2021

Teachers' Beliefs and Experiences: Teaching Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in K-5 Inclusive Classrooms

Ruth Omunda
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

Ruth Omunda

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Stephanie Gaddy, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Gary Lacy, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Dimitrios Vlachopoulos, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

Teachers' Beliefs and Experiences: Teaching Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in K-5 Inclusive Classrooms

by

Ruth Omunda

MA, North Carolina A&T State University, 2011

BA, University of Nairobi, Kenya, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Special Education

Walden University

January 2021

Abstract

Students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) often exhibit problem behaviors in the classroom. Some of these students present challenges for teachers in general classrooms that impact not only the students' own learning, but also the learning of other students. Thus, the purpose of this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological research study was to expand knowledge about the experiences of special education teachers who teach students identified with ADHD. The conceptual framework was based on Dewey's constructivist worldview and van Manen's phenomenology of practice. The research questions explored beliefs and experiences of special educators with students identified with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Little research is currently available that details the experiences of special education teachers who work with students with ADHD in inclusive classroom settings. To address this deficit in the literature, this study involved the collection of information about special educators' beliefs and experiences regarding teaching students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms in kindergarten through Grade 5. Eight elementary school special educators participated in semistructured phone interviews. The resulting data were hand-coded and analyzed using a modified van Kaam method of data analysis. The key findings were that participants identified positive teacher–student relationship and structured classrooms as beneficial for students with ADHD. A major recommendation was training for both special and general education teachers. This study may provide useful insights about teaching students with ADHD, thereby leading to implementation of programs and resources for teaching and learning of students with disabilities.

Teachers' Beliefs and Experiences: Teaching Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in K-5 Inclusive Classrooms

by

Ruth Omunda

MA, North Carolina A&T State University, 2011

BA, University of Nairobi, Kenya, 1992

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Special Education

Walden University

January 2021

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this doctoral study to my deceased parents, Meshack Omunda and Joyce Ojow Omunda, who understood the value of education and sacrificed to pay for my higher studies even though they struggled to make ends meet. You always beamed with joy when I brought home good report cards. It was clear to me from a young age that you wanted me to excel in my studies, so I worked hard to make you both proud. I wish you were here to celebrate this milestone with me, but I know you are watching and will always be proud of your girl. I love you so much, Mum and Dad!

Acknowledgments

Thank you, Dr. Stephanie Gaddy, for your constant feedback and support throughout this doctoral process. Thank you, Dr. Gary Lacy, for your support as well in this research process. To my family, Webb, Charlene, Lisa, Jane, Barack, Meshack, Rahab, Daniel, and Willis, thank you for your prayers and encouragement. Lastly, I would like to thank all participants in this study for their time and commitment.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a neurological condition that impacts 5-11% of students in the United States (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014). Various qualitative studies have concentrated on general education teachers' experiences with students who have been identified with ADHD or those students who demonstrate related symptoms in regular education classrooms (Murphy, 2015). However, few studies have aimed at special education teachers' beliefs and experiences concerning teaching students with ADHD in inclusive elementary school settings. Students with ADHD receive the majority of their everyday academic lessons in general education settings together with their nondisabled counterparts; therefore, current research is necessary to learn about special education teachers' beliefs and experiences when teaching this population (Schuck et al., 2016).

In Chapter 1, I provide background information for the study that incorporates a brief explanation of ADHD and its challenges, varying perceptions from educators who work with students with this disorder, and the prevalence of ADHD in general education classrooms. In addition, Chapter 1 includes a problem statement that details the challenges that students with ADHD face or undergo and problems that they pose to educators who work with them regularly. Also included in this chapter are the purpose and nature of the study, research questions, and the conceptual framework. Lastly, this

chapter contains definitions of important terms, a summary of assumptions, the significance of the study, and the limitations and delimitations of the study.

Background

ADHD is a disorder that is characterized by constant inattentiveness, hyperactivity, and impulsivity (Hamilton & Astramovich, 2016; Moore et al., 2017). Inattentive ADHD entails executive deficits that involve off-task behaviors and poor organization, whereas hyperactivity is demonstrated by fidgeting, excessive talking, and the inability to regulate stimuli (Hamilton & Astramovich, 2016). Students with ADHD experience challenges in academic and social functioning, such as peer rejection, bullying, homework incompletion, and poor communication with adults (DuPaul & Langberg, 2014). According to DuPaul et al. (2016), students with ADHD may demonstrate academic failures and difficulties in social functioning, which may begin in elementary school and continue through college.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016), 62% of students with disabilities are included in general education classrooms. Furthermore, ADHD diagnoses have increased by 43% since 2003, and researchers have estimated that a minimum of one student with this disorder exists in every general education classroom in North American schools (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). In the United States, students identified with ADHD qualify for special education services under the "other health impairment" classification according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; Cho & Blair, 2017).

Murphy (2015) indicated that students with ADHD can be productive in general education classrooms if educators recognize and employ efficient teaching and behavioral management approaches. Nonetheless, general education classroom teachers from many parts of the world have voiced various concerns about teaching students with ADHD, citing issues such as inadequate training and lack of administrative support (Guerra et al., 2017; Liang & Gao, 2016). Based on a study carried out in public elementary schools, Guerra et al. (2017) reported that teacher participants from five South Texan schools attributed their incapability to deliver necessary assistance to students with ADHD to a lack of organizational support in the form of counseling services and afterschool programs. Liang and Gao (2016) also found that limited training contributes to preservice and in-service ineffectiveness in providing proper interventions to students with ADHD. Participants in Liang and Gao's study reported a dearth of knowledge and pragmatic experience as impediments to containing the behavioral actions of students with ADHD in the classroom. All participants interviewed in the Liang and Gao study regarded working with students with ADHD to be onerous. Such views have been corroborated by other teachers who experience less emotional closeness to students with ADHD and more conflicts in their relations in comparison to their nondisabled peers (Ewe, 2019).

Researchers also have pointed out several misconceptions about ADHD. For example, Bradshaw and Kamal (2013) found that teacher participants in their study shared collective misunderstandings about the origins of ADHD as involving the child's family life. Another popular misunderstanding shared by participants in the Bradshaw and Kamal study is that a child who takes stimulant medication for ADHD is likely to

achieve improved academic results. However, most of the participants in Bradshaw and Kamal's study supported the use of nonmedical interventions, claiming that ADHD is not a medical disorder (Bradshaw & Kamal, 2013). Hart et al. (2017) identified several interventions that can help handle behaviors and increase academic performance in students with ADHD. Moore et al. (2017) also identified effective ADHD interventions, such as medications and nonpharmacological treatments. Further ADHD intervention strategies that researchers have recounted involve contingency management, behavior adaptation, peer coaching, self-regulation, and self-monitoring (Langberg et al., 2013; Moore et al., 2017).

The prevalence of students with ADHD in general education classrooms is evident in America's public schools, and studies are needed that also examine the experiences of teachers who teach these individuals in inclusive settings (Fabiano et al., 2013). Murphy (2015) likewise recommended assessing teachers' practices and knowledge in working with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Through these studies, educators may better comprehend valuable intervention strategies and difficulties encountered, thus supporting social change at the district level. As previously mentioned, several studies have focused on general education teachers' knowledge and attitudes concerning teaching students identified with ADHD (Ewe, 2019). However, no qualitative phenomenological studies have been conducted to learn specifically about special education teachers' beliefs and experiences regarding students identified with ADHD in inclusive elementary education classrooms.

Problem Statement

The problem that was the target of this study is that ADHD impacts many students' lives. Approximately 5-7% of young school-aged students in U.S. public schools have ADHD or exhibit symptoms that are consistent with the disorder (Gormley & DuPaul, 2015). Students with ADHD often exhibit challenging behaviors that affect not only their academic performance, but also that of their nondisabled counterparts (DuPaul & Jimerson, 2014). Research studies show that students with ADHD often exhibit poor educational outcomes, distracting behaviors, and deficits in interpersonal skills compared to nondisabled peers in general education classrooms (DuPaul & Jimerson, 2014; Hoff & Ervin, 2013; Rogers et al., 2015). These students with ADHD are at risk for dropping out of school, repeating grades, and engaging in criminal acts (Hoff & Ervin, 2013).

Earlier research studies have targeted general educators' lived experiences, knowledge, and attitudes regarding students with ADHD in general classrooms (Ewe, 2019). The literature review presented in Chapter 2 details studies about teachers' understanding and perspectives concerning ADHD, behavior and academic interventions, and difficulties they encounter when working with these students. Some researchers have examined the dominance of students with ADHD who are currently studying in inclusive general classrooms with their nondisabled peers (Fabiano et al., 2013). Nevertheless, not much is understood about the experiences of special education teachers who work with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms, thereby suggesting the need for qualitative phenomenological research in this area. A thorough evaluation of the existing literature

indicates that actual research studies that feature special education teachers' beliefs and experiences relative to teaching students with ADHD are essential.

According to van Manen (2017), a phenomenological study captures participants' experiences in raw form, without any interpretation or explanation. I chose transcendental phenomenology to understand special education teachers' beliefs and experiences involving students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Identifying behavioral and academic intervention approaches used by special education teachers and their general education peers may be valuable to other educators who work with students identified as experiencing related behavioral challenges.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences of special educators who work with students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms and to gain comprehensive knowledge of their individual perceptions regarding this student population. This qualitative research study is important in that personal data were obtained from the teacher participants, thereby increasing the knowledge in the literature that pertains to special education teachers' everyday involvement with students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. In conducting this study, I employed semistructured interviews with open-ended questions to achieve in-depth views of special educators' beliefs and experiences in working with students identified with ADHD. The new information acquired from this research study may spearhead the advancement of strategies that will help sustain the needs of students who demonstrate behavioral difficulties.

Research Questions

The central research question for this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study was the following: What are special education teachers' beliefs and experiences teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms? The research subquestions were as follows: (a) How do special education teachers describe their experiences and work with students identified with ADHD? (b) How do special education teachers describe beliefs they hold about students with ADHD?

Conceptual Framework

Dewey's constructivist worldview and van Manen's phenomenology of practice informed my understanding of this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study. For Dewey, knowledge is grounded in human beings' previous encounters and understanding rather than being forced upon individuals (Beard, 2018). Such knowledge is influential in informing the practices that teachers use in their classrooms. Just as students arrive in the classroom with separate and exceptional experiences, teachers also come to the classroom with individual backgrounds, understandings, opinions, and feelings (Schauer, 2018). Reflecting Dewey's constructivist worldview, the goal of this study was to help understand special education teachers' attainment of beliefs and experiences that are pertinent to working with students identified with ADHD. Certain beliefs understood by these teachers may correlate with teaching and behavioral management approaches. Regarding the concept of experience, Dewey indicated that experience consists of active communication between human beings and their surroundings (Hildebrand, 2018). Because special education teachers come into the

classroom with diverse backgrounds, investigating their beliefs and experiences about teaching students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms may help provide insights into intervention strategies that may be useful for students with behavioral challenges. Therefore, the research questions were designed to help gain a comprehensive understanding of these two phenomena.

van Manen (2017) highlighted activities involving the methodological structure of a phenomenological study. These activities include investigating lived human experience and reflecting on fundamental themes. According to van Manen (2017), phenomenological research is based on the understanding that humans care about their own beings and others. The lived experience of a participant with a phenomenon varies. Each participant's experiences are unique; therefore, lived experiences should be meaningful and significant to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). As a phenomenological researcher, I gathered experiential data through thick, rich descriptions of special education teachers' experiences. The essence of the phenomenon derived from special educators' experiences with students with ADHD. I further reflected on essential themes emerging from descriptions of the lived experiences of these educators with this student population.

Nature of the Study

This study employed qualitative transcendental phenomenology to describe special education teachers' beliefs and experiences regarding students diagnosed with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. Transcendental phenomenology is a qualitative methodology that allows researchers to hear and understand the essence of participants'

lived experiences (Sousa, 2014). Through this study, I gathered information from special education teachers who experienced the phenomenon and then used these data to develop a comprehensive description of their experiences in their own words to gain a deeper understanding of the essences of their experiences (Creswell, 2013). Participants consisted of eight special education teachers who taught in K-5 inclusive classrooms. Creswell (2013) stated that a qualitative phenomenological researcher uses an imagined lens to advance understanding of experiences through participants' answers. An important objective of a phenomenological study is to unearth ordinary human reality and its significance (Quay, 2016). Consequently, a phenomenological design is appropriate for attaining personal dependable data from special education teachers who share lived experiences with students identified with ADHD. To this end, open-ended interview questions that emphasized special educators' beliefs and experiences concerning working with students with ADHD were used in this transcendental phenomenological research study to achieve a broad understanding of the topic. Audio recordings were also used to gather information.

Definitions of Terms

Several key terms are used throughout this study and are defined as follows.

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: A behavioral disorder of childhood indicated by elevated levels of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. ADHD has also related to shortfalls in executive functioning and affects individuals' academic, social, and personal performance (Tatlow-Golden et al., 2016).

Inclusive classrooms: Educational settings where students with disabilities receive instruction with their nondisabled peers (Dev & Haynes, 2015).

Special education teachers: Individuals who deliver individually designed instruction to students identified with socioemotional, physical, and academic requirements (Tomlinson, 2015).

Belief: Personal statement, judgment, or understanding grounded in human experiences (Raymond, 1997).

Experience: An impression of experience based on communication among human beings and the world around them (Dewey, 1938).

Transcendental phenomenology: A philosophy aligned with qualitative methodology aimed at studying human experiences from a first-person perspective (Husserl, 1963).

Assumptions

Multiple assumptions were associated with this transcendental phenomenological study. For example, one assumption was that all subjects who willingly agreed to participate gave truthful and unbiased responses related to the research questions. Another assumption was that special educators who work with students with ADHD experience challenges in inclusive classrooms. Another assumption of this study was that special education teachers who work in inclusive classrooms have students with ADHD in those settings and are well versed concerning the behavioral characteristics that these students exhibit. The last assumption was that this study may help future researchers to inform other teachers who work with students identified with ADHD in various settings.

Scope and Delimitations

Through this transcendental phenomenological study, I sought to provide a comprehensive understanding of special education teachers' beliefs and experiences regarding elementary-school-aged students identified with ADHD. The study involved a thorough exploration of these educators' reported experiences to contribute to knowledge about teaching students with ADHD from special education teachers' perspectives. This phenomenological study involved eight special education teachers from different public schools in the United States. The participants discussed their knowledge related to working with ADHD students in K-5 inclusive classrooms. Data collection included in-depth interviews based on open-ended interview questions. Participants were issued a consent form to obtain their permission to participate in the study. The use of member checking eliminated any threats to the validity of the study, whereby the research participants assessed the data and ensured that the data validated their answers (Creswell, 2013). However, transferring the research findings to different regions in the country is not possible due to the study's limited scope.

Limitations

A key limitation anticipated in this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study was the small sample size. Because of the strength of this research, examining the beliefs and experiences of eight teachers did not allow a broad view of other teachers' experiences when teaching ADHD students in other parts of the country. An additional possible limitation was in the sample itself, which was restricted to K-5 special education teachers who worked with students in inclusive classrooms. Furthermore, the nature of

this study permitted a choice of participants who embodied a particular population of special education teachers (Patton, 2015). Although this selection process renders the transfer of the study's results to additional areas difficult, a thorough description of these educators' beliefs and experiences helped in addressing this limitation. Another potential limitation resided in the snowball sampling strategy, which carries potential problems such as the likelihood of the participants being mirror images of one another and not a true variation. Lastly, a possible limitation was my own bias. Although I do not have any experience teaching students with ADHD in a general classroom setting, my work as a special education teacher could have impacted the data collection process. To manage this potential bias, I applied my teaching experience to help me recognize other special educators' experiences but kept my interpretations separate from participants' responses. Additionally, I used the practice of memoing to ask myself questions at each stage during the interview process so that I could separate what participants were saying and not infuse my own interpretation.

Significance

This transcendental phenomenological study adds to the current body of literature in that special education teachers had the opportunity to describe their experiences related to teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. ADHD students present various behavioral challenges that affect their educational and social functioning. Additionally, these individuals' behaviors affect not only their learning, but also that of the nondisabled students who share the same classroom (DuPaul & Langberg, 2014). Through this study, I gathered valuable information that correlates to working with

students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. The findings from this research study may help additional educators, including school administrators, make important decisions directed toward enhancing teachers' services for students with ADHD. Teachers who work with students with behavioral difficulties tend to be more sensitive, rather than being active in their efforts to address these individuals' behaviors (Ross & Sliger, 2015). This study's results should help in achieving a broader understanding of teachers' beliefs and experiences concerning students with ADHD.

