

# CLOSING THE GAP:

How foundation phase teachers support learners presenting with attention-deficit- hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms in South Africa

**Southern Africa Regional Conference on Early  
Childhood Development, Lusaka, Zambia**

**28-30 March 2023**

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# INTRODUCTION

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*“Education is all a matter of building bridges”*

*Ralph Ellison*

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## **South African History**

~Promulgation of EWP6 (DoE 2001) to accommodate the needs of all learners (Inclusive Education & new challenges)

~SIAS policy introduction in (DBE, 2015)



# MOTIVATION

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Interest in role of teachers in creating inclusive environments  
(Identification & accommodation of learners with ADHD)

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Insufficient pre-service teacher training: Learners with ADHD  
fall between the cracks

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Available research: focuses on Foundation Phase teachers'  
knowledge and ways to support learners with ADHD symptoms  
in a mainstream school setting



# PROBLEM STATEMENT

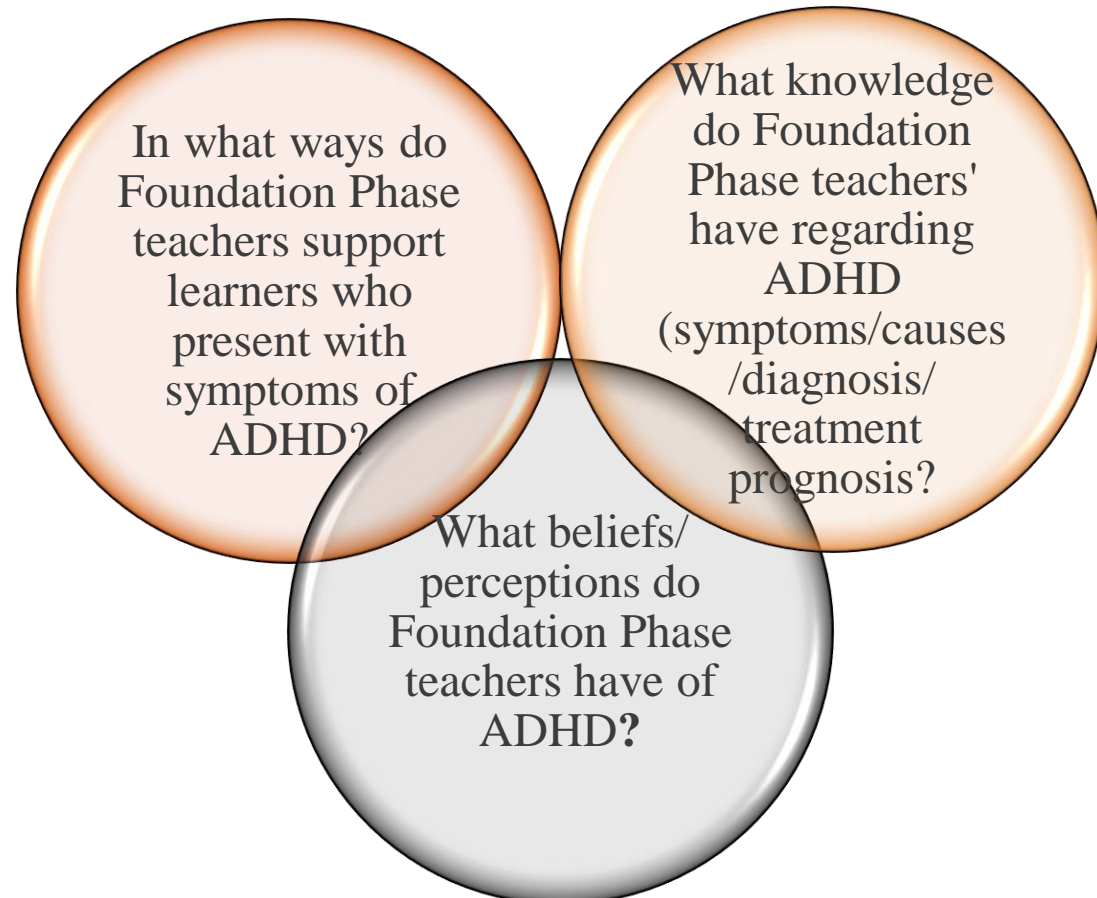
- Insufficient pre-service teacher training ➡ limited teacher preparedness to support learners with ADHD
- Only a few studies in South Africa ➡ focused on teachers' knowledge of ADHD.
- International studies ➡ teachers' knowledge of ADHD to range from 75 to 77%, but this estimation is based on a dichotomous true/false scale which is unreliable.
- Direct correlation ➡ ADHD and teachers' willingness to implement classroom strategies for learners affected by ADHD
- Teachers' conceptualization of ADHD ➡ influenced by cultural dimensions.



