate that the teachers have a good and adequate understanding about ADHD learners in the classroom. Similar findings by Leavett (2018) mentioned the adequacy of teachers' understanding of ADHD in the urban context of the Western Cape. However, similar research carried out in the rural context of KZN found that teachers had an inadequate understanding of ADHD in the classroom (Naidoo, 2019).

4.3.1.1. Sub-theme one: Behaviours teachers perceive that they feel are associated with ADHD

As stated by **Participant 3**: *"I'd just find that he is far more hyperactive than the other children...uh there's definite um inattention, we've got sort of um disabilities not to complete tasks, not to stay at his desk, talks nonstop, tries to do more than one thing at a time...can't for instance if I'm teaching a concept, he can't focus for the duration of the whole thing from beginning to end...can't sit still."* This was validated in the literature by Kern et al (2015) who found that teachers associated certain perceived behaviours in the classroom, such as an inability to complete tasks, constant movement and a lack of concentration, with ADHD.

The teachers of this study understood the difference between a misbehaving child and a child with ADHD. As stated by **Participant 3**: *"It's actually very easy because the learner that's misbehaving, you're just looking for negative attention. He will misbehave at certain times but when there are tasks to be done, he will buckle down..he will complete the tasks which the ADHD child won't do."* However, findings by Naidoo (2019) indicated that teachers struggled to differentiate between the two.

4.3.2. Theme two: Teachers' experiences and feelings of children with ADHD in the classroom

Although teachers in this study felt they had positive and negative experiences with ADHD learners in the classroom, their perceived ability and skills to deal with and support these learners aided in them to have more positive experiences. As stated by **Participant 3**: *"Far more positive than negative."* This differs from the findings of Sikotane (2016) where teachers' experiences with ADHD learners in the classroom were mostly negative which could be attributed to their lack of knowledge of ADHD.

4.3.2.1. Sub-theme one: Experiences that are positive

Majority of participants experienced ADHD better when they were on Ritalin and experienced the learners' behaviour as focused and motivated to complete tasks (Kern et al., 2015). As stated by **Participant B**: *"Once they on medication they almost function normally. Ritalin can make teaching them pleasant"*

4.3.2.2. Sub-theme two: Experiences that are negative

Few participants indicated that they experienced ADHD learners on Ritalin worse (Kern et al., 2015). This experience influenced by Ritalin can be seen in this study where **Participant 3** states: *"Sometimes children become very aggressive on Ritalin. But bad experiences come from incorrect dosages that children receive"*
"He used to come and drool out of his mouth and I couldn't get anything out of him."

4.3.2.3. Sub-theme three: How teachers feel about having an ADHD child in the classroom

The findings indicated that the teachers felt comfortable and confident teaching ADHD learners which is dissimilar to Sikotane's (2016) findings which mentioned that teachers felt uncomfortable. However, the teachers in this study did feel having these learners was challenging and difficult at times. This is similar to findings where teachers expressed that

they felt it was challenging (Leavett, 2018 & Sikotane, 2016) however is also dissimilar to the findings of Leavett (2018) in which teachers disliked teaching learners who had ADHD. The findings of this study indicated that despite the challenges, the teachers enjoyed the feeling of being able to help these learners. Some teachers experienced feelings of sadness towards ADHD learners which can confirm findings by Lawrence et al (2017).

4.3.3. Theme three: Teachers' perceived self-efficacy

This is how an individual perceives their ability to have control over their environment and whether or not they feel they are capable of changing circumstances of their environment (Bandura, 1997). The findings of this study indicate the teachers' mostly high perceived self-efficacy in being able to utilise their knowledge to support and exert control over ADHD learners in the classroom.

4.3.3.1. Sub-theme one: High perceived self-efficacy

As stated by **Participant 3**: *"I do feel that I support them...I do have the skills to support them."* This supports Naidoo's (2019) statement of the importance of teachers in having the knowledge and skills in being able to support and control learners with ADHD in the classroom. However, the findings of this study refute Naidoo's (2019) and Sikotane's (2016) findings where teachers expressed their lack of skills and perceived ability to support and deal with ADHD learners. This discrepancy may be due to this study being within the urban context of KZN, accounting for the subjective experiences within an urban, transient population of KZN whereas the studies by Naidoo (2019) and Sikotane (2016) were conducted within the rural context of KZN.

4.3.3.2. Sub-theme two: Low perceived self-efficacy

Sikotane (2016) mentioned that teachers failed to provide barriers in the classroom to ADHD learners' behaviour. This highlights their low perceived self-efficacy which is similar to the perceived self-efficacy of teachers in this study when they experienced ADHD

learners they could no longer support or exert control over. This finding of this study did not dominate the teacher's overall high perceived self-efficacy.