Summary

Chapter 1 presented a summary of the study's outline, which included an introduction to the study, background information about the topic, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the conceptual framework, the nature of the study, definitions of key terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 includes the literature review, the literature search, the conceptual framework, research gaps in the literature, a conclusion, and a summary.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological research study was to gain a thorough understanding of special education teachers' beliefs and experiences with students identified with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Students with ADHD characteristics often demonstrate behaviors that are distracting to other learners, show underachievement in their academics, are likely to drop out of school or be suspended, and have deficits in social skills (DuPaul & Jimmerson, 2014; Rogers et al., 2015). As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to investigate the beliefs and experiences of special education teachers who taught students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive elementary classrooms. The literature review provided in Chapter 2 is a synthesis of current studies of teachers' beliefs and experiences as they pertain to students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. The literature reviewed in this chapter explores some of the issues that teachers of students with behavioral challenges face. The last part of this chapter summarizes the research findings, gaps in the literature, and ways to address these gaps through this study.

Literature Search Strategy

In this literature search, I used several databases and print resources limited to the past 5 years. The databases used for this review were Education Resource Complete, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). Using an advanced search tool, I limited my search results to particular online journals, as well as to current and peer-reviewed

literature. The following are some of the online journals that I reviewed to identify related research articles: *International Journal of Educational Research, Journal of International Association of Special Education*, *Journal of Pedagogy*, *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, and *Australasian Journal of Special Education.* Terms that were narrowed down to gain the needed resources included *inclusion and ADHD*, *ADHD and academic achievement*, *teachers' experiences and ADHD*, *the prevalence of ADHD*, *behavior strategies and ADHD*, *teachers' attitudes and ADHD*, and *ADHD challenges*. Lastly, reference chaining was used in this study to select relevant articles.

Conceptual Framework

For this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study, I applied John Dewey's constructivist worldview, which suggests that no definite fact concerning an event exists (Ültanır, 2012). According to Dewey, knowledge formation is not forced on individuals but is simply grounded on people's past experiences. Dewey clarified that knowledge is an individual's ability to influence his or her reasoning into solving situations or taking actions actively (Hildebrand, 2018). Teachers' knowledge of issues or events directs the actions that they undertake in the classroom relative to their students' learning needs. Therefore, teachers have a responsibility to monitor and apply behavioral and academic strategies based on individual needs of the students as well as classroom situations (Xyst, 2016).

Dewey understood the concept of belief to be something that human beings entertain or hold without necessarily seeking to prove or reason with it (Brown, 2015). Belief is a mental or psychical state of individual human beings and is used to name what is believed. It may be a product of an inquiry process that leads to attitudes intended to solve problems (Brown, 2015). Important components of this research study included identification and examination of viewpoints held by special education teachers about teaching and classroom conditions. Some of the teachers' beliefs may have been based on their past experiences performing specific evidence-based approaches and relationships with parents, students, and colleagues.

Dewey noted that people's perceptions prompt reflective thinking, thereby allowing them to locate and explore their views (Laverty, 2016). Teachers already perceive in their teaching processes, and they have different perceptions about their training, knowledge, effective pedagogies, classroom management, student learning, and teacher–student relationships. For example, Kamens et al. (2013) noted that teachers reported that most of their training occurred through their experiences while they were on the job. In other words, their individualized experiences while on the job led them to learn which strategies were effective (or not effective) in tier-specific classroom settings. Although different teachers have shared different perceptions regarding their teaching experiences, research into special education teachers' perceptions of students with ADHD is limited. Therefore, understanding special education teachers' perceptions of their experiences with students who have been characterized as having ADHD, especially in inclusive K-5 classrooms, is critical to develop helpful strategies for teaching this

student population. Interviews with these educators may allow further examination of their approval and frustrations relative to existing teaching situations and their beliefs regarding this student population. For example, identifying the emotional statuses of educators based on their present-day teaching conditions would be significant to establishing the teachers' comfort and the performance of activities in their classrooms (Frenzel et al., 2016). The hypothesis here is that participating teachers' perceptions of students are based on their practical involvements with students identified with ADHD. The consequence is a constructivist understanding of the perceptions that these special educators bring to the classroom.

According to Dewey, the philosophy of human experience is the relationship or communication between human beings and their world (Hildebrand, 2018). Dewey contended that experience must be educative, and human beings must experience things by acting upon them and suffer or enjoy the consequences (Beard, 2018). Teachers enter their classrooms with varying backgrounds and experiences. Because their objectives in teaching situations are based on their experiences, they also are likely to bring unique goals to the classroom environment that help them meet the needs of the diverse classroom population (Sartor, 2016). In order to understand teachers' experiences, including their classroom activities, identifying the goals that they have developed for their classroom environment is a prudent exercise. These goals typically include behavioral and academic achievement. Teachers' goals become particularly important when considering strategies for teaching students with ADHD. In short, because special educators often work closely with students with ADHD, their beliefs and experiences are

particularly salient and may be tapped to develop ways to improve both teaching and learning in K-5 inclusive classrooms.

van Manen's (2017) phenomenology of practice informed my understanding of this study. van Manen's research activities used to guide this study included investigating the experience of the phenomenon as it is lived but not how it is conceived. Drawing upon special education teachers' experiences in inclusive classrooms, I used this study to understand the essences of these educators' experiences with students who had been diagnosed with ADHD. In interviewing special education teachers, I asked them to give direct accounts of their experiences with students with ADHD to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (van Manen, 2017).

van Manen (2017) referred to four essential themes used to guide a study's reflection process: lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations. Lived space relates to participants' daily experiences with a phenomenon. For example, lived space was understood through this study by examining whether the interaction between special education teachers and students with ADHD happened from a distance or in proximity. Was this interaction physical or emotional? Lived body means that people use bodily presence to conceal or reveal themselves. In this qualitative phenomenological study, the special education teachers revealed things that they shared and how they influenced each other to build relationships. Lived time was essential in this reflective process because it allowed me to understand personal life and what this project in life meant (van Manen, 2017). This allowed me to make meaning of the teacher–student relationship through the history of special education teachers and what they project in

teaching students with ADHD in the inclusive classroom. Lived time allowed me to understand participants' past experiences and how they shaped their teaching and interaction with students with ADHD. Lived human relations refers to relationships that people have with one another. According to van Manen, these are not individual entities but are all connected to form a unified whole. Therefore, reflection on the lived experiences of participants allows a researcher to uncover themes that facilitate the phenomenological description of a phenomenon (van Manen, 2017).

Teachers of Students With Disabilities

During the last 20 years, numerous countries have advocated for individuals with disabilities (Hauerwas & Mahon, 2018). Therefore, teachers of students with disabilities are accountable for supporting all students with disabilities so that these learners can meet their functional and academic goals (Pennington & Courtade, 2015). The IDEA stipulates that students with disabilities who require specially designed instruction may also require instruction from a trained special education teacher.

Teachers' Knowledge to Teach Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities face difficulties in the general education classroom, and there is increasing consensus among researchers that indicates that efficient teacher training and knowledge of ways to educate students with disabilities are integral to the academic and behavioral functioning of children and adolescents (Corona et al., 2017; Washburn et al., 2017). For instance, students with language deficits require teachers who are well informed about literacy concepts (Moats, 2014). Nevertheless, creating access to

competent teachers who are experienced in serving students identified with disabilities has been challenging (Gage et al., 2017; Moats, 2014).

Researchers who examined 271 novice teachers in terms of understanding attributes connected with reading disabilities and dyslexia concluded that most of the teachers held misunderstandings relative to dyslexia (Washburn et., 2017). However, teacher education programs and literacy classes were deemed significant to teachers' knowledge about literacy (Washburn et al., 2017). In a separate cross-sectional study, Lopes and Crenitte (2013) examined teacher understanding about learning deficits. A total of 25 teachers with teaching experience of 5-35 years took part in the research study. In the Lopes and Crenitte research study, data were gathered using 18-item questionnaires and were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative measures. The conclusions resulting from this research study showed a shortage in teachers' knowledge regarding various disabilities leading them to hold various misconceptions about disabilities and their causes. A section of teacher participants indicated that causes of learning disorders and low academic functioning are related to students' lack of interest, family environment, and socioeconomic status (Lopes & Crenitte, 2013).

The results of the previously mentioned research studies (Lopes & Crenitte, 2013; Moats, 2014; Washburn et al., 2017) were corroborated by Gonçalves and Crenitte (2014), who examined teachers' perceptions in several public and private schools in Brazil. Gonçalves and Crenitte determined that 68% of the teachers interviewed lacked understanding relative to school difficulties experienced by students, learning disabilities, and dyslexia. On the other hand, teachers who help erstwhile knowledge about learning

disabilities and other learning difficulties managed to accurately state their definitions, causes, and manifestation (Gonçalves & Crenitte, 2014). Based on these findings, Gonçalves and Crenitte determined that the teachers lacked an understanding of efficient intervention strategies to implement in their classrooms for students with learning difficulties.

Sagner-Tapia (2018) investigated teachers' reflections on their teaching practices concerning students with disabilities. Participants included 23 teachers who served students identified with multiple disabilities in inclusive classrooms from different secondary schools in Germany. Sagner-Tapia employed open-ended questions and semistructured interviews to gather qualitative data that encompassed perspectives and reflections about school culture, teachers' goals, students with disabilities, and pedagogical practices. Sagner-Tapia achieved triangulation by using numerous data collection tools. The results from the research study indicate that although the participants recognized unique student differences and strengths, more than one-half of the teachers acknowledged a dearth of knowledge, information, and training to work with students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms (Sagner-Tapia, 2018). These research findings were supported by Pennington and Courtade (2015), who investigated the level of engagement for students with mild to severe intellectual disability for the duration of instruction in separate schools and concluded that the percentage of students who lacked engagement averaged 69% in separate schools compared to 58% in conventional schools. In summary, these results show that teachers generally do not feel adequately prepared to teach students with disabilities (Pennington & Courtade, 2015).

Teachers' Training to Teach Students With Disabilities

Teachers are believed to invest passionately in their teaching practice and in their students even under difficult circumstances. In one qualitative research study performed by Frelin and Fransson (2017), the investigators explored teachers' continued devotion to their students. The researchers cross-examined eight general education teachers who possessed more than 20 years of teaching experience and reported a high level of commitment to their work and their students. The questions that the researchers used addressed factors that maintain and weaken teachers' dedication to their profession and students. The findings indicate that a constructive relationship between the teacher and the student is fundamental in sustaining teachers' devotion to their teaching practice or work (Frelin & Fransson, 2017).

Teachers are typically trained in classroom management skills that help them to address student behaviors while increasing students' engagement in an educational setting. In a brief survey study, Cooper et al. (2018) investigated the seeming effectiveness of research-based practices to deal with students' behaviors. The researchers surveyed 248 teachers from different elementary schools in Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, and California. The research findings from Cooper et al.'s study showed that the teachers frequently used many scientific-based practices to manage students' behavior. They further reported these to be effective approaches relative to the management of students' behaviors. For example, 91% of the teachers interviewed showed that their use of timeout allowed them to manage the students' behaviors effectively, while 19% reported the ineffectiveness of timeout (Cooper et al., 2018). In

this study, the limitation that the authors pointed out was that all of the data collected were based on the teachers' self-reports, which were unlikely to be individually corroborated. Additionally, whether the classroom management approaches were implemented or not implemented with fidelity was not clear in this research study. Sun (2015) substantiated the findings of Cooper et al. (2018). Sun (2015) studied 12 teachers' views about successful behavior management approaches and reported that out of 12 teachers, eight used various behavior strategies that included timeout, punishment, conference with the teacher, and rule setting to improve positive student behaviors and classroom engagement.

Overall, teachers are leaders in the community, school, and classroom (Angelle, 2017). They cooperate with their colleagues to examine best teaching practices that support their students' education. In a quantitative study, Reeves et al. (2017) investigated the influence of collaboration among teachers on students' academic achievement. These researchers collected data about eighth-grade mathematics teachers in Japan and the United States. The researchers asked the teachers to state the frequency of their collaborative engagement with their colleagues, including sharing teaching materials, planning, and observing lessons. The Japanese teachers reported more frequent collaboration as part of their teaching than the American teachers, who reported spending 80% of their time in the general classroom teaching their students. Nevertheless, both the Japanese and American teachers agreed that frequent collaboration contributes to students' higher math achievement (Reeves et al., 2017).

Well-trained teachers play a fundamental part in students' skill advancement and subsequent academic achievement (Gűleç-Aslan, 2013). Policymakers have identified some markers to ascertain teacher quality that comprise years of experience, certification programs, and classroom management skills (Gage et al., 2017).

Students with disabilities present several challenges and working with them can be a difficult responsibility that requires properly trained and experienced teachers. Special education teachers have a legal authority to carry out practices geared toward advancing academic outcomes for students with disabilities. Accordingly, special education programs are planned to advance teachers' specialized practices that are essential for skilled practices (Todorova et al., 2017).

Behavioral interventions are particularly important when working with students with ADHD because many of them have difficulty with impulsivity (Murphy, 2015). Additionally, children with ADHD are frequently diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder, which is characterized by resistance to authority. Beam and Mueller (2017) conducted a qualitative research study to investigate the level of information or knowledge that general education and special education teacher have about scientific research-based behavioral approaches. Based on the results of a computer-based survey, the researchers determined that 91% of special education teachers felt ready and 90% felt positive to teach students identified with behavioral difficulties. Based on training, 75% of special education teachers showed that they had the licensure to work with students identified with disabilities. Among regular educators, 64% stated that they lacked licensure to teach students who had been identified with behavioral and learning

difficulties, even though they were cognizant of the presence of these learners in their classrooms (Beam & Mueller, 2017).

School administrators and veteran teachers often have the responsibility of offering training to other educators; nonetheless, concerns have surfaced about teachers' failure to use research-based strategies with reliability (Cook & Odom, 2013). In a research conducted by Gűleç-Aslan (2013) to examine teaching practices of one teacher of a student with a disability, the researcher found that this individual frequently encountered teaching and behavioral difficulties during formal instructional sessions. Gűleç-Aslan determined that the teacher participant was required to acquire more knowledge in teaching and controlling the student's challenging behaviors. The teacher created an action plan, and the researcher provided her with a professional development opportunity to teach and manage this student's behaviors in the classroom. Analysis of the teacher's sessions after implementing the action plan indicated that this teacher managed to teach methodically while managing behavioral problems without difficulties. Gűleç-Aslan concluded that, for teachers to learn the necessary skills to manage students' behaviors, a carefully planned program using competent coaches with sufficient time for training should be implemented.

Teachers who teach students with behavioral challenges often convey concerns about their preparedness to support these individuals. Unfortunately, general education teacher education programs frequently do not include course offerings that train teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities effectively. Hence, to better serve students

with disabilities in the general classrooms, educators must participate in effective training opportunities that target the needs of these individuals.

Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ADHD is a disorder related to differences in brain development and activity, and it is mostly experienced by children and adults. ADHD is characterized by difficulties including attention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. People with ADHD encounter difficulties with multi-tasking, sustaining attention, and organizing work (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). There is reliable proof that indicates that ADHD characteristics are hereditary. Therefore, when parents or siblings of an individual have ADHD, they are at an increased risk of developing the disorder (Dan, 2016).

Characteristics

ADHD frequently first develops in children, and the symptoms usually remain through adulthood (Dan, 2016). Coping with educational requirements is often more challenging, especially for students with ADHD. In a study by DuPaul and Jimerson (2014), the researchers noted that students with ADHD demonstrate different types of conducts that can negatively impact their educational performance and that of their peers in the instructional environment. According to Barry et al. (2016), students with ADHD characteristics or individuals who have been identified with the disorder encounter difficulties that involve academic failures and social skills deficits with peers, teachers, and parents, among other challenges. Behavioral difficulties involve organizing work, completing assigned tasks accurately, staying on task, following classroom regulations

and daily schedules, and cooperating with classmates with minimal disruption (DuPaul & Jimerson, 2014).

Steiner et al. (2014) performed a qualitative research study in 19 public elementary schools in two separate districts. They contrasted the conduct of elementary school students with ADHD to that of their nondisabled peers. To observe the students' behaviors, the researchers used the Behavioral Observation technique, an organized method to record the students' conduct (Steiner et al., 2014). Part of the on-task behaviors that the researchers observed included looking at the teacher during a teacher-led instructional session and involvement in activities at designated individual work areas. Some of the off-task behaviors included conversing with a peer and leaving an allocated seat in a class presentation. The findings from the Steiner et al. study indicate that students with ADHD exhibited a reduced level of classroom participation, recurrent off-task behaviors, and more distraction during instructional sessions compared to peers without disabilities.