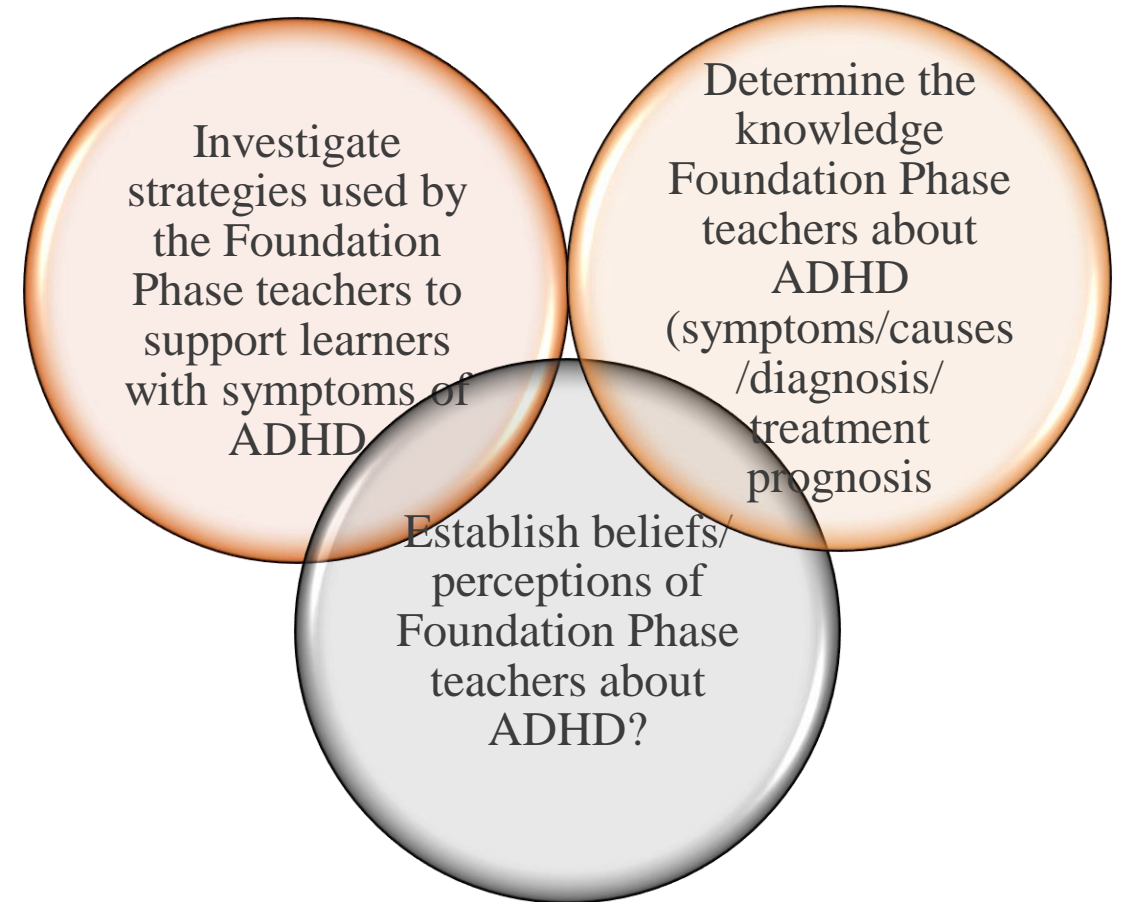
# RESEARCH AIMS, QUESTIONS & OBJECTIVES

*The aim of this study was to explore Foundation Phase teachers' knowledge and understanding of ADHD to determine how teachers support learners who present with ADHD symptoms.*

## Research Questions



## Research Objectives



# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## Research Paradigm

- **Interpretivist paradigm** (people's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions)
- Aimed to understand, explain, and describe teachers' knowledge, understanding, and support for learners with ADHD
- Participants expressed their experiences and perceptions
- Researcher gained in-depth details about teachers' support for learners with ADHD

## Research Approach

- A **qualitative approach** ~ deemed more suitable to exploring teachers' knowledge, understanding, and support for learners who present with ADHD symptoms.
- The process of qualitative ~ inductive, and the product of a qualitative inquiry is richly descriptive.