4.3.3.3. Sub-theme three: How teachers' exert control over children with ADHD in the classroom

High self-efficacy causes an individual to believe in their ability to gain control over their environment and produce change (Bandura, 1997). How a teacher produces this change indicates their high self-efficacy. This study confirms this in that the teachers were able to gain control over most of the ADHD learners within the classroom by using their knowledge and ability to create a space where the learners' behaviours were redirected or controlled which produced change in the classroom. For example, **Participant 3** felt that using bouncing chairs, direct eye contact, lap desks, and deep pressure produced change in the learners' behaviour in the classroom. This finding can be supported by Lawrence et al. (2017) findings in that children who were provided with a space to move around were able to behave better and had greater focus.

4.3.4. Theme four: How teachers feel about training programs or support groups for ADHD

The teachers of this study felt that schools should provide ongoing training programs or support groups for ADHD and that they could further benefit from this. Each teacher attended external seminars or courses however felt the need of having school implemented programs. This finding is supported by international (Greenway & Edwards, 2020; Lawrence et al., 2017; Shelemy et al., 2019) and local findings (Kern et al., 2015; Leavett, 2018; Naidoo, 2019; Sikotane, 2016) in highlighting the lack of training that teachers receive in their schools.

4.4. Trustworthiness

In order to enhance the trustworthiness and rigour of the study, the researcher ensured that there was credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility was ensured by providing a deep interpretation and understanding of teachers' perceptions and experiences of learners with ADHD or who exhibit behaviours characteristic to ADHD, in the classroom. Additionally, the researcher ensured transferability by making sure that the teachers were representative of the context which they are in. The researcher ensured that the context of the study was clearly described and understood so that the reader is able to transfer their understanding of the research to the same context which they have or may find themselves in, that being the classroom. To ensure that the readers understand how teachers' perceptions and experiences influence the context that they are in, which will include learners with ADHD in the classroom or who may exhibit behaviours characteristic to ADHD, and in turn how the experiences of teachers shape their perceptions and understanding.

To ensure dependability, the researcher ensured that the inferences made about teachers' perceptions and experiences of learners with ADHD, or those learners who may exhibit behaviours that are characteristic to ADHD, were not influenced by what the researcher constructs as reality but rather how reality has been constructed by the perceptions and experiences of the urban primary school teachers' own realities. Subsequently, the researcher utilised their skills to make sure that the findings analysed from the data were done so truthfully without the researchers' personal perception of reality to influence the analysis. Furthermore, the researcher aimed to ensure that there was somewhat confirmability by striving to be neutral by managing any sense of bias during the stage of analysing the data in addition to managing any sense of bias when producing the findings of primary school teachers' experiences and perceptions of ADHD in the classroom.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Addressing the Research Questions, Problem and Objectives

This study aimed to answer the primary research question "How do urban primary school teachers in KZN perceive and experience ADHD?" and this was answered by addressing each objective which involved to understand how primary school

teachers in KZN perceive and experience ADHD, to understand the extent primary school teachers in KZN feel equipped to assist learners with ADHD in the classroom and to understand what primary school teachers in KZN understand about learners with ADHD in the classroom.

In relation to the research objectives that aim to understand how primary school teachers in KZN perceive and experience ADHD and to understand what primary school teachers in KZN understand about learners with ADHD in the classroom, the findings successfully answered both objectives where teachers had positive experiences and perceptions of learners with ADHD as a result of their skilled interactions and support that enhanced the learners' wellbeing. Although teachers had negative experiences of ADHD learners, they had more positive ones. The teachers each had a thorough understanding of ADHD and were at most times able to exert their perceived control as a result of their experience and knowledge, in a manner that created a positive classroom environment which in turn influenced their perceptions and experiences of ADHD to be positive.

In relation to the research objective to understand the extent primary school teachers in KZN feel equipped to assist learners with ADHD in the classroom, the findings indicated that the teachers felt equipped in most cases due to their experiences over the years with ADHD learners, their personal experiences as well as their own efforts to broaden their knowledge of ADHD by attending external seminars, however, they indicated that this could be improved by receiving training programs from the school.

The problem was solved and the study was a success in that the gap was bridged in order to understand the experiences and perceptions of KZN primary school teachers, specifically within the urban context and although the teachers had received a lack of training from their school, their MHL was not reduced thus resulting in them to perceive and experience ADHD learners positively which in turn led them to interact with the ADHD learner's in a manner that supported their wellbeing. This finding may be due to the availability of resources within the urban context of KZN, such as external workshops, which allowed teachers to broaden

their perceptions and understanding as well as due to the teachers' personal experiences.