Furthermore, the students with ADHD did not display as much engagement in teacher-led large-group instruction than in small-group instruction where the students had the chance to mingle and interact with other students and the teacher (Steiner et al., 2014). As such, the ability of students with ADHD to experience high levels of interaction appeared to be important in maintaining their engagement in the classroom. Behavioral challenges exhibited by students with ADHD during whole-group instruction suggest that they risk academic underachievement in lower school levels such as elementary schools if correct mediations are not given in good time.

Self-assurance is one of the positive qualities that affect people's lives, and young children with ADHD are believed to display this characteristic similarly to typically developing peers. Nosouhian and Javadi (2018) conducted a comparative study to investigate self-assurance and signs of aggression among 60 children aged 6 and 12 with ADHD, including their peers without disabilities. These researchers evaluated the participants' self-assurance using a questionnaire, and the students responded to the questions by choosing '*yes*,' '*no*,' or '*I don't know*' options. The students' teachers also completed a questionnaire to assess student aggression. The conclusion drawn based on the study is that children with ADHD have similar levels of self-assurance compared to their peers without disabilities. Nevertheless, the study found that the level of aggressive behaviors among students with ADHD was higher than that of other students without disabilities (Nosouhian & Javadi, 2018). This result aligns with a different study's results that suggest that physical aggression is indirectly associated with poor executive function that is common among individuals with ADHD (McQuade et al., 2017).

Forner et al. (2017) investigated social tolerance among students with ADHD compared to their typically developing peers. Participants in this research study included 72 students between 7 and 11 years old. The teachers used the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF) questionnaire to measure each student's social conduct in the school situation. The BRIEF questionnaire consists of 86 items scored on a Likert-type scale, and the responses range from '*never*' to '*often*.' Results from this research study suggest that ADHD symptoms are linked to difficulties in sustaining relations with friends or peers and social approval (Forner et al., 2017). The results of Forner et al.

(2017) correspond with findings from a separate study by Tseng et al. (2014) who examined indicators of ADHD and peer performance among elementary school students and found that students with ADHD experienced lower levels of peer acceptance from their typically developing counterparts.

Likewise, researchers have linked ADHD symptoms to social difficulties among college students. Ryan et al. (2016) investigated social functioning amongst college students who described high levels of inattentiveness and hyperactivity/impulsivity traits. The study's participants were students in their freshmen year aged between 17 and 24 years at the University of Ottawa, Canada. Generally, this study's outcomes indicate that ADHD does not impact male students' social skills; however, social skill deficits associated with ADHD were predominant among female students (Ryan et al., 2016). Certain limitations Ryan et al. recognized included self-reporting and single informant tools, which made it difficult to corroborate the study's findings or expand the perception of the phenomenon. Interviewing multiple teachers and completing thematic analysis of the data will help broaden the understanding of experiences of special education teachers who teach students identified with ADHD.

To summarize, ADHD is a disorder that often leads to difficulties associated with distracting, impulsive, and aggressive behaviors in the classroom. Hence, understanding teachers' practices with students identified with this disorder will help influence their instruction and mediations intended to promote the students' executive functioning, which is a fundamental aspect for dealing successfully with peer and adult relations (Forner et al., 2017).

Prevalence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Fabiano et al. (2013) found that approximately between 3% and 5% of students in general education classrooms have been diagnosed with ADHD. The prevalence of ADHD is approximated to be a low of 1.7% to a high of 17%. Some teachers within counties in 21 different states completed a survey to ascertain the occurrence of students with ADHD traits and the degree of stimulant medication usage in the classroom. The research study's results show an estimated 4% of students in elementary school and 2% of students in middle school use stimulant medication for ADHD (Fabiano et al., 2013).

Nationwide surveys are also helpful in examining trends in ADHD prevalence, and the resultant information can be instrumental in recognizing suitable service needs or management for students with ADHD (Danielson et al., 2018). The National Survey of Children's Health (2017) provided an estimation of the countrywide prevalence of parent-reported ADHD among children between 2 and 17 years of age in the United States. The reported findings indicate that a total of 6.1 million young children in the United States in the previously stated age range had been identified with ADHD by a doctor or other health provider (Danielson et al., 2018).

Lefler et al. (2015) examined the prevalence and level of ADHD characteristics in girls and boys from the Native American group. Young children between the years of 6 and 13 were engaged from healthcare clinics to participate in the study; 72 children (41 males and 31 females) participated. While ADHD signs were apparent in both the girls and boys, the researchers determined that the boys showed elevated levels of symptoms of ADHD compared to the girls (Lefler et al., 2015).

In developing countries, the prevalence of ADHD also has been noted. For instance, researchers who performed a research study in 10 different public and private schools in Ghana determined that the general prevalence rate of ADHD among primary school individuals was 12.8% (Afeti & Nyarko, 2017). Additionally, a separate study of 770 primary schools was conducted in India to examine the occurrence of ADHD between children in the age range of 6 and 11 years. Out of 635 students who participated in the study, 72 students were identified with ADHD and the prevalence level was greater among males than females. According to the study's outcomes, 48 male students out of 324 were identified with ADHD, and 24 female students out of 311 had ADHD (Venkata & Panicker, 2013).

Even though ADHD is often first diagnosed in school-aged children, it is expected to continue even into adulthood. Therefore, a perspective of teachers' everyday practices with individuals who have been identified with ADHD symptoms and the ways educators deal with the challenges of a growing number of students with the disorder in their instructional settings is critical for facilitating initial detection followed by intervention before these young students reach adulthood.

Academic Challenges

Students identified with ADHD often undergo severe behavioral struggles, leading them to achieve poor academic results (Hamilton & Astramovich, 2016; Modesto-Lowe et al., 2016). Using a longitudinal research, DuPaul et al. (2016) assessed the mathematics and reading attainment of elementary students whose parents described the diagnosis of ADHD. The students were administered assessments planned by the

National Center for Education Statistics. The results indicate that approximately 40% of the participants attained below average in reading and 39% scored below average in mathematics compared to their typically performing classmates (DuPaul et al., 2016). However, a notable limitation of the study is that the diagnostic condition was based only on the parental description. A medical account that includes an official identification would have offered a more dependable diagnosis of the students' condition regarding ADHD. This study by DuPaul et al. (2016) is confirmed by other findings by Afeti and Nyarko, who compared the academic attainment of students with ADHD to that of students with no disorder. Based on that research study, students who were diagnosed with ADHD showed lower educational achievement in science, reading, and math compared to their regular counterparts or peers (Afeti & Nyarko, 2017).

Wiener and Daniels (2016) investigated 12 youngsters with ADHD in Canadian schools and their academic attainment experiences. The participants were n=3 females and n=9 males aged between 14 and 16 years who had official diagnoses of ADHD provided by a medical practitioner or licensed psychologist. The researchers used medical interviews as the primary data collection approach in addition to a questionnaire. Based on the students' descriptions entirely, 12 youths in this study revealed that they experienced difficulties in their academics (Wiener & Daniels, 2016). Notable weaknesses of the Wiener and Daniels study include that all participating students resided in a large Canadian city; hence, their encounters could have been unique from those of students who lived in rural areas where ADHD is unrecognized. In the Wiener and

Daniels (2016) research, understanding the geographical and cultural backgrounds of participating teachers would have been necessary, especially during the selection process.

Researchers have also associated ADHD with difficulties in writing skills (Capodieci et al., 2018; Molitor et al., 2016; Rodríguez et al., 2015). Written expression is an essential skill in any educational situation. Yet, it remains difficult for students with ADHD or those who exhibit similar symptoms due to the complexities in cognitive processes that include planning, drafting, editing, and revising. Based on one research study designed to assess the frequency of written expression impairment of 326 students with ADHD in middle school, Molitor et al. (2015) determined that ADHD is a prevalent disorder among youngsters. These researchers observed the implication of the difficulty with written expression experienced by students with ADHD and how the improvement of such skills could influence these students in other learning areas. In another study, Rodríguez et al. (2015) assessed the output and written work of students with ADHD in contrast to their peers without disabilities. These investigators decided that, although ADHD did not impact the students' writing production, students identified with the disorder produced written compositions with less coherence and of inferior quality in contrast to their nondisabled peers (Rodríguez et al., 2015). The findings of the Rodríguez et al. study were confirmed by Graham et al. (2016), whose research, meta-analysis, and results were grounded in an analysis of the fundamentals of writing created by students with ADHD. Graham et al. investigated writing features, including vocabulary, handwriting, spelling, and sentence structure, and found that students with ADHD exhibited less ability than their peers.

Students identified with ADHD frequently struggle with writing and particularly with the organization of writing. These difficulties contribute to poor performance in other subject areas. Therefore, a clear perception of teachers' experiences concerning instructional approaches applied in the classroom for students with ADHD is needed when designing curricula.

Academic Interventions

Researchers have found that intensive academic remedial programs can offer encouraging results for children with ADHD. For example, Tannock et al. (2018) conducted a study with 65 students aged 7 through 11 years to assess the effectiveness of two reading programs for students with ADHD and reading disorders. Participants were largely Whites, 4% Blacks, and 5% Asians. The instructions used in the Tannock et al. study were developed from corrective reading and reading mastery programs. Based on the implementation of these reading programs, the reading skills of students characterized by reading difficulties improved (Tannock et al., 2018). The outcomes from the Tannock et al. study indicated substantial positive effects of the academic interventions on the students who participated in the reading programs concerning those students who did not participate in the rigorous reading sessions. Important constructive effects of the academic interventions on the students' behaviors in the home environment also were described by the parents.

The results from the Tannock et al. (2018) study are consistent with results from a separate research study by Roberts et al. (2015) that was intended to approximate the effect of reading interventions on students with attention challenges. The students'

reading skills in that study were assessed using the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement, Third Edition (WJ-III), and attention was measured using the ADHD Symptoms and Normal Behavior Scale (Roberts et al., 2015). Veteran teachers were engaged for 3 years to provide the tiered instructional model interventions to students from inner cities in the southwestern part of the United States. The findings showed improvements in the students' reading abilities, including their attention.

The findings of Roberts et al. (2015) are further supported by Chavez et al. (2015), who conducted research to explore the effect of story mapping as a directed intervention planned to lower the main signs of ADHD, including off-task behaviors. In Chavez et al.'s (2015) study, participants were six third-grade students registered in a West Georgian public school. The participants in this study had been diagnosed with ADHD and were taking prescription medication at the time of the study. In the initial stages of the study, one-half of the student participants attained below average in reading comprehension. Nevertheless, at the close of the 5-week study, the students' attitude towards reading, on-task behavioral skills, and reading comprehension scores had improved after the story mapping intervention sessions (Chavez et al., 2015).

Research-based interventions used by special educators to address reading concerns have clearly been shown to be effective not only in improving reading skills but also in helping to manage ADHD symptoms. However, not demonstrated are special educators' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of these strategies for students with challenging behaviors.

Behavioral Interventions

Researchers have acknowledged several efficient classroom behavioral management approaches that target students with ADHD (Cirelli et al., 2016; Hart et al., 2017). Barry et al. (2016) remarked that early detection and treatment could help slow down some of the behavioral difficulties demonstrated by students with ADHD. The researchers examined the viability of introducing a school-based diagnosis process to help detect these students and improve interactions with the students' parents so these students could receive interventions in a timely fashion. The Barry et al. study was found to be feasible regarding ways that early interventions can help reduce behavioral challenges.

Based on a meta-analytic review, Tan et al. (2016) assessed the efficacy of physical training to improve the mental performance of students with ADHD. These researchers used an entire 22 quantitative research studies printed in scholarly journals or as doctoral research papers between 1968 and 2015 that involved 579 individuals aged 3 through 25 years of age. The results yielded a little to moderate influence of physical training on the intellect of students with ADHD. In a separate research study that utilized a mixed methods style that combined quantitative and qualitative designs and action research methods, Dan (2016) examined the effect of an intervention plan that depended on intermediated learning and scaffolding teaching techniques to increase students' personal relations. The researcher collected data through open-ended interviews, informal observations, and child behavioral worksheets concluded by the parents and teachers of the participants. The findings from the Dan (2016) study indicated that, within a

structured setting, challenging behaviors related to ADHD could be modified and subsequently improve personal relationships between students with behavioral challenges and their teachers (Dan, 2016).

Hart et al. (2017) studied teachers from 245 schools in 21 separate U.S. states to explore the function of behavior management strategies and how those strategies align with common interventions (applied for every student in an instructional setting), directed interventions (designed for particular students who are in danger for behavioral or academic concerns), and thorough interventions (personalized interventions that require extra resources and time). As per the study's results, Hart et al. determined that most teachers practice common and targeted interventions, but not intensive or thorough interventions, for their students with ADHD. These behavioral interventions were common in lower levels such as elementary schools than in upper levels such as middle schools. A reduction in the behavioral management approaches was apparent as the students proceeded to upper-grade stages at the school. Particularly problematical regarding this tendency is that, as academic pressures mount, behavior assistances lessen, resulting in academic underachievement in middle and high schools (Hart et al., 2017).

A particular behavioral strategy that has demonstrated effectiveness is the self-regulation approach (Slattery et al., 2016). Exercising a self-regulation process, Slattery et al. (2016) studied the efficacy of this intervention on the on-task behavior of three students. Grounded on reference point measurements or a baseline taken before the study, all three students exhibited limited levels of on-task behaviors. Nonetheless, these students' on-task behaviors progressed after a two-week follow-up following the

intervention (Slattery et al., 2016). The Slattery et al. (2016) study thus demonstrated proof of the effectiveness of self-regulation interventions for students with ADHD.

Researchers also have investigated the effects of classroom self-assessment and self-management procedures. For example, Hoff and Ervin (2013) used a self-management intervention to establish its efficacy in decreasing distracting behaviors in a public elementary school environment. They collected classroom-wide data and personal data to ascertain the value of this intervention. Hoff and Ervin (2013) identified students from every classroom with the support of the students' teachers, and the researchers took baseline measurements of their behaviors. The participating teachers were prepared to implement the self-management intervention. The investigation involved a teacher-guided segment where the students were instructed regarding the classroom assessment scale and notified of the classroom regulations and supports. In the self-management phase, the students observed their individual behaviors including the class behaviors for every directive and measured the behaviors on a 5-point scale (Hoff & Ervin, 2013). The findings from this research study demonstrated a decline in the students' distracting behaviors, thereby reinforcing the efficacy of a class-wide self-management strategy to reduce distracting behaviors in the classroom.

Researchers have also found parental involvement to be valuable regarding students' educational success and helping to cope with the difficult behaviors shown by students with ADHD (Marcelle et al., 2015). Parent-delivered interventions can be instrumental in fostering positive communication of children with ADHD for whom social relations is an additional prevalent problem (Wilkes-Gillan et al., 2016). Eleven

school-age children diagnosed with ADHD, along with children not diagnosed with ADHD participated in the Wilkes-Gillan et al. (2016) study to investigate the effectiveness of parent-delivered interventions in fostering social play skills. All the parents who participated in the study received a one-week training on how to afford the children with constructive responses or feedback about conflict resolution and games and strategies that foster social communications with counterparts. The results from this research study imply that parent-delivered play-based interventions accompanied by constant parent and peer commitment are influential in fostering the social skills of children with ADHD when they interact with their friends (Wilkes-Gillan et al., 2016). Also, the collaboration between parents and teachers can help promote the social skills of students identified with ADHD. While this study's outcomes showed that the quality of the teacher-parent association does not contribute considerably to students' knowledge, Marcelle et al. (2015) found some values connected with this cooperation.

Researchers also have investigated school-wide general strategies that have produced encouraging outcomes concerning the management of students' behaviors. Karhu et al. (2018) conducted a study in Finland to investigate an intervention referred to as 'check-in check-out' (CICO), a behavior management approach designed for students, including those diagnosed with ADHD and with serious behavioral challenges. The central aim of the study was to examine how CICO aids in managing students with behavioral difficulties in general classroom settings. The research participants were two boys identified with ADHD who were receiving medication at the time of the study. CICO centered around an everyday report card. The study's outcomes demonstrate the

efficacy of CICO by showing a decline in the students' problematic behaviors (Karhu et al., 2018).

The results of the Karhu et al. (2018) study are corroborated by independent research performed by Cirelli et al. (2016), who investigated the influence of activity plans on the on-task and on-schedule performances of two elementary school boys who experienced challenges completing work individually. During the study, the boys were not on any stimulant medication for symptoms associated with ADHD. However, after multiple training sessions, the students' on-task behaviors improved, confirming the efficacy of the activity plans or schedules (Cirelli et al., 2016).

The findings of Blume et al. (2019) supported the assumption that students who sit in proximity to the teacher during classroom instruction learn better than those who sit further away from the teacher. The study employed 24 participants from elementary school who received instruction on how to solve a specific math problem while seated in a location proximal or distant to the teacher. The researchers aimed to investigate whether students with higher levels of ADHD benefitted from sitting in proximity to the teacher. Based on the study's results, the group of students who sat close to the teacher in the classroom learned the math problem better than those who sat further away from the teacher. Therefore, these findings align with another study investigating students' learning and academic performance when seated close to the teacher (Meeks et al., 2013).