## Research Design

- A **case study design** was chosen for this study
- The aim of a case study is to have an in-depth understanding of the participants in their natural setting acknowledging its context and complexities (Yin, 2014).
- A case study examines a contemporary phenomenon in detail when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are indistinct (Pathiranage et al. 2020),



# FINDINGS (Themes & sub-themes)

07



FINDINGS

## *Themes & Sub-themes*

- Teachers description of ADHD
  - ❖ Hyperactivity and lack of concentration
  - ❖ Poor time management skills
  - ❖ Inability to follow instructions and complete tasks
- Teachers limited awareness of the ADHD diagnosis process
  - ❖ Negative attitudes towards learners with ADHD
  - ❖ The importance of holistic observation before diagnosis
- Challenges in providing adequate support for learners with ADHD
  - ❖ Inadequate pre-service teacher training
  - ❖ Difficulty in implementing self-taught strategies
  - ❖ The high number of learners in a classroom







## Teachers' description of ADHD

### Introduction:

Traditional teaching approaches do not assist learners with ADHD (Alabdulkareem & Jamjoom, 2020)

Brown (2009) explained that learners with ADHD can pay attention if it sparks their interest  
ADHD learners struggle to finish activities and follow instructions due to limited concentration and understanding (Santos et al., 2011)

### Impact of Teachers' Limited Understanding of ADHD:

Delayed recognition and treatment resulting in psychosocial problems (Park et al., 2018)

Barrier to accommodating learners with ADHD in the classroom due to lack of teacher knowledge and skills (Topkin et al., 2015)

Teachers play a crucial role in referral, diagnosis, and creating a conducive learning environment (McConaughy et al., 2011)

### Teachers' Limited Understanding of ADHD:

Only one out of six participants focused on learners' interests while the others focused on inattention and inability to complete tasks (Naidoo, 2003).

Teachers often confuse ADD and ADHD, lacking the basic understanding of the barrier (APA, 2013; Zentall, 2006; Cooper & Bilton). Teachers have limited knowledge of ADHD symptoms such as short attention span, slow working memory, and difficulty following multiple instructions (De La Charie et al., 2021; Schroer et al., 2020)

### Conclusion:

Teachers' limited understanding of ADHD is a crucial sub-theme in supporting learners with ADHD in mainstream schools

Proper knowledge and understanding of ADHD symptoms can lead to better recognition, treatment, and a conducive learning environment for learners with ADHD

# DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Integration with  
literature

# CONCLUSIONS

- Given the findings of the current study, teachers have limited knowledge of ADHD apart from the behavioural symptoms.
- There is not enough practical exposure to learners with ADHD during teacher training
- Trainees and new teachers have a basic understanding of the strategies used to accommodate learners in a classroom but require an in-depth understanding to effectively include learners with ADHD in a mainstream classroom.
- The results of this study have important implications for teacher training which could, in turn, provide the necessary knowledge, understanding, and strategies to accommodate learners presenting with ADHD in a mainstream setting, which could contribute positively to a more effective quality of education for learners presenting with ADHD symptoms in a mainstream public-school classroom.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In-service training by knowledgeable teachers who can share effective strategies to accommodate learners with ADHD.
2. Continuous training opportunities for teachers to support children with ADHD effectively.
3. Use of educational websites and evidence-based articles and books to gain more knowledge about ADHD.
4. Attendance at workshops offered by various organizations to gain more knowledge about ADHD.
5. Visit remedial schools to learn how learning with ADHD is assisted daily.
6. Provide moral support by having sessions with teachers and discussing and sharing ideas.
7. Invite educational psychologists to come to the school and provide workshops to teachers on how to implement interventions that would be beneficial to learners presenting with ADHD.
8. Guided by debriefing sessions with teachers, the School Management Team could add a remedial class program as a goal that the school needs to achieve.
9. The DBE should provide greater levels of support and guidance as well as motivational workshops that inspire and train teachers to deal with ADHD in the classroom.
10. The DBE should provide teachers with psychological services for counseling and support when dealing with learning barriers.





**Ngiyabonga**

isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, isiTswana, isiVenda

Ke a Leboga

**Ke a Leboga**

Shesheki, Sheshekena, Shesheko



Thank You

**Enkosi**

isiZulu

Enkosi

**Thank You**

English



Ndo Livhuwa

**Dankie**

isiNdebele

**Ndo Livhuwa**

isiTswana

Ndza Nkhensa

**Ndza Nkhensa**

isiVenda

Dankie



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