5.2. Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained informed consent from each participant to participate in the research as well as informed consent for the interview to be audio recorded (see Annexure A). Additionally, the informed consent form (see Annexure A) was sent as an attachment in an email to each participant's personal email address and in the email the participants were instructed to sign and provide their informed consent prior to the research process. Each participant was requested to scan the document of informed consent and to send it back to the researcher as an email attachment. Participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms on the transcripts (Maree et al., 2020) to ensure anonymity throughout the research process and each interview transcript was kept confidential, in a password protected folder on the laptop. Each participant was then either referred to as "Participant 1, Participant 2 or Participant 3" within the research report in order to ensure anonymity.

5.3. Limitations of the Study

There may be various limitations (Maree et al., 2020) of the research study, of which one of them may involve the sample parameters of the population of the study as only three female, primary school teachers, located within the urban context of KZN, were required for the interview and the results obtained may not have reflected the perceptions and experiences of all primary school teachers within the urban context of South Africa. Furthermore, due to developing a good rapport with each teacher, they may have subsequently felt the need to impress the researcher and provide information that may not have been a true reflection of their perceptions and experiences of learners with ADHD in their classroom. Additionally, they may have limited what they chose to share with the researcher during the interview process due to the researchers' existing relationship with them, however, this was managed by the researcher through probing.

5.4. Heuristic Value

The findings of this study are important to providing an understanding of how teachers' MHL may influence their perceptions and experiences of ADHD learners in the classroom. As a result this bears significance to schools on why it is important to provide teachers with compulsory training programs based around mental health disorders such as ADHD. Furthermore, the findings of this study may encourage further research within different urban contexts of KZN.

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Annexure A

CONSENT FORMS

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants
To whom it may concern, My name is Kelly van Niekerk and I am a student at Varsity College, Durban North Campus. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Suhaila Ameer about urban primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), in the classroom, in KwaZulu-Natal. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of ADHD, specifically within the urban context of KwaZulu-Natal as this social context is under-researched. I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.
What will I be doing if I participate in your study?
I would like to invite you to participate in this research because I value your perceptions and experiences as a primary school teacher. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to interview you over Skype with various questions I have set out to ask. The interview will be around 30 minutes in length and with your permission, the duration of the interview will be audio-recorded in order to ensure all the data I require is obtained and so that I am able to return to the audio recording for the purpose of my data analysis process. You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.
Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?
Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this

study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your experiences and perceptions of learners with ADHD or who may display behaviour associated with the symptoms of ADHD. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

2. Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
3. If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
4. Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Varsity College, Durban North, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology (HPSY414). You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

What happens if I have more questions about the study?

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:
Kelly van Niekerk

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:
 Suhaila Ameer

Consent form for participants	
I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Kelly van Niekerk about urban primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in the classroom in KwaZulu-Natal. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:	
• I agree to be interviewed for this research.	
• My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.	
• My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.	
• I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.	
• I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.	
Signature	Date

Consent form for participants

I, _____, agree to allow Kelly van Niekerk to audio record my interviews as part of the research about urban primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), in the classroom, in KwaZulu-Natal. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.

The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer.

Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.

Signature	Date

Annexure B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Please describe your understanding of what ADHD is.
2. Please describe your experiences of dealing with learners who have ADHD or which you perceive to have ADHD in your classroom.
3. How do you feel about your ability to manage learners who have or that you perceive to have ADHD?
4. To what extent do you feel that you interact with a learner with ADHD, in a manner that supports the learners wellbeing?
5. How do you differentiate between a learner who is misbehaving and a learner who has ADHD?
6. How do you feel if a learner with ADHD is defiant?
7. What do you do if a learner with ADHD is disruptive during your lesson?
8. Please describe what it is like to teach a learner who has ADHD.
9. Please describe the type of training you have received with regards to ADHD and how this has helped you to support learners with ADHD in the classroom.
10. Overall, how do you personally feel about having a learner with ADHD in your classroom?

Annexure C

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



5 August 2020

Student name: Kelly van Niekerk

Student number: 17230345

Campus: Varsity College Durban North

Re: Approval of HPS1 Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS/PGDIP ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.