Of note for the current study is the impact of teachers' beliefs and experiences regarding behavioral interventions and chosen strategies when implementing behavior interventions for students with ADHD. Through the research questions, I intended to

elicit feedback from special education teachers about behavior management strategies that they were currently using and the impact they perceived these strategies to have on the students' behaviors and learning.

Teaching Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Teachers' Knowledge of Academic Challenges

Students with ADHD present difficulties in the general classrooms, which requires experienced and well-informed educators who can pinpoint ADHD symptoms and employ successful intervention approaches to handle these students' behaviors. Earlier studies in Australia and the United States have shown that, even though teachers appear well-versed about ADHD symptoms and the diagnosis, they do not have the knowledge associated with the sources and treatment of the disorder (Blotnicky-Gallant et al., 2015). Furthermore, a limited number of teachers recounted using scientific-based approaches with fidelity in their classrooms to control the behaviors and academic concerns of students with ADHD.

Blotnicky-Gallant et al. (2015) conducted a study in Nova Scotia, Canada, to examine teachers' knowledge and beliefs about ADHD, including their application of scientific-based classroom management approaches. A total of 113 teachers participated in the study, and each teacher had gained experience in teaching at least a single student with ADHD. Many teacher participants recounted applying teaching strategies such as changing the language for instruction, making instruction easier, employing choral response methods, and using directed notes for content, but not frequently. The participants exhibited a similar pattern regarding behavioral management techniques that

involved a token economy, positive teacher feedback, and preferential seating (Blotnicky-Gallant et al., 2015).

Teachers' knowledge and attitudes about students with ADHD also influence how they characterize, refer, teach, and relate with these persons (Mulholland, 2016; Murphy, 2015). Anderson et al. (2017) examined the relations between teachers' viewpoints and attitudes about students with ADHD and how these viewpoints influence their teaching and relationship to the learners. Participants in this research study involved in-service and pre-service teachers from different age groups. Most of the in-service teachers' beliefs about working with students with ADHD were disapproving, as they reported that their teaching involved frustration, stress, and tiredness. However, pre-service teachers' feedback yielded more encouraging sentiments concerning teaching students with ADHD than those of in-service teachers (Anderson et al., 2017).

Shroff et al. (2017) investigated teachers' misunderstandings about ADHD; for example, 67% of the study's participants assumed that ADHD could be cured with dietary management. Additional participant feedback revealed an inadequate understanding or knowledge concerning stimulant medication for students with ADHD (Shroff et al., 2017). Likewise, Bradshaw and Kamal's (2013) descriptive research study that utilized a quantitative analysis of survey data investigated K-12 teachers' understanding and perceptions of ADHD symptoms in Qatar public schools. Based on Bradshaw and Kamal's (2013) findings, 54.5% of teachers showed that they had worked with at least one student with ADHD and gained invaluable knowledge about the disorder from either a book or the Internet. As to whether stimulant medication increases the

educational performance of these individuals, 46.9% of participants recounted they were not sure, and 33.2% responded that it does. Generally, 52% of the participants disagreed that teachers adequately understand the function of stimulant medication for individuals with ADHD (Bradshaw & Kamal, 2013). In short, the expectation that teachers with training in special education would be knowledgeable about ADHD was not the case in the Bradshaw and Kamal's study.

Certain general classroom teachers have mentioned a dearth of superior training opportunities necessary to groom them for the challenges of working with students with ADHD characteristics (Murphy, 2015). In a research study that investigated the perceptions and understandings of general education teachers, Murphy (2015) determined that, regarding collaborative learning communities aimed to increase the learning skills of students with ADHD, collaborative professional development is successful in training teachers for the challenging task of teaching this student population. Also, Lasisi et al. (2017) corroborated the advantages of effective professional development for teachers in delivering suitable interventions for students with ADHD. Based on the study carried out in Nigeria, two groups of teachers comprised of intervention and control groups were used to investigate the influence of professional development on teachers' knowledge and attitudes toward identifying ADHD symptoms and effective interventions approaches instrumental in a general classroom environment (Lasisi et al. (2017). The findings from this study revealed an enhancement in the understanding of ADHD symptoms and its associated behavioral management including improvement in teachers' attitudes concerning individuals impacted by this disorder.

Additionally, Bradshaw and Kamal's (2013) research study investigated general classroom teachers' experience and training regarding students with ADHD in their instructional settings. Based on the research outcomes, teacher participants who received professional development opportunities in effective teaching practices responded to questions about ADHD accurately. These trained teachers managed to recognize insights and misunderstandings relative to the disorder better than those teachers with inadequate training and experience. Besides, teachers who had taken a single training in special education responded to the questions accurately, unlike teachers without training (Bradshaw & Kamal, 2013). In a separate study that explored the teachers' experiences in handling students with ADHD, participants indicated that they applied a broad range of practices to support this student population in the general education classroom (Moore et al., 2017). All the teacher participants acknowledged that their responsibility was to support their students to perform better in the regular education classroom and not remove them from their peers without disabilities. Unfortunately, the teacher participants study failed to report using any research-based strategies to handle their students identified with ADHD characteristics (Moore et al, 2017).

The shortage of knowledge regarding research-based practices for students with ADHD in the general classroom settings brings up critical implications for students' education. Teachers must possess an essential understanding of students with ADHD to afford these individuals with the necessary services in the classroom in addition to referring them for further assessment as required (Mulholland et al., 2015). Based on this current research study, an investigation into special education teachers' knowledge and

opinions regarding research-based strategies will provide information about ways to address the lack of knowledge of evidence-based practices. Furthermore, the studies in the literature and ways that other research participants improved their understanding and abilities to teach students with ADHD will be important for teachers who pursue prospects to foster their everyday pedagogical practices to adequately meet the demands of all the learners in the general classroom settings.

Teachers' Implementation of Interventions

Classroom intervention approaches for students with ADHD need to be implemented and carried out with trustworthiness so that educators can attain expected outcomes. Therefore, educators need knowledge and expertise so they can execute these practices successfully for their students. Ennis et al. (2018) examined the efficiency of self-monitoring strategy as a low-intensity intervention approach for learners with behavioral and academic challenges. Participants in their study included three students from fifth grade identified with a disability in the classification of 'other health impairment' due to diagnoses of ADHD in an elementary school located in a rural area of United States. Also included in this study was a classroom teacher and an undergraduate student-teacher. The researchers assessed the degree to which the teachers conformed with the intervention specification. Based on this assessment, the researchers noted that when the intervention was carried out with fidelity, there was an improvement in the students' behaviors. Treatment validity, coupled with social validity data, confirmed the viability of the study when carried out in collaboration between the two teachers in the academic setting (Ennis et al., 2018).

The previously mentioned studies align with research conducted by Cho and Blair (2017), who evaluated a multicomponent function-based intervention for students identified with ADHD in a private special education school. The focus of this intervention involved modifying classroom activities to decrease students' disruptive behaviors and increase their academic engagement. Teacher participants took part in a 2-hour training session that focused on functional behavior assessments, implementing interventions with fidelity, and monitoring the students' behavior and academic progress. The intervention strategies were evidence-based, aligned with the student motivation and context where the behavior occurred, and were implemented with fidelity. Cho and Blair (2017) found a decrease in target problem behaviors and increased academic engagement across academic subjects.

Hart et al. (2017) investigated the self-reported use of behavior management support for students identified with ADHD. Participants in this research study were teachers derived from elementary through middle schools from 26 different states in the United States of America. Generally, the teachers studied indicated more frequent use of worldwide approaches compared to specific intensive approaches. As the students moved to higher levels such as middle schools, the teachers noted a decline in these intensive targeted strategies (Hart et al., 2017). Teachers who worked at the elementary school level were more likely to use daily report cards and weekly or daily home notes, unlike teachers at the middle school level. An investigation is needed into whether special education teachers, who often receive more specialized training in educating students

with disabilities (and ADHD), use effective strategies when teaching students with ADHD.

Results from the previously mentioned studies show that behavioral management strategies, if implemented with fidelity, can contribute significantly to improvements in students' on-task behaviors as well as academic engagement. Therefore, gaining an understanding of how special education teachers implement behavioral management strategies for students identified with ADHD and the challenges that they experience in inclusive classrooms is worthwhile and important.

Teachers' Perceptions of Students With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Teachers' perceptions, whether positive or negative, impact their interaction with students identified with ADHD. If teachers hold negative perceptions about this student population, they are less likely to use the needed interventions or modifications that enable students with ADHD to succeed in the general classroom setting. On the contrary, teachers with positive perceptions of their students with ADHD are likely to be receptive to available modifications and interventions geared to improving the students' academic and behavioral performance.

Ewe (2019) conducted a systematic review of existing literature relating to the teacher-student relationship in primary and secondary inclusive classroom settings. The main aim of the study was to synthesize previous research studies based on relationships between teachers and students with ADHD in mainstream classrooms. Theoretical approaches were used to understand the current literature and considering future research areas. Based on the methods used in the review of the literature, five investigations

centered on quantitative surveys, while two used a mixed methods approach. None of the methodologies used a qualitative measure. The findings in this review indicated that students identified with ADHD do not feel as close to their teachers as students without ADHD. These findings align with another study that investigated the student-teacher relationship; the findings showed that children with ADHD experience poorer relationships than children without ADHD (Zendarski et al., 2020). However, outcomes from a review of qualitative studies indicated that students preferred teachers who understood their needs. They described these teachers as nice, helpful, and easy to talk to (Ewe, 2019). The latter findings are corroborated by another study investigating the individualized teacher-child relationship and positive reinforcement strategy on the students' behavior and grades (Ali, 2018).

In a single-subject research study, Vogelgesang et al. (2016) investigated general education teachers' perceptions related to the viability of a technology-based intervention as a self-monitoring tool or strategy for students identified with ADHD who were singled out as experiencing engagement in the mainstream classroom. The participant was a Caucasian female teacher who had just entered her 13th year of teaching. Semistructured interviews for teacher participants were completed before and after the intervention process to obtain a full grasp of these educators' perceptions about the viability of the intervention. The teacher exuded self-confidence and enthusiasm concerning exploring new ideas instrumental for addressing students' behavioral challenges. Following this research study, the teacher demonstrated support for this technology-based intervention,

describing it as an invaluable resource necessary for the students' engagement in the academic environment (Vogelgesang et al., 2016).

In a mixed methods study, Guerra et al. (2017) examined elementary school teachers' perceptions about their ability and preparedness to serve students identified with ADHD. A total of 173 teachers from five different schools in South Texas participated in the study. Of these participants, 140 teachers held Bachelor's degrees, 32 held Master's degrees, and one held a doctoral degree. Guerra et al. (2017) used a survey design for their study that combined comparative design approaches to establish how the characteristics of the teachers' education and their experiences impacted their knowledge and perceptions of students with ADHD. Guerra et al. also used open-ended questions to understand the teachers' perceptions of teaching students with ADHD. Results from the study indicate that 60.7% of the teachers had no previous coursework that dealt with teaching students with ADHD. Furthermore, nearly 60% of the teachers surveyed stated that they did not attend training that specifically addressed teaching students with ADHD (Guerra et al. 2017). A key limitation of this study is that the participants were recruited from one geographical area, suggesting that the results may not generalize to other areas.

Guerra et al.'s (2017) study findings are corroborated by research by Zambo et al. (2013), who investigated pre-service teachers' knowledge relative to students with ADHD and concluded that teachers lack adequate understanding about ADHD symptoms and challenges. Zambo et al. (2013) further suggested that student teachers need information about this disorder to be embedded in their coursework.

Through a qualitative research design, David (2013) sought to understand teachers' perspectives about students with ADHD in regular education classrooms and their understanding of the disorder. David gathered data using in-depth, semistructured interviews, classroom observations, and questionnaires. Based on the study's results, 13 out of 15 teacher participants attributed a combination of factors, including the limited time parents spend with their children and inadequate supervision, to the reasons for the students' behaviors. Moreover, 73% of teachers mentioned electronic and electronic media such as television, video games, and Internet access as influencing factors for these students' ADHD behaviors (David, 2013). David (2013) reported preferential seating, student engagement, frequent cues, and close supervision as teacher responses that could limit the severity of the students' challenging behaviors.

Teachers have various perceptions about the academic functioning of students with ADHD. In a qualitative research study, teacher participants indicated that most adolescents identified with ADHD fail to take notes and raise their hands before speaking. These students tended to produce careless work and experienced challenges with organization and difficulty planning schoolwork (Sibley et al., 2014). These findings are consistent with an earlier study by Langberg et al. (2013) who evaluated the academic performance of 94 middle school students identified with ADHD and identified lack of organization and planning as major factors that impeded the learning of these individuals.

Summary and Conclusions

The literature review presented in Chapter 2 contained detailed information related to teaching students with ADHD. Although no specific examples in the current

literature discuss special education teachers' experiences with students identified with ADHD in inclusive classrooms specifically, several of these research studies are nonetheless relevant to this current study. The literature highlighted in Chapter 2 is informative regarding teachers' perceptions, knowledge, training, interventions, and challenges when working with students with ADHD. Therefore, this current study intended to fill this gap in the literature by providing detailed information about special teachers' daily experiences with students identified with ADHD in inclusive classrooms.

To summarize, ADHD is a prevalent disorder with major academic, social, and behavioral impacts for students (Fabiano et al., 2013). Interventions have been shown to improve outcomes for students with ADHD, and teachers' beliefs and perceptions of these interventions and about students with ADHD can impact their effectiveness. Special education teachers frequently work with students with ADHD, but little research has focused on their perceptions of the disorder and strategies they implement to help these students. This current research sought to fill this gap in the literature by interviewing special educators to examine their beliefs, perceptions, and experiences with students identified with ADHD and associated interventions.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

This research study's primary purpose was to understand special education teachers' beliefs and experiences regarding serving students with ADHD. This study was phenomenological in design and employed the interview method to obtain information from and about the study participants.

In the next segments, I highlight the research design and rationale, my role as the researcher, methodology, participant selection logic, instrumentation, researcher-developed instruments, procedures for data collection, analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures, concluding with a summary of the chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

The following central research question guided the research: What are special education teachers' beliefs and experiences regarding students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms? The following were the research subquestions: (a) How do special education teachers describe their experiences and work with students identified with ADHD? (b) What beliefs do special educators have that relate to students with ADHD?

The central concepts identified for the study were students with ADHD, inclusive classrooms, and special education teachers. For this study, *students with ADHD* was defined as individuals with a developmental disorder that is characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity (Morsink et al., 2017). *Inclusive classroom* was defined as an educational setting where students with disabilities are taught alongside their nondisabled peers and are provided needed accommodations and modifications. *Special*

education teacher was defined as a certified individual who provides individualized instruction to students who have been identified as having disabilities ranging from physical to intellectual needs (Tomlinson, 2015).

For this research, I considered a case study design as a potential approach but quickly eliminated this option due to the narrow sample required for most case studies, which, for this study, might have allowed for only a few schools or teachers, thereby making it difficult to gain the breadth of information needed (Creswell, 2013). I selected a phenomenological qualitative design for this study because the primary source of knowledge is perception, which complements understanding participants' lived experiences (Patton, 2015). According to Creswell (2013), a qualitative phenomenological researcher gains comprehensive insight into participants' experiences and perceptions about an issue. In this study, participants were special education teachers who had experience with students with ADHD and were considered specialists in their field. Phenomenology was a suitable approach for a qualitative research design with this population (Creswell, 2013).

Moustakas (1994) defined transcendental phenomenology as an approach in which the researcher describes phenomena through participants' own words, rather than the researcher interpreting their experiences. In this study, I sought information based on experiential descriptions obtained from special education teachers who taught students identified with ADHD. Because this topic had not been previously studied (to the best of my knowledge), a transcendental phenomenological research design seemed the most appropriate design option for the goal of understanding teachers' beliefs and experiences

to be achieved. I employed a purposive selection to identify participants to be interviewed for this qualitative study (Creswell, 2013). The rationale for this participant selection process was a deliberate one and increased the likelihood that participants would contribute to a broader understanding of the research questions (Rudestam & Newton, 2015).

The data collection process involved phone interviews and audio recordings of eight special education teachers. The settings for the interviews, which were integral to this study, were in locations where participants were free and comfortable to share their opinions about their experiences with currently identified students with ADHD. This qualitative interview process included 12 open-ended questions intended to elicit open conversations that allowed participating teachers to detail their beliefs and experiences involving students with ADHD in inclusive K-5 classrooms. Another rationale behind the interview process used in this phenomenological approach was that it served to establish a relationship between the teachers (interviewees) and myself (the interviewer) to obtain in-depth responses and elicit information that was both interesting and ethically obtained (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Role of the Researcher

As a special education teacher currently working with students with disabilities, some of whom had been identified with ADHD, I intended to maintain an appropriate interview protocol by, for example, asking one question at a time and not interrupting participants while they were speaking, acknowledging understanding of participants' responses by nodding, asking questions as needed to clarify issues, distinctly

transitioning from one topic to another, and expressing gratitude for their participation in the study (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Throughout the interview process, I tried to remain an active listener for the participants. In transcendental phenomenology, the researcher brackets himself or herself out of the study by revealing any personal connection with the phenomena under consideration (Sumskis & Moxham, 2017).

As a qualitative researcher, my role involved memoing, a practice that is common in qualitative research studies. Memoing allows qualitative researchers to explore and challenge their interpretations when analyzing collected data (Patel et al., 2016). Through this process, I critically examined my notes to eliminate personal interpretations of what participants were communicating.

As an ethical qualitative researcher, I needed to develop trustworthiness and avoid comments that might suggest scrutiny or judgment of participants' responses based on personal gains. To avoid this risk, audio recordings of the participants' responses helped to ensure that the content of the interviews was accurately captured (Patton, 2015). Each participant received a transcript of her interview (member checking) to minimize any researcher bias and to add credibility to the study (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, in an additional effort to avoid bias, the participants were recruited and selected from schools that had no connection to me.

Seidman (2012) noted that qualitative researchers interview participants, observe behaviors, collect raw data, and analyze data to complete a study. Therefore, my primary role in this study as the researcher was simply to employ the interview method effectively and collect and analyze the data. In summary, my role was to maintain objectivity during

the interview, transcription, and analysis processes so that I could accurately present information in the voices of the participants.

Methodology

The transcendental phenomenological methodology used in this qualitative study helped in gaining a wide understanding of special education teachers' beliefs and daily experiences working with students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. This methodology may be useful to other scholars who are interested in conducting a similar study. This methodology section encompasses the following topics: participant selection logic, instrumentation, researcher-developed instruments, and procedures for recruitment, participation, and data analysis.

Participant Selection Logic

For this study, I employed purposive sampling to select special education teachers from the schools' websites. Purposeful sampling was appropriate for this qualitative study because it increased the likelihood that participants would be knowledgeable and would provide a deep understanding of the phenomenon under consideration (Creswell, 2013). I also used snowballing, a purposeful sampling technique that involves the use of social networks to recruit participants for a study (Griffith et al., 2016). I sent prospective participants emails of introduction (Appendix A) that included the purpose and description of the study and an electronic version of the informed consent form. On the consent form, prospective participants responded with "yes" and provided their telephone numbers indicating their consent to participate in the study. After receiving their consent

to participate, I arranged a date and time to conduct a phone interview with each participant.

A criteria-based selection process ensured that the eight participants who were ultimately chosen for the study met the requirements for participation (Patton, 2015). The selection criteria included that the participants needed to be licensed special education teachers who had worked with at least one student identified with ADHD in an inclusive K-5 classroom. Additionally, the participants needed to have at least 3 years of teaching experience in special education. This criterion was intended to increase the likelihood that participants had worked with at least one student identified with ADHD. Participants had to be granted permission by their principals to participate in the study. Another selection criterion was that participants had no prior working relationship or any social ties with me as the primary investigator of this study. Selecting participants who had no previous connection with me was important because previous relationships or ties can limit research findings based on personal interest (Creswell, 2013). This transcendental phenomenological study had no exclusions regarding age, gender, race, or more than 3 years of teaching experience to allow for a balanced approach to understanding the experiences of K-5 special educators currently serving students with ADHD.

I identified K-5 special education teachers from the district website, and after obtaining permission from their principals, I sent them emails with an invitation to participate in the study. I also used the snowballing strategy to recruit two additional participants (Griffith et al., 2016). However, I dropped two participants, either because they did not respond to my subsequent communication or they did not meet the inclusion

criteria of at least 3 years teaching special education. Ideally, prospective participants were contacted because they were deemed relevant to the study (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the recruitment process was based on the understanding that participants had unique experiences and that their participation was guaranteed (Robinson, 2014).

Instrumentation

In any qualitative study, the interview process requires that specific instruments be used to gain the needed information (Kumar, 2014). The term *researcher-developed instruments* refers to tools such as letters of cooperation, consent forms, and interview questions designed by the researcher as facilitating the data collection process. The protocols and instruments used in this study related to semistructured interviews and audio recordings, which constituted the primary researcher-developed instruments for this study. Other researcher-developed instruments included the consent form and interview guide.

Before beginning the interviews, I reminded participants of the consent form they had completed earlier, which indicated their willingness to participate in the study. It is important to note that participants received an interview guide (Appendix B) 2 days before the scheduled interview to acquaint them with the questions. According to Brinkmann and Kvale (2014), interview guides are instrumental in supporting consistency in interviews while also serving as a crucial tool that connects the research problem, questions, and relevant literature.

An interview method is commonly used by qualitative researchers to collect data and thus was the basis for the instrument development in this study. Because the purpose

of this transcendental phenomenological research study was to help provide an in-depth understanding of special education teachers' beliefs and experiences teaching students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms, the interview approach to gathering data was deemed useful for this particular study (Peters & Halcomb, 2015). Therefore, I used semistructured phone interviews, which were designed to last between 50 and 60 minutes, to allow for a structured approach to the process and probe participants to give full responses. Interviewing participants allowed me to ask detailed questions about the topic and to gather reliable information to answer the research questions.

In this transcendental phenomenological study, I used an open-ended question approach to collect adequate and appropriate information from participants to answer the research questions. I asked participants to elaborate or explain their responses if necessary. As Creswell (2013) suggested, I developed and prepared interview questions in advance; however, the questions changed depending on the dynamic nature of the interview process. This researcher-developed approach incorporated trustworthiness factors such as credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability to establish the content validity of the findings (Creswell, 2013).

Audio recordings provided for "thicker" descriptions and the trustworthiness and accuracy of research information (Patton, 2015). For this study, I used a digital audio recorder (with an iPhone as a backup device) to capture and save the information provided by the participants in their own words. After the interview process, I transcribed the data before analysis. The audio recordings became part of the collected data and captured detailed information that was useful during transcription and analysis processes

(Creswell, 2013). The audio recordings will be preserved for 5 years and then discarded per university requirements.

Researcher-Developed Instruments

The researcher-developed instruments included the informed consent form, which contained information about my background as the researcher, risks, participants' privacy, and the nature of the study. Semistructured interview questions, which were field-tested by two experts who specialized in qualitative research, formed part of the researcher-developed instruments used and allowed for a more structured approach to the process and the ability to probe participants for more detailed responses (Appendix B).

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Permission to conduct this transcendental phenomenological study was obtained from the district and school administrators through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Walden University. The prospective participants were special educators who possessed 3 or more years of experience working with students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. I made initial contact with the school principals, from whom I sought permission to recruit teachers. I selected the schools and special education teachers from the district website and sent them letters of invitation and the informed consent form to participate in the research. Upon receiving responses from the teachers and their consent to participate in the study, I contacted each participant by phone to arrange a day and time for a 50- to 60-minute phone interview. The interviews took place in a home setting because such a setting is useful in maintaining participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Through the interview process, open-ended questions allowed for detailed

responses (Creswell, 2013). Semistructured interviews with individual participants allowed depth of discussion and provided opportunities to probe the interviewees and encourage them to expand on their responses (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

Saturation of information refers to the redundancy of gathered information (Kumar, 2014). Although the literature does not directly address this topic, information saturation is likely to occur in interview studies with 10-12 participants. A qualitative researcher may recognize that, during an interview, no new information is being obtained, such that further interviews will become meaningless, with nothing new being learned (Kumar, 2014).

Once the interviews were completed and the participants' responses were recorded to capture comprehensive, detailed information, all pertinent data for this phenomenological study had been collected. Important to note is that demographic information, which included the participants' gender, race or ethnicity, and years of teaching experience, was also obtained through the interview questions. This information was beneficial during the analysis process, where common themes regarding the teachers' experiences could be identified (Creswell, 2013). Within approximately 2 weeks of their interviews, participants received transcripts of their interviews to verify the information as accurate representations of their views. Each participant returned her transcript within 2 weeks of confirming that the responses had been recorded accurately. Lastly, after verifying the transcripts, all teachers who participated in the study were mailed a $10 Starbucks gift card as a thank-you gesture.

Once the interviews had been completed, I conducted a debriefing session with each participant. I encouraged the teachers to send me any further information or concerns that they may later realize. I scheduled follow-up meetings as part of member checking to discuss the data analysis and results and clarify any queries for data validity.

Data Analysis Plan

The primary data collection process involved interviews. The resultant information used for analysis was coded, categorized, and thematized to answer the study's research questions (see coding map in Appendix D). In this way, the data became connected to specific research questions. I used a coding map to organize and code the data manually into a Microsoft Word document (Lauer et al., 2018).

Specifically, the study's analysis was guided by a modified van Kaam process of analysis (Sumskis & Moxham, 2017) to obtain a rich understanding of special education teachers' experiences who serve students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. The van Kaam method employs analysis of data in four stages namely (a) horizontalization, (b) reduction and elimination (c) clustering and thematizing, and (d) final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application. Important statements by the participants relevant to their experiences were highlighted in the initial coding process; this process is referred to as horizontalization (Sumskis & Moxham, 2017). The next step was to reduce or eliminate participants' irrelevant statements such that only significant information about their experiences remained. The van Kaam method also guided the researcher in thematizing the invariant components, checking the themes against the data, creating individual textural descriptions, and creating composite structural descriptions

(Sumskis & Moxham, 2017). Thus, I clustered the invariant components that remained after filtering into relevant themes. I then verified the themes to determine if the information was represented explicitly in each complete transcript. If the information in the themes was found to be incompatible with the information in the transcripts, I eliminated that information. Next, I prepared an individualized textural description for each participant as well as textural-structural descriptions. Finally, I created a combined description of all the participants' experiences (Sumskis & Moxham, 2017). In this analysis process, data saturation was reached if no new information was found from emerging themes.

Issues of Trustworthiness

In a qualitative study, the data collected must be trustworthy. Validity in qualitative research is the extent to which the researcher maintains credible and plausible data (Creswell, 2013). The four aspects of qualitative studies that researchers must establish are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell, 2013).

Establishing the credibility of a study is one of the most important criteria of qualitative research (Pilot & Beck, 2014). Amankwaa (2016) suggested that researchers should establish procedures that make their work worthy to their audiences. Creswell (2013) recommended eight procedures for verifying qualitative findings and suggested that a researcher should employ at least two of these eight. For this study, I used member checking of willing participants as one of Creswell's eight procedures to establish the credibility of this research. Creswell (2013) also encouraged using a peer debriefer in

qualitative research to enhance the credibility of the findings. Therefore, in the debriefing process, I also worked with a doctoral student who was conducting a qualitative study. For a qualitative researcher, the credibility of information must be ensured by carefully re-examining different categories and themes to ensure that no new information is omitted. According to Kumar (2014), the interviewer may also realize that no further information is being gleaned during the interview process. As such, the process becomes laborious, with nothing meaningful about the topic being learned. Therefore, in this study, if a participant continued to provide the same information and nothing new about the topic was being gained, I stopped the interview process.

Transferability in a qualitative study occurs when the results can be transferred to other contexts (Anney, 2014). Transferability applies to the external validity of the study and denotes generalization of the findings to other settings. According to Kumar (2014), other researchers may evaluate qualitative research findings and apply the details to other settings, people, and situations if the phenomenon described contains relevant information that is fundamental to their study. In this study, transferability was upheld by ensuring that at least eight interviews were completed or until thematic saturation of the data was attained. By providing exhaustive details related to participants' experiences, readers shared and gained an inclusive look at the general experiences of the participants (Creswell, 2013).

Dependability in this study was achieved by making the report available to the participants to evaluate the findings, interpretations, and recommendations to confirm that these elements were supported by the interview data. I also utilized a peer debriefer

who signed a confidentiality agreement form (Appendix C) to review the findings to ensure that they were substantiated by the data. Additionally, I employed the services of an expert with experience in qualitative research to conduct an audit trail that involved cross-checking the transcripts to ascertain that they corroborated the findings (Anney, 2014). Morse (2015) recommended using an outside individual to conduct an inquiry audit to ensure the linkage between the data and the research conclusions.

Confirmability was achieved in this study through reflexivity, a technique used by phenomenological researchers to verify findings (Creswell, 2013). This process involved maintaining a journal in which my background as a special educator and the measures I undertook throughout the study, such as bracketing to avoid bias, were detailed. For example, as soon as any bias became evident, I noted such bias in the journal. I aimed to allow the findings of the research to be based exclusively on the participants' responses and not driven by my biases or self-interests.

Ethical Procedures

The ethical procedures required for this study were in place before and during the study. For example, IRB approval was in place before recruiting participants. Furthermore, I adhered to key research processes before undertaking the study. For example, participants were required to complete informed consent forms before they participated in the interview process. Also, to protect the rights and privacy of participating teachers, I informed the participants that the data collected would be kept confidential and that I would ensure their privacy in the study reports. I informed participants that their participation in the study was voluntary and they had the right to

decline to respond to any questions or withdraw from the study at any time if they chose to do so. Before activating any recording devices, I reminded participants of the consent form that they completed allowing the interview to be recorded and asked them if they were still agreeable to it. I informed the interviewees that if at any point during the interview they wanted the recorder to be turned off, they could ask me to do so and I would honor their request.

Regarding the treatment of the data, the collected interview data and any demographic information about the participants were stored in a secure place. For example, interview and demographic information were stored on secure password-protected USB sticks and hard drives. This process helped to ensure compliance with ethical considerations, as pointed out by Creswell (2013). The information on the drives was accessible only by an authorized research team member or myself. Likewise, hard copies that contained interview notes, printed drafts, consent forms, and audiotapes were locked safely in a file cabinet accessible only by other authorized team members and myself. After 5 years, I will destroy hard copies of the transcripts and discard the audiotapes as required by Walden University.

Summary

This overview of the components and processes involved in this qualitative transcendental phenomenological research laid out how I intended to explore special education teachers' beliefs and experiences with students who have been identified with ADHD and were being served in K-5 inclusive classrooms at the time of the study. A transcendental phenomenological approach helped me to explore the experiences of

special education teachers of students with ADHD in their own voices. The primary components of this research method outlined in this chapter included my role as a qualitative researcher, population and sampling, selection criteria for participation, data collection instruments, and data analysis. I collected, transcribed, and analyzed the data obtained from the interviews to extract common emergent themes. To ensure the trustworthiness of this research and its findings, I employed strategies to establish its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability and adhered to ethical procedures, as discussed in this chapter. In Chapter 4, I reviewed the study, included data collected, and presented my research findings.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

This qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was conducted in the southern region of the United States. Participants were eight special education teachers who taught in K-5 inclusive classrooms. The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of special education teachers' beliefs and experiences teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. To achieve this purpose, I used open-ended interview questions to highlight special education teachers' collaboration and interaction with general education teachers and students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. I also highlighted special education teachers' beliefs about students with ADHD, effective professional development, and the ideal inclusive classroom for students with ADHD. In previous chapters, I described background information, the conceptual framework for the study, and the methodology of this research. In the literature review, I explored current studies on teachers' knowledge and training teaching students with disabilities, the prevalence of ADHD, and academic and behavioral interventions. In Chapter 4, I discuss the research setting, participant demographics, data collection, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness. At the end of this chapter, I provide a summary that contains a brief discussion of the study's findings in alignment with the research questions.

Research Questions

The central research question for this qualitative, transcendental phenomenological study was the following: What are special education teachers' beliefs

and experiences teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms? The research subquestions were as follows: (a) How do special education teachers describe their experiences and work with students identified with ADHD? (b) How do special education teachers describe beliefs they hold about students with ADHD?

Setting

This study's setting included six different public elementary schools from one school district in a southern U.S. state. The schools were situated in rural and urban locations and served students mainly from lower to middle-class families. The average student population size in the schools was 547, and the racial makeup was 39% Black, 28% White, and 21% Hispanic. Nine participants were interviewed via phone over 2 weeks, with the first interview completed on May 4, 2020, and the last interview completed on May 18, 2020. After the interviews, one participant did not respond to my subsequent communication.