Please note: The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Annexure D

28/10/2020

SafeAssign Originality Report



RESE8419_2020_HIPS1_VCDN1 - RESE8419_VCDN1

 

Safe Assign Plagiarism Practice

Kelly Van Niekerk on Wed, Oct 28 2020, 9:09 PM

94% highest match

Submission ID: deab5ff9-98da-4ada-a7e5-c0ffc8487aa9

Rese Report FINAL.FINAL.pdf

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Citations (15/15)



1

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Annexure E

Final Research Report Summary Document Table

Title: A qualitative study of urban primary school teachers' perceptions and experiences of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in the classroom in KwaZulu-Natal

Research Purpose / Objective	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors	Literature Review - Conceptual Framework	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Methods	Ethics	Key Findings	Recommendations
To gain an in-depth understanding of primary school teachers' perceptions & experiences of ADHD, specifically within the urban context of KZN.	• How do urban primary school teachers in KZN perceive & experience ADHD?	- Reduced MHL may result in teachers to misperceive ADHD. - Important to understand teachers' experiences & perceptions of ADHD & extent to which they feel equipped. - Bridge contextual gap in KZN.	- Perold et al. (2010) - Lopes et al. (2009) - Topkin & Roman (2015)	Theme 1: Mental Health Literacy (MHL) Theme 2: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in the Context of the Classroom. Theme 3: Lack of Training. Theme 4: Teachers' Understanding, Experiences and Perceptions of ADHD in the Classroom.	- Interpretivist paradigm - Epistemology: involved the researcher using the knowledge teachers have of the social phenomena around them, by gaining deeper insight from perspectives & experiences of each teacher, in this case perspectives based on their understanding of learners with ADHD and how well they perceive ADHD in order to assist learners who experience this disorder. - Ontology: Reality & ADHD meaning constructed by teachers' experiences & perceptions of ADHD in classroom. - Axiology: Researcher values subjective experiences and perceptions of ADHD, described by each teacher.	- Qualitative research approach - Focuses on social settings & how individuals create meaning within these contexts (Maree et al., 2020). Population South African female primary school teachers in urban context KZN who have ADHD learners.	- Qualitative - Semi-structured interview with open-ended questions.	- Informed consent obtained - Pseudonyms used to replace names in transcripts & "Participant 1, 2 or 3" used in report to replace names. - Confidentiality: Transcripts kept in password	- Each teacher had a good overall understanding of ADHD - Although the teachers feel there is a lack of training & support from the school, they have an overall positive perception towards ADHD learners in the classroom & due to their - Increased MHL, it assisted them to interact with ADHD	The findings may encourage further research within different urban contexts of KZN, South Africa and may encourage schools to understand the importance of training programs and how they shape teachers' MHL.
Research Problem	Secondary Research Questions	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Methods	Limitations	Key Contributions	
Reduced MHL is a problem in the field of psychology as it may lead to misperceptions of ADHD & affects teachers' experiences with the learner. While there is some SA research on this topic, there is a lack of literature on teachers' experiences & perceptions of ADHD in the urban context of KZN and it is therefore important to carry research out on perceptions & experiences of Primary teachers in the above mentioned context to fill this gap.	- To what extent do primary school teachers in KZN feel equipped to assist learners with ADHD in the classroom? - What do primary school teachers in KZN understand about learners with ADHD in the classroom?	- Mental Health Literacy (MHL) - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) - Self-efficacy - Teacher - Learner	- Self-efficacy theory by Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1997) - Self-efficacy involves the way an individual perceives their ability to have control over their environment & their ability to carry out effort to manage & deal with environmental circumstances or challenges (Bandura, 1997). For example, a challenge to teachers in the context of this research would be learners who have or exhibit behaviour associated with ADHD.			- Non-probability sampling. - Purposive sampling method. - Three teachers (participants) were recruited to form the sample size of this study.	- Unit of analysis: Individual female teachers within KZN, South Africa who have learners with ADHD or who display behaviours characteristic to ADHD. - Collected data was analysed by means of inductive, thematic analysis through the use of line-by-line coding in order to identify common themes in the data set.	- Sample parameters of population of study may have not reflected the perceptions & experiences of all primary school teachers within the urban context of South Africa. - Due to good rapport, teacher's may have provided information to impress researcher that is not a true reflection of their perceptions & experiences of learners with ADHD. - Teachers may have limited what they chose to share due to researchers' existing relationship with them.	- Bridging the contextual gap within the KZN context as this research fills the gap by gaining an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences & perceptions of ADHD in the classroom, specifically within the urban context as there is a lack of literature based on the urban context. - The research may provide the schools with the understanding as to why it is important to provide teachers with compulsory training programs based around mental health disorders such as ADHD.	