Demographics

Participants' demographics were based on race or culture, gender, grade levels taught, and years of teaching experience. Ten prospective participants completed the informed consent form demonstrating their interest in the study. However, one teacher did not meet the inclusion criteria of 3 years teaching special education, and another teacher did not respond to subsequent phone calls, text messages, and e-mails after the interview. All special education teachers interviewed for this phenomenological study had teaching experience in special education ranging from 7 to 24 years. All participants were female; five identified as White, and three identified as Black. They all met

inclusion criteria for teaching experience in K-5 inclusive classrooms, teaching students with ADHD, and teaching license in special education. Three participants described themselves as southerners, one participant described herself as Jewish, and seven described themselves as family-oriented, urban-raised, Christian, conservative, and liberal. Each participant was considered very experienced as a special education teacher. All participants are identified by pseudonym to maintain their privacy. Table 1 displays participant demographic data.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

Participant	Gender	Race	Years of experience
Beatrice	Female	White	12
Sarah	Female	African American	7
Christine	Female	African American	24
Belinda	Female	African American	11
Regina	Female	White	7
Janet	Female	White	13
Lynnette	Female	White	14
Pamela	Female	White	11

Data Collection

Before the interview process, I obtained approval from Walden University's IRB on April 3, 2020 (Approval Number: 1652470600) to conduct the research. I selected participants and scheduled interviews as they responded to the invitations to participate in the study. I used a notebook to record my personal experiences as a special education

teacher with students with ADHD, in order to reflect on any potential biases that were likely to creep into my study report. This process of self-reflection is a critical step in a qualitative phenomenological study, referred to as *bracketing* (Moustakas, 1994). I interviewed nine participants via phone in a quiet setting at the participants' convenience. All interviews were audio recorded using a Sony digital audio recorder with an iPhone as a backup device. During the interviews, there were no distractions experienced that were likely to impact the study's results. Participants chose interview dates and times that were convenient for them. Only one participant had to reschedule the interview date due to a family commitment; nine participants were interviewed as scheduled.

The recruitment process consisted of obtaining permission from 52 elementary school principals to recruit special education teachers from their schools. Out of the 52 principals I contacted, only 17 responded to permit me to recruit participants. One principal responded but did not grant permission, citing disruption of teachers' lives due to the coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19). Once the principals allowed me to recruit teachers, I obtained publicly available names and email contacts of special education teachers from the school district website. I sent them an email of introduction (Appendix A), a password-protected informed consent form, and an approval letter from the district. I sent emails to 46 special education teachers, and only eight responded expressing their willingness to participate in the study. Another prospective participant informed me that she knew two special education teachers who might be interested in my study, so I used a snowball sampling strategy to recruit two additional participants. On the consent form, prospective participants were expected to indicate "yes" and provide

their telephone number if they were willing to participate in the study. No participant signature was required on the consent form to maintain confidentiality and the privacy of the participants. Once I received informed consent forms from prospective participants, I sent text messages and scheduled phone interviews.

Before data collection, I created a table in my notebook with participants' names, email addresses, schools, and telephone numbers. I printed out consent forms that prospective participants forwarded back to me, and I kept them in a safe location only accessible by me. All participants understood that they were free to withdraw from the study if they chose to do so without retaliation, and that I would maintain the confidentiality of their identities. I assigned pseudonyms to participants to maintain their privacy. Before turning on the audio recorder, I verified that participants were amenable to being audio recorded. All nine participants whom I interviewed were female and were licensed special education teachers teaching in a southern region of the United States at the time of the study.

I conducted phone interviews over 2 weeks. After the second week, I ceased soliciting participants because I had reached the saturation point of data collection. I was confident that I had gathered adequate information and that interviewing additional special education teachers would not have provided me with new information other than what I had already gathered (Moustakas, 1994).

During the interviews, I asked each participant 12 questions (Appendix B) and follow-up questions as needed. As the interviewer, I was an active listener and made sure that I did not interrupt the participants while they were talking. I reflected on my own

experiences as a special educator to eliminate any biases that were likely to creep in during the interview process. During the interviews, I encouraged rich descriptions of participants' responses through follow-up questions. At the end of the interviews, I asked participants if they had any information that they deemed pertinent to this study. All the interviews lasted 35 to 45 minutes. I informed participants that I would send them completed transcripts within 2 weeks as part of the member checking process to enhance the trustworthiness of the study's findings. I encouraged participants to contact me if they had additional information that they wished to share or if they had any questions or concerns. I completed each interview by thanking participants for their time and reminding them that I would contact them if any questions emerged.

Data Analysis

This study's data analysis was based on a modified version of the van Kaam method of phenomenological data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). In the van Kaam method of data analysis, four steps are highlighted: (a) horizontalization, (b) reduction and elimination, (c) clustering and thematizing, and (d) final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application. After the interviews, I used the interview data saved on the digital audio recorder to transcribe the interviews on my desktop computer using dictation software. I saved the transcripts in Microsoft Word format and compared the transcripts with the digital recording while making necessary corrections. To code the transcripts, I used color-coded highlighting in Microsoft Word. I combined nine interview transcripts into one document, separating participants' data using their assigned pseudonyms. The completed transcribed document totaled 56 pages. In my journal, I

recorded participants' names, dates of interview, telephone numbers, and pseudonyms for identification purposes. Once I completed the transcripts, I forwarded the password-protected transcripts to the participants to allow for the member-checking process. Participants received transcripts of their responses within 2 weeks of the interviews. All participants returned the transcripts within an average of 2 weeks. One participant neither returned the transcript nor responded to my text messages, phone calls, and emails after the interview. Upon receiving transcripts from eight participants, I sent text messages asking them for their home addresses and sent each a $10 Starbucks gift card as a thank-you gesture.

In my initial coding process, I read the transcripts multiple times to gain a rich understanding of participants' shared information. First, I scanned for words, statements, and expressions to determine relevant statements pertaining to the phenomenon. This coding process is called *horizontalization* (Sumskis & Moxham, 2017). The next step was the reduction and elimination stage, where participants' statements that I deemed irrelevant to the phenomenon were eliminated, so that only invariant constituents were left (Moustakas, 1994). In the third step, which involved clustering and thematizing, I carefully reviewed each transcript and for each interview question wrote emergent patterns in the margins that demonstrated relevance to teachers' experiences (Saldaña, 2016). After completing a review of all interview questions, I identified common patterns among participants from each research question and used different colors to code and categorize these into themes and subthemes. I used a different document to color code common themes and subthemes. I conducted another review of the transcripts,

summarized, and labeled participants' responses to each research question as themes and subthemes. Main themes were established if four or more participants specifically stated a phrase or word, while subthemes were selected if two or more participants used the same or related phrases. The last step was final identification of the invariant constituents and themes by application (Moustakas, 1994). In this stage, I verified the themes and subthemes to ensure that the information was correctly represented in the transcripts (Sumskis & Moxham, 2017). Any information in the themes and subthemes that was found to be incompatible with the transcripts was finally eliminated (Yüksel & Yildirim, 2015).

Six major themes emerged for each research question: *positive experiences, challenges, professional development, ideal inclusive classroom, students with ADHD can be successful*, and *characteristics of students with ADHD.* I created subthemes from each major theme when two or more participants described an experience or provided a statement or statements relevant to that theme. Twenty-one subthemes emerged from major themes. They included *administrative support*, *teacher-student interaction*, *collaboration with general education teachers*, *large caseloads*, *team-based*, and *multiple strategies*, among others.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I used member checking, asking participants to review the transcripts of their interviews to confirm that the information was an accurate representation of their responses. Only one participant made a minor change involving a typo error on her

transcript. The remaining participants approved their transcripts as an accurate communication of their beliefs and experiences relating to teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. In ensuring the credibility of this research study, I conducted an organized analysis of the data collected (Patton, 2015). During data analysis, I listened to the audio recordings repeatedly; this provided me with a basis for accuracy and reliability of the data. A researcher embodies trustworthiness, reliability, confirmability, and transferability to achieve the credibility of a study (Patton, 2015). To further enhance the credibility of this study, I worked with a peer debriefer, a doctoral student currently conducting qualitative research from a local university, and an expert in qualitative research to ensure that data corroborated the study's findings. These individuals signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix C) for privacy purposes.

Transferability

The transferability of this study was achieved after all eight participants had been interviewed through open-ended questions that allowed respondents to provide detailed accounts of their experiences so that readers could determine if they share participants' experiences (Creswell, 2013; Noble & Smith, 2015). Additionally, I enhanced transferability through the purposeful recruitment of participants who represented variation in race, years of teaching experience, and grade levels taught. According to Moustakas (1994), researchers seek to gain variation in their sampling to enhance the transferability of their studies.

Dependability

I developed an interview guide (Appendix B) and used the same questions for each participant until saturation of data was reached. In employing member checking of transcribed data, I enhanced the dependability of my study because this process confirms the strength and validity of data (Birt et al., 2016). The dependability of a study allows other researchers to duplicate the findings in studies carried out under similar situations (Noble & Smith, 2015). Saturation was achieved when meaningful themes were exhausted, and no new themes emerged.

Confirmability

To enhance confirmability, I maintained a reflective journal about the data collection and analysis processes to ascertain that all pertinent information was included, adding to the validity and depth of the findings (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Confirmability was further achieved through bracketing, whereby I recorded personal biases or judgments that were likely to influence my study's findings. During the interview process, I paid close attention to the participants and refrained from interfering while they were speaking. Through this, I ensured that the findings were an accurate reflection of their own words and experiences. Lastly, I established confirmability by color coding and grouping the data in Microsoft Word using common themes.

Results

In this section, I provided a brief description of each participant. Pseudonyms and general terms are used to represent participants, schools, and the school district. This study's results were based on open-ended interview questions with participants and an

analysis of themes and subthemes aligned with the research questions. I compiled a combined description of participants' beliefs and experiences teaching students identified with ADHD in inclusive K-5 classrooms.

Introduction to Participants

The following is a brief description of participants who are identified by pseudonyms. They were five White and three Black female participants. The participants' teaching experiences ranged from 7 to 24 years at the time of the study. All participants were teaching at least one student with ADHD in a K-5 inclusive classroom.

Beatrice is a White female and had been teaching in inclusive classroom for 12 years. She had a bachelor's degree in special education, and she taught Kindergarten through fifth grades. Beatrice remarked that she had trained staff whom she also invited to her classroom to observe her use of valuable strategies for the students.

Sarah is an African American female who was teaching kindergarten through third-grade special education students. Sarah had a bachelor's degree in child development and a master's in elementary education. Sarah had a Pre-K certification and special education general curriculum and had taught in an inclusive classroom for 7 years. Sarah described herself as a typical southern woman.

Christine is an African American female who had been an exceptional children's teacher for 27 years; 18 of those years were in self-contained classrooms of different life skills. Christine had taught in inclusive classroom for 5 years working primarily with third through fifth grades.

Belinda is an African American female, and she had been teaching in an inclusive classroom for 10 years. She had an undergraduate degree in criminal justice as well as an Alternative Initial Licensure. Belinda described herself as a country girl who grew up as a Southern Baptist in a very strict home.

Regina is originally from the suburbs of a city in the American Midwest. She identified her race as White, although her father is Hispanic. She had a master's degree in special education, and she had taught in inclusive classroom for 7 years. Regina taught kindergarten and 1st grades, although she had been working with Kindergarten through fifth grades in the previous year.

Janet is a White female, and she had been teaching special education for 13 years in one elementary school. Janet grew up around children with special needs, and her mother was a special education teacher. Janet's undergraduate and master's degrees were in special education. Janet described herself as a Christian who grew up in the North Central part of the United States.

Lynnette is a White female who grew up in a Jewish family. She had a master's degree in special education and had been teaching for 14 years. Lynnette taught two classes of math inclusion, and she saw each group for 30 to 40 minutes.

Pamela is a White female, and she had taught special education for 11 years. Pamela had an undergraduate degree in special education and a master's in early childhood education. She taught for 8 years in preschool special education and then moved to private school where she taught kindergarten for 3 years. Pamela taught

Kindergarten, second, third, and fourth grades, and in the last 3 years she returned to special education.

Central Research Question

My central research question was as follows: What are special education teachers' beliefs and experiences teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms? This central research question was aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of the beliefs and experiences of special education teachers who work with students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. To support the central research question, I used two research subquestions through open-ended semistructured interview questions with eight special education teachers who were currently working with students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms.

Research Subquestion 1

The first research subquestion was as follows: How do special education teachers describe their experiences and work with students identified with ADHD? Three main themes and subthemes emerged from this research question and they are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2

Emergent Themes and Subthemes for Research Subquestion 1

Main theme	Subtheme	Number of participants
Positive experiences	Modeling interventions	2
	Administrative support	5
	Teacher–student interaction	5
	Collaboration	6
Challenges	General education teachers	5
	Inconsistency in medication	4
	Large caseloads	3
	Stigma	3
	School mandate for inclusion	3
Professional development	No training specific to ADHD	8
	Collaborative training	3
	Training for general education teachers	4

Theme 1: Positive Experiences

In my initial questions to participants, I asked them to describe their experiences with a student or students with ADHD in the inclusive classroom. All eight participants described at least one positive experience while teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classroom. These positive experiences were based on modeling interventions to colleagues, school administrative support, teacher-student interaction, and collaboration with the general education teachers and parents. Beatrice noted that she had so many different experiences with students with ADHD because every child is different, and their needs vary. She indicated that her experience with students with ADHD has trained her to be flexible in exploring multiple strategies to help her students. Beatrice remarked,

"Some of the positive things about being in inclusive setting is being able to model interventions and strategies for the teachers to use for the benefit of all students, and this is a good thing." Additionally, Christine indicated that she has "coordinated with the general education teachers to help develop strategies as well to ensure success for the students in the classrooms."

Five teachers (Beatrice, Christine, Belinda, Regina, and Janet) described their positive experiences based on the support from the school administration. Belinda stated that at the district level, "there is a level of expectations that students will receive high level instruction and that it will be equitable among all students." Janet expressed support from her school administration regarding behavior specialists whom they receive from the district as needed to help with kids whose behaviors are out of control. Christine noted that her "school administration has been very supportive and always putting the needs of the students first." She assumed that her school had a "very good support system." If there are issues with students, her administrators share information that might help with students' home life or medication. Christine further described her positive experiences based on the scheduling of classes and the placement of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms at her school. She stated,

> The way our schedule was set up at school, the morning blocks consisted of math and reading, which are the most difficult core subjects. When working with students with ADHD, it is good to have those classes scheduled for early in the morning, so that they can get that instruction early in the day when they are more focused. As the day tends to go on, lots of things happen that could lead to other

> unnecessary distractions, so typically math and reading at my school are in the morning.

Christine also described support from her school administration regarding student placement, especially those with ADHD in inclusive classrooms.

> At my school before students come back in August, the administration and the EC department sit down together and look at our students and the teachers considering their needs and personalities, and all our students in upper grades are placed in one homeroom. We figure out typically considering their needs and personalities and which teacher would be the best fit for those students. That is one of the top priorities, which is the selection of the general education teacher.

More than half of the participants described their positive experiences relative to daily positive interactions with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. For example, Pamela recalled her experience with one student:

> When I taught 4th grade, I had a student in my class that sticks in my mind. He would kind of just burst in the classroom every morning and trying to make that connection, I would greet him first and give him some space to do what he needed to do. He liked to move a lot. What we ended up doing for him was, I moved him to sit in the back of the classroom and used a little tape box on the floor around his desk. I told him he could get up, he could move, but he had to stay in that space so that he wasn't disturbing the other kids' learning and he did really great with that. That's something that I've used with multiple kids because it really seemed to work well for him.

According to Sarah, building a relationship with her students, especially those identified with ADHD has helped both parties. She noted that the routine and token system work very well in her interaction with students who are identified with ADHD:

> I set specific schedules and routine with the students, and I make sure I do not alter them. In case I alter the routine, I ensure this is communicated to the students in advance, so they understand what is coming next. The routine works very well with my students that I interact with. I also create a token system with them where they can earn rewards, and this works very well. The consequences are not earning a token because they have not met the set goals. Expectations are based on appropriate interaction with others, turn taking, assignment completion, and any other behavior that will help them to function better in the general education setting better. Usually they are up to five tokens and these could be simple things such as stickers, skittles or a five-minute break on their iPad, and any other thing that excites them. Otherwise I let them choose their rewards, and that helps a lot.

The majority of the teachers described their positive experiences concerning collaboration with general education teachers. These participants noted that their ability to collaborate with general education teachers has contributed to their success in working with students with ADHD in the inclusive classroom. For example, Christine shared,

> I have had some teachers that I work with who will utilize me to work with other groups of students who may not be EC students but still can benefit from extra support. I have also had teachers that I have worked with that have had me work with small groups of students including my EC students as well as AG students

> and other students . . . A few years ago, I worked with a fifth-grade teacher for reading. It was the year that we implemented American Reading Company, and we had all of our students in that class . . . Had you walked into that room not knowing who I was and the regular education teacher, all you could see were two teachers teaching. I remember we had an observation by the principal and the lesson was carried out so effectively that she did not even know some of the students were EC. What she saw when she walked in were two teachers teaching together a whole group lesson. She was a phenomenal teacher to work with, and it benefited all students. It is a give and take and we found the balance and chemistry that was amazing . . . I try not to pull students with ADHD to a table if possible, but I try just to monitor what they are doing and leave them as part of that whole group.

Regina indicated that she has "been blessed to work with a lot of amazing teachers." She had two specific stories about her positive experiences collaborating with two general education teachers in inclusive classrooms:

> I had a kindergarten teacher that at first, we had very different viewpoints. She is ADHD herself. She is very much left brain and I am right brain. We both understood what our kids needed and worked together for 5 years. We would work before class and after school and set the rotations before time to support the students . . . I worked with another general education teacher for 12 years. She is very old school, very structured, and any kid that I've ever put in her room including my ADHD kids always thrived because she is very calm, structured,

> and flexible. I did math inclusion with her. We did a lot of centers and rotations and we shared the kids, EC or not EC to work with. Depending on the year, type of kids, and structure, we changed what we did, but we worked really well together. We actually did a lot of co-teaching but not this year.

Theme 2: Challenges

Although participants differed in their descriptions of their experiences teaching students with ADHD in inclusive classroom, half of the teachers identified a lack of cooperation from the general education teachers and inconsistency with administering student medication as major challenges to their work. According to Regina, her experiences with general education teachers depended on individuals. She claimed, "Some teachers have no choice serving students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms because that is what is indicated on their IEPs." Regina noted that working with a special education teacher in one classroom is new for some general education teachers; therefore, it poses some challenges. Belinda indicated that her biggest challenge is trying to find what works for her "students with ADHD and convincing teachers to buy into particular behavior interventions." She noted that some students with ADHD have behavior intervention plans, although creating plans that everybody can buy into and implement with fidelity is always challenging. Pamela described her challenges relative to general education teachers who are wary about her presence in the general classroom. She recalled,

> When I first started doing inclusion in the classroom, I was met with different styles of teachers. Some teachers are very welcoming, and others are wary about

> why I am in there. They want to know what I'm doing, whether I am watching them, and they want to apologize. I think it's really important for them to know that I'm there to support and help the children in any way I can. A lot of teachers are very adverse at having another adult in the classroom, and it's very challenging to work with another adult in one classroom. One teacher that when I first started going in to see kids, I literally saw every day she was like, "this schedule," and I was like, "I'm just here to help." "I'm not here to observe you or your teaching or anything." "I'm here for this kid and to support both of you in any way I can." It can be challenging that way.

Half of the participants identified parents' inconsistencies with administering medication for their children as part of their challenges when dealing with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Regina noted that some of her students who take medication are often under control. She recalled, "I have had experiences where the students not on medication were falling behind and knowing that they were falling behind started acting out. However, as soon as medication stops, disruptive behaviors are back." Regina indicated that her biggest frustration is when parents stop medication for their children with ADHD. Regina stressed the need to have consistent communication with parents so teachers understand what is going on at home and how they can support the students at school. Janet also described her challenges with two students whose parents were inconsistent with medication:

> I had one little boy that I got in kindergarten, and I kept him all the way through fourth grade. He was very much ADHD like. He couldn't sit still on the seat and

was the class clown. Dad put him on medication for a few months, and when he was on medication, he was able to focus. Without his medication he was not successful. In inclusion, I was with him for an hour and a half out of his school day partly in reading and partly in math. When I was in there during my small groups, he was fine, but when he was just out with the rest of his 30 other peers, he was not very successful. We tried behavior points, we tried lots of different things with him and he was not successful. When he was on his medication, he did great and you would not even know he was EC. It's very frustrating knowing what they can do and especially in his case, it's a medication issue. We would talk about calming your brain and thinking about your strategies and talking about specific things, but the impulse control was not there. A lot of times he would get frustrated with himself and I would tell him, "As you get older, you going to learn strategies to help yourself." "I know it's really hard right now, but it will get better as you mature." It was his fourth grade so he kind of got it, but he was not still quite there yet. Just staying in contact with parents and telling them about the difference you see in the children, praising them when they are doing great is beneficial. Most of my years I spent in K-2 or K-3. Like the child that I had last year, I had him in kindergarten, first, and third grades. A lot of my kids came in as kindergarteners with ADHD.

Janet shared an additional experience:

I had a little girl that had ADHD and intellectual disability. She came in kindergarten as DD and when we did her reevaluation to change her category in

> second grade, we ended up doing dual for her because of intellectual disability. She also had ADHD, which was severely impacting her. I had her in kindergarten, skipped her in third and fourth and got her again in fifth grade for math. In kindergarten she did not have medication and either her second year in kindergarten or first grade, she was put on medication and again for her it made a world of difference.

Belinda described her experience with one of her students regarding inconsistencies with medication:

> I have a student now who is in fifth grade going to sixth grade and has ADHD diagnosis. Mom is in the medical field and I think the boy took medicine for a little while in lower grades and hadn't taken it in a couple of years. He's very impulsive and he was getting into a lot of trouble. I had almost 30-day maternity leave for the first part of the school year, so of course when I returned, he had 11 write-ups.

Half of the teachers identified large caseloads as obstacles to providing services for students identified with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. For example, Sarah mentioned her inability to provide adequate support for her students, especially those with ADHD, due to the large caseload. She remarked, "Sometimes I may have 33 students in my caseload, and I do not feel like these students can get the best from one teacher." Sarah believes that additional help from support staff will be helpful to her in meeting the students' needs in inclusive classrooms, especially those identified with

ADHD. Additionally, Janet expressed challenges working with students with ADHD in the inclusive classroom:

> Looking at our EC caseloads at the elementary level, we can go up to 35. This year I was case managing 23 and I had an additional five kids that I saw that were from another case manager, and I was sharing the classroom with another EC teacher. This pauses some challenges. You could have a caseload of even 15 and two grade levels, you could do so much to support them. When you're working across four grade levels and 25 kids, you're very restricted. How many times can you go check out on your kids in the day? It would be nice if I had time in the day where I can go check on students, especially those with ADHD. It's like when you're back to back with groups, you just don't have that possibility . . . I think what is frustrating with our kids with ADHD is that they are capable, but our classrooms are not designed for these kids. Because our classrooms are big and they move quickly, you just don't have time to sit there and stay right on top of that one kid when sometimes you have multiple kids.

Some teachers cited stigma as one of the challenges that they experience while working with students with ADHD in inclusive classroom. Beatrice described her challenges based on stigma that some teachers hold against students with ADHD. She reckoned:

> As a school system, there is a stigma attached to students with ADHD. You hear these students referred to as lazy or not wanting to try. We have this habit from some teachers that, "Oh, he needs his meds, oh I think he is ADHD." What I ask myself is that "If they are not on any medication, what can I do to meet their

> needs?" My experience with these students has trained me to be flexible. The strategies are a second nature to me because I think about it like what happens if they do not have their meds. As teachers we need to reflect on our own practices to see what we are doing right or not doing right when it comes to students with ADHD.

According to Regina, her biggest issue is when some parents hold stigma about their children because of the ADHD diagnosis. This poses some challenges, especially when a teacher is trying to explore and communicate strategies to help support students with ADHD. Regina expressed,

> My biggest issue is that I want the parents to take away the stigma of it and that there is nothing wrong with their children. What is important is to try to figure how we can help these children. I want parents to understand that ADHD is not something that the school can diagnose, so we are not trying to put a label on their child. We need to find out if there are underlying reasons why children behave in certain ways. We have seen that specific items in diet trigger a child's behavior and if that is the case then we need to keep such a child from that diet.

Some participants pointed out the placement of all students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms as one of the challenges they face when working with students with ADHD. While some teachers acknowledged that the placement of students in the inclusive classroom is assigned based on students' individual needs, others noted that it is mandatory that students, especially those in upper levels, receive services in inclusive classrooms. Christine claimed, "There are a lot of my students who would be perfect fit

in the self-contained classes that I have taught in the past. That has been a very big issue just trying to meet those students who are more impacted within that general education classroom." Janet remarked,

> I think our school system in general is just not set up to accommodate our EC kids, especially those with ADHD. This is because we are using box curriculum, which has its good and bad points. I'm not against box curriculum at the school level because your head gives teachers autonomy to do what they feel they need to do. You are still following the guidelines, but in large class sizes, the pace of everything makes it very difficult for students with ADHD.

Sarah discussed her schools' mandate that third- through fifth-grade students with IEPs be placed in inclusive classrooms. She noted,

> I would say that in my school, third-grade through fifth-grade students with disabilities whenever we create IEPs, we have to do inclusion . . . I feel like there are a lot of students that can benefit from pull-out, so they cannot be so distracted in that large group setting, especially students with ADHD. I do not just work with these students on their academic needs but also on coping skills. I work with them on how to cope with anger, how to cope with disappointment, how to cope with being overwhelmed, and different strategies we use with them in our pull-out sessions so when they get back to their general education classrooms, they can perform better. However, we are forced to perform EC services in the general classroom, and this is a challenge. I feel like these students are not getting as much as if we were performing those services in pullout sessions. I feel like IEPs

> are individualized and some of these students should be in separate settings but not automatically placed in inclusion if they are to master certain skills.

Theme 3: Professional Development

This theme emerged when participants were asked whether they had received any professional development training or to describe trainings that would be most effective in preparing them as special education teachers working with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Eight participants indicated that they had received different trainings that deal with inclusive classrooms, students with disabilities, reading and math, crisis prevention intervention (CPI), and co-teaching in a virtual environment among others. However, all participants revealed that they had not received any training specific to ADHD or ADHD students. Beatrice noted, "I have had behavior and inclusion trainings but not any specifically geared towards students with ADHD." Belinda described trainings that she had received during her 10-year experience teaching in inclusive classroom, but none specific to students with ADHD:

> The best training that I've had was in cooperative learning, which is really important. They do a lot of movements, chants, and cheers. I feel like that's really important because it does that whole brain teaching . . . I have also done Stephen Covey's leadership seven habits of highly effective people . . . I really don't recall taking a specific course that deals with students with ADHD even though four hours of my day are dedicated to kids with ADHD.

Even though all participants interviewed said that they had not received any training specific to ADHD, only two teachers suggested training on ADHD would be

effective in preparing them to work with students with ADHD in the inclusive classroom. Lynnette described the benefits of having professional development that would benefit teachers working with students with ADHD. She remarked, "I think just the basic training of what ADHD and ADD really are would be effective. They are two different things, so being able to know the difference of what's truly ADHD and ADD is important."

Sarah shared her insights into the benefits of having professional development about teaching students with ADHD:

> As I said before, professional development opportunities that I have had thus far have not been geared towards addressing the needs of students with ADHD, but they have been more generalized to cover students with disabilities and how to teach in inclusive classroom. If these professional development opportunities have specifically been directed at providing insights that would help teachers with understanding what ADHD is, scientific information about ADHD symptoms, how a mind of individual with ADHD works, and the best ways to work with them, that would be beneficial.

Beatrice, Christine, Regina, Janet, Lynnette, and Pamela noted the lack of training among general education teachers about teaching students with ADHD in the inclusive classroom. Participants suggested that general education teachers attend the same trainings alongside special education teachers so they can be well-versed in collaborating with special education teachers when working with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Christine shared her views regarding training for general education teachers:

> Along with professional development for special education teachers, I think that there should be a requirement for the general education teachers to take the same trainings as well. This is because if you look at our classrooms, they are becoming more inclusive and there are some teachers that may be older like myself and they may have only had an introductory class. Things have changed in the past 25 years, and on the flip side of that it may be a brand-new teacher, so professional development should be for all.

Lynnette described trainings that would equip the general education teachers as well as special education teachers on instructional approaches that are non-academic:

> I feel like you get different kinds of children, and it would be nice for teachers to figure out what the kids' learning styles are and use that to teach. It would be better to have trainings that would help both general and special education do less academic stuff such as playing games and social skills. I had some kids that could not lose, and they would flip out in class, so we had to practice losing. That's really weird we had to practice losing, but these social skills activities help the kids with ADHD function better around their peers.

Pamela also shared her sentiments about the need to train general education teachers:

> I think that it's important that the regular education teacher is appropriately educated about special needs kids, especially ADHD and what that is and what it is not. These kids do learn differently, they demonstrate mastery differently, and it's important to make sure that they know a child might make 100% on a test even though he sat in class all week and didn't look like he did anything at all.

> Just make sure that the teacher understands that there are different styles of learning and allow the kids to present that in whatever way is best for them . . . We tell classroom teachers that these kids need modified assignments, but if they don't understand what that means and I don't take the time to sit down and say to them, "you know that means you might only do four problems or that means he needs a concrete level assignment." It's important for them to have that background knowledge as well. I think a lot about my son having gone through all these years of school with him. He is in middle school and he got 100% on every science test. He got the highest grade on the districtwide science test at the end of the year, but he got a C in class because he didn't do his cut and paste study notebook. What are we measuring? That to me is a teacher that clearly didn't understand what she was assessing. You're assessing mastery not art skills.

Other participants suggested professional development on how to collaborate and ongoing collaborative training for both special and general education teachers. According to Beatrice, "Training on how to team with regular ed teachers to build that collaborative atmosphere and relationship will be important . . . Collaborative and ongoing professional development that targets teaching and behavior management strategies will be important." Beatrice continued to narrate his experience collaborating and offering professional development to general education teachers:

> I have trained staff for the last 2 years where I show and model strategies for the teachers specific to on-task behaviors. Based on feedback from the teachers, they may need social stories, picture schedules, and help with transitions. Then we

> come together and decide on the strategies that would be beneficial in their classrooms. I also invite regular [education] teachers to come to my classroom, so they can observe how I use the strategies with the students and take notes. This collaborative professional development works very well.

Belinda noted,

> At the EC department level, we get training on how to do an FBA [functional behavior analysis], but we don't get training on the behavior analysis component. It's important to be able to come up with realistic behavior management strategies that we can share with the regular education teachers and make effective for the kids.

Pamela narrated her experience as a beginning teacher:

> My first teaching job as a special educator, I walked into a classroom where the assistant had been there for years and years and years. I walked in as a brand new teacher not knowing a lot, and she kind of took over and it was hard for me to come back and say, "You know this is how I'm going to do it now . . . Teachers do need that training on how to collaborate with other adults and how to make that relationship work when you have two adults in the classroom and define those specific roles well who is responsible for what. It's important if you're going to have a co-teaching environment or an inclusive classroom that those teachers are well educated on different kinds of kids with special needs.

Janet shared her views about realistic trainings and strategies that are feasible for teachers working in inclusive classrooms:

> a lot of trainings give you these great ideas, but they're not realistic in a classroom of 30. When you're packed like sardines, it's like you can't have your own space. When you go to trainings, you get awesome ideas, but you have no time to digest these ideas and think about how you can make plans and changes. You simply go back to what you have been doing because you don't have time to digest and actually implement some of the things that you've been trained on. I think if they're broken up into smaller chunks and you are told, "here's one thing that you can do that you can change, within the next week try that, see how it goes and then later here's something else to consider." Right now, we are doing the LETRS [Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling] training, which is a good example because it is carried out throughout the year, so there is a lot to implement with the general education teacher because it's in small chunks.

Research Subquestion 2

How do special education teachers describe beliefs they hold about students with ADHD? Three main themes emerged from this research subquestion. They include (a) ideal inclusive classroom for students with ADHD, (b) students with ADHD can be successful, and (c) characteristics of students with ADHD with ADHD. Subthemes that emerged from these main themes are detailed in Table 3.

Table 3

Emergent Themes and Subthemes for Research Subquestion 2

Main theme	Subtheme	Number of participants
Ideal inclusive classroom	Engaging	4
	Loving and accommodative	5
	Team-based	4
Students with ADHD can be successful	Multiple strategies and resources are beneficial	6
	Medication	6
	Developmentally appropriate expectations	2
Characteristics of students with ADHD	Smart and talented	4
	Organization skills	8
	Self-regulation difficulty	4

Theme 1: Ideal Inclusive Classroom for Students With ADHD

This theme emerged from interview questions that asked participants to describe what they considered (a) fundamental to do or know as special education teachers working with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms, (b) the idea of an ideal inclusive classroom for students with ADHD, and (c) the idea of effective professional development that would prepare them to work with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Different subthemes such as engaging, loving and accommodative, and team-based emerged. Belinda described one of her engaging and interactive experiences as her idea of an ideal inclusive classroom for students with ADHD.

> In my fifth-grade math at the end of the day, the classroom teacher had a song for everything, and we used to be up in the front room singing, dancing, and chanting while teaching. I would be at the document camera teaching and she would be

> moving around and vice versa. It was just amazing. That shared teaching type model with the whole brain teaching including the movements, hands-on, and exponential learning is what my ideal inclusive classroom is. Nobody wants to sit and listen to a teacher talk the whole day.

Sarah shared,

> An ideal inclusive classroom for students with ADHD . . . where the teachers model appropriate behavior but at the same time give the students opportunities to move around in the classroom freely. The students, especially the ones with ADHD are assigned different roles such as helper and passing out materials so they can move around as opposed to sitting still and listening to lessons or lectures. In most cases teachers do a lot of talking, but if we make it more like a Montessori type of classroom where students are free to move around, interact with one another, and use manipulatives to learn, that would be great.

The majority of participants described an ideal inclusive environment where both general and special education teachers are accommodative to the students' needs and at the same time create a loving relationship with them. Regina identified building a loving relationship with the students with ADHD as fundamental in the inclusive classroom, claiming, "If they feel they do not like you or if they think you don't like them, then they are not going to do it for you, so you have to build that relationship." Lynnette said,

> You have to be a firm, patient, and loving classroom teacher . . . It is just so much easier to have a good seasoned classroom teacher. I feel like most of my kids with ADHD need brakes more often but not too often that they won't be back on track.

> The first thing is they just have to know that you like them and that you care about them.

Lynnette elaborated on her belief in demonstrating love for students with ADHD:

> I love all my kids with ADHD and would never quit on them as much as sometimes they drive me crazy. I had a little boy in first grade who had fetal alcohol syndrome and he was being adopted. He was tiny and he was wild. My first year literally I had no idea what to do with him. I mean he had not had any stable environment and clearly his mom had been drinking a lot. He was really an extreme situation . . . I would never want to give up on a child.

Janet expressed her views on being accommodative to the students' needs as a way of building a loving relationship with them:

> I think . . . having a teacher that is structured and flexible will build that relationship with them. Being able to give that constant feedback, find topics that interest and motivate them, and build in those breaks throughout the day that they need makes a difference . . . Of course, just having a relationship with your child, so they know that you're there for them, and that you want what's best for them is fundamental.

Pamela recalled,

> When I started teaching, I was not a parent. Someone said to me once, "If you have kids, you would understand." I was really angry. I have a Master's degree. Then I had a child that has special needs and they were 100% right. I think that's really important for teachers to understand that, especially if you don't have

> children of your own. You see kids through a different lens because my philosophy on teaching after that was to treat these kids how I would want someone to treat my child regardless of ADHD or anything. I feel like being a parent of a child like that has really changed my viewpoint in a lot of ways.

Christine described her ideal inclusive classroom for students with ADHD in terms of accommodations and modifications:

> All of our classrooms have calm down zones, which could be utilized as a quiet area and free of any distractions for the students. I just remember working with one teacher to support her on giving instructions one at a time, repeating them if needed and doing the most difficult content material earlier in the day using visuals. If the students need accommodations for testing, answering questions orally, accepting late work, giving fewer questions on a quiz or fewer homework questions and helping them with organization, they should be given . . . They change classes throughout the day, and they have one binder that has everything. Those binders tend to get messy and things get lost. Working with the students on those organizational skills is important. Strategies to signal to the students that the lesson is beginning, listing the activities on the board, making quick eye contact, and when you are conducting the lessons using those simple instructions including different materials, allowing students to have a break if needed, using calm down corners, have a little squishy balls and other kinds of self-regulation would be my ideal inclusive classroom for students with ADHD.

Half of the participants described an ideal inclusive classroom as one in which the special and general education teachers collaborate on lesson planning, behavior management strategies, and maintenance of classroom structure conducive to students with ADHD. Beatrice pointed out to structure and consistency as fundamental for teachers to build a team-based environment, especially when working with students with ADHD. Belinda noted that developing realistic behavior management strategies for students with ADHD that both special and general education teachers can buy into is fundamental in the inclusive classroom. Sarah said,

> An ideal inclusive classroom is where there is an organized collaboration between special education teacher and general education teacher without one teacher feeling like it is the other's responsibility to do certain duties . . . My idea of an ideal inclusive classroom is where special education teacher and regular education teacher work collaboratively, co-teaching, and partnering. They work together to create a classroom that is routine-based and structured, and students know that there are consequences that come with not following classroom expectations.

Pamela stressed the need for general education teachers to be educated about students with disabilities, especially those with ADHD, so they can collaborate effectively with special education teachers to support their students. She indicated that as a special education teacher who is working with students identified with ADHD, it is important to know about the children and their background and what their specific needs are and try to help the general education teacher understand that as well. Pamela shared,

> Just make sure that the teacher understands that there are different styles of learning and allow the kids to present that in whatever way is best for them. If you're going to be in inclusive classroom, just make sure that you are a team together and that you're both on the same page with what's going on in there.

Theme 2: Students With ADHD can be Successful

This theme emerged in response to the research question that probed participants to share beliefs they hold about students with ADHD. The majority of participants believed that students with ADHD could be successful with the right supports. Teachers believed that the use of multiple strategies and resources are beneficial for students identified with ADHD. Janet believes that behavior support therapies are important and finding ways to support parents with training to "structure their homes to help their kids be successful would be a necessary aspect." Belinda believes in implementing multiple strategies in her teaching for students with ADHD. She noted, "I still use the old gradual release model, activate the kids' learning through maybe a video or discussion questions because the kids may not have the background knowledge." Sarah expressed her beliefs regarding using different strategies and resources as instrumental for students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms: "Parents and teachers need to try different strategies first and see what motivates and grabs attention of children with ADHD. Once available resources have been exhausted, then they can move to medication." Regina said,

> It also would be beneficial to have more behavior strategies specifically geared towards ADHD students because what works for one kid may not work for another. Having a training to get a whole bunch of different resources that you

> can try throughout would be beneficial. Having a contract with them such as behavior contract or academic contract is useful. One of the things that I do with them is create statements such as, "if you do this then this can happen." Or try to give them that structure and choices so that they know this has to happen first.

Beatrice described her beliefs that teachers need to be reflective of their own practices and explore other strategies that can be useful for these learners:

> I have several students with ADHD in my caseload, and it has taught me to overstretch myself so I can help them. As a school system, there is a stigma attached to students with ADHD. You hear these students referred to as lazy or not wanting to try. We have this habit from some teachers that, "Oh, he needs his meds, oh I think he is ADHD." What I ask myself is, "If they are not on any medication, what can I do to meet their needs?" My experience with these students has trained me to be flexible. The strategies are a second nature to me because I think about it like, "What happens if they do not have their meds?" As teachers we need to reflect on our own practices to see what we are doing right or not doing right when it comes to students with ADHD.

Six of the eight participants expressed beliefs they hold about students with ADHD relative to medication. These participants believe that medication works for students with ADHD and ensures their success in the academic environment. According to Lynnette, medication makes a difference for students with ADHD. In sharing her own story, she recalled,

> I am for medicine just because I know I was failing high school biology and then my parents got me on medicine then I was able to focus and listen. Typically, when a child is not doing well academically and parents decide to put their child on medication, I respect that.

Janet said,

> I think medication is important even though it's not right for every child. I do think in the school setting, medication is a very helpful tool. I mean it [ADHD] is a chemical imbalance in the brain, so diet does help, structure helps, as well as consistency. From what I've seen, my kids who are on medication have been the most successful.

Pamela noted her beliefs regarding medication for students with ADHD:

> My belief on medication is if your child was diabetic, you would give him insulin, if your child needed glasses you would buy him glasses, so if your child has a chemical problem in his brain that keeps him from paying attention, you would get the medication to help him. My child has been taking medication since he was eight.

Janet noted that some parents of students with ADHD have difficulties affording medication for their children. Janet believes that the school system should provide some form of support for these families. Janet shared one family's story:

> I had a student who was not identified EC, but I had him in inclusion. He was ADD but was not hyperactive at all. He could not focus even in a group of three students; his eyes were all over and his parents were undocumented. For a short

> time, they were able to afford medicine, and he did beautifully. Then the parents had to choose whether to continue to give him medicine or to eat and they chose to eat, which I would choose too. I wish there was more that we could do on the school end to support the families just with the medication.

More than half of the participants believed that all students with ADHD have the potential to be successful. However, Beatrice claimed that "sometimes we have unrealistic expectations of the kids and we need to make it realistic if we want them to learn." Sarah stated,

> Expectations for students now are way too advanced for their age-group. I feel like some expectations that we have for students are not developmentally appropriate. I just feel like kids are not allowed to be kids anymore, and when they are acting like typical children, then we are quick to reprimand them or label them as having attention deficits.

Theme 3: Characteristics of Students With ADHD

The majority of the participants indicated that students with ADHD are different and, at the same time, alike. Therefore, their beliefs about the characteristics of students with ADHD varied. Four participants described students with ADHD as intelligent and creative. For example, Janet believes that all students with ADHD are "smart and they're all capable of learning . . . ADHD is just a part of who they are." Pamela shared similar beliefs noting that students with ADHD are "amazingly creative and talented." She claimed that "a lot of people see these students as loud busy bothersome kids when in fact they can be creative, intelligent, and insightful."

There was consensus among all participants that students with ADHD lack organizational skills, so putting structure in place is beneficial for them in the inclusive classroom. Beatrice reckoned,

> It is harder for students with ADHD when it comes to organization, especially where there is no system in place. If they do not feel prepared to attend to tasks, they get frustrated and confused as far as organization is concerned.

Beatrice identified writing, which requires a great deal of organization as an area in which students with ADHD struggle. Therefore, Beatrice believes that teachers should encourage these students to demonstrate what they know by allowing them to use other modes such as illustrations or even typed work. Belinda also believes in clear structure and directions for students with ADHD due to the difficulties they experience with organizational skills. Noting that having a child with ADHD helped shape her paradigm when it comes to teaching students with ADHD, Belinda recalled one experience with her own child:

> My son would come home with homework to do, but he didn't know what to do because he couldn't remember instructions. One day he came home with a blank sheet of paper, and I was like, "Dude, this is a blank sheet of paper, so I don't know what it is." If I didn't have that first-hand experience with it, I feel like I would have been like everybody else.

Another subtheme that emerged when participants described their beliefs about students with ADHD was difficulty with self-regulation. Half of the participants indicated that they believe that a chemical imbalance in the brain causes ADHD and impacts

students' ability to self-regulate their behaviors. According to Belinda, ADHD is a mental disability. Regina believes that there are specific items in the diet that trigger a child to behave in certain ways, and she suggested that kids should be kept away from such a diet. Janet shared similar sentiments saying, "It [ADHD] is a chemical imbalance in the brain, so diet does help . . ." Lynnette expressed her beliefs about students with ADHD relative to self-regulation: "I believe that they don't know how to moderate their own brakes. They're things in their brains that move so fast. If they're younger, they don't know how to self-regulate and that is what gets them in trouble."

Summary

In Chapter 4, I included a description of this transcendental phenomenological study's setting, participants' demographics, and how I collected and prepared data for analysis. I coded and categorized data from semi-structured interviews of participants' beliefs and experiences teaching students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. I discussed the modified version of the van Kaam method of data analysis used in this study. Also included in this chapter was the trustworthiness of the study, which included credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To conclude Chapter 4, I discussed the key findings of this phenomenological study.

I identified six themes and 15 subthemes that were the basis for the key findings in this transcendental phenomenological study to address the research questions. Relative to Research Subquestion 1 (How do special education teachers describe their experiences and work with students identified with ADHD?), three findings emerged. The first finding is that special education teachers who work with students with ADHD in

inclusive classrooms experience positive experiences concerning administrative support from their respective schools, teacher-student interaction, and collaboration with the general education teachers. The second finding is related to the challenges that participants identified while working with students with ADHD in the inclusive classroom. While six participants cited collaboration with the general education teachers as a positive experience, five participants indicated that they experienced difficulties working with these individuals in inclusive classrooms. Another challenge identified by the participants was inconsistency in administering student medication. A third finding was related to professional development the participants had received to prepare them to teach students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. All eight participants noted that they had not received any trainings specific to ADHD or teaching students with ADHD. Half of the teachers also indicated that general education teachers needed trainings alongside special education teachers, so they could understand how to work with students with disabilities, especially those identified with ADHD.

Concerning Research Subquestion 2 (How do special education teachers describe beliefs they hold about students with ADHD?), three findings emerged. The first finding was participants' beliefs about the ideal inclusive classroom, and the majority believed in an engaging, loving and accommodative, and team-based setting. The second finding was that most participants believed that students with ADHD can be as successful as their typically developing peers if there is structure in the classroom, teachers use multiple strategies and resources, and medication is administered consistently. The third finding concerned the characteristics of students with ADHD, whom the participants believed are

smart and talented. However, they also noted that these students experience difficulties with organization and self-regulation and a well-structured inclusive classroom is beneficial for them to be successful. The majority of participants believed that teachers need to explore multiple strategies and resources to help meet the needs of the students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms.

In Chapter 5, I concluded this study with a discussion of the findings concerning Dewey's constructivist worldview and van Manen's phenomenology of practice, as well as a review of the literature in Chapter 2. Finally, I discussed the limitations of this study, recommendations for future research, and implications for social change in education.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to obtain a detailed understanding of special education teachers' beliefs and experiences related to teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. To achieve this purpose, I collected data using semistructured interviews with eight special education teachers who were working with students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms at the time of the study. I described factors that special education teachers identified as their positive experiences and challenges when working with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Additionally, I explored professional development opportunities that the teachers had and those that they lacked. I also described special education teachers' beliefs about the ideal inclusive classroom and students with ADHD. The data analysis process was based on a modified van Kaam data analysis approach popularized by Moustakas (1994). The research questions were based on Dewey's constructivist worldview and van Manen's phenomenology of practice. The findings from this phenomenological study may provide a deep understanding of special education teachers' experiences with students identified with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. The findings may also help the school district and administrators implement useful reforms and strategies for the teaching and learning of students with behavior challenges. Chapter 5 includes a description of interpretations of the findings, the limitations of the study, recommendations for future research, and implications for positive social change, ending with a conclusion.

The central research question for this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was the following: What are special education teachers' beliefs and experiences teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms? The two research subquestions supporting this central research question through open-ended interview questions were the following: (a) How do special education teachers describe their experiences and work with students identified with ADHD? (b) How do special education teachers describe beliefs they hold about students with ADHD?

Three main themes emerged from the first research subquestion: participants' positive experiences, challenges experienced, and professional development opportunities undertaken. The most noted participant positive experiences were administrative support from the schools, teacher-student interactions, and collaboration with general education teachers. Regarding the challenges, participants shared difficulties working with the general education teachers and inconsistencies with medication for students with ADHD. While participants cited positive experiences collaborating with the general education teachers, they also shared challenges regarding their collaboration. The participants identified different professional development sessions they had attended as special educators in inclusive classrooms; however, all noted that they had no training specific to ADHD or teaching students with ADHD. Half of the participants also noted that regarding professional development, general education teachers should attend the same trainings alongside special educators, so that they can learn how to relate to and teach students with disabilities, especially those identified with ADHD.

Three themes emerged from the second research subquestion: the ideal inclusive classroom for students with ADHD, students with ADHD can be successful, and the characteristics of students with ADHD. The majority of participants shared their beliefs about the ideal inclusive classroom as engaging, loving and accommodative, and team based. The participants also believed that students with ADHD could be successful, and that multiple strategies and resources are beneficial in ensuring such students' success in the academic environment. Additionally, the majority of participants believed that medication, if administered consistently, helps students with ADHD in achieving success behaviorally and academically. The most common characteristics identified in students with ADHD were that they are smart and talented but lack organizational skills and self-regulation. Although there were commonalities in the participants' beliefs and experiences, none of their descriptions were precisely the same, indicating uniqueness in their perceptions relative to teaching students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms.

Interpretation of the Findings

In this study, I captured and analyzed the lived experiences of special education teachers who work with students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. Using a transcendental phenomenological research design, I set aside any biases or prejudgments as much as possible using organized procedures to collect the data and explicate the essences of participants' experiences (Moustakas, 1994). The participants' lived experiences were based on emerging themes, and they involved positive experiences, challenges, professional development, the ideal inclusive classroom, and

characteristics of students with ADHD. These themes were discussed in light of current research studies and aligned with the research questions.

The conceptual frameworks that guided this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study were Dewey's constructivist worldview and van Manen's phenomenology of practice. According to Dewey, human knowledge is not imposed but is based on prior experiences and understanding (Beard, 2018). Teachers come into the classroom with different experiences, understandings, and opinions (Schauer, 2018). Some participants' beliefs about students with ADHD or ideal inclusive classrooms were based on their previous experiences working with these students in the previously mentioned setting. The participants also shared information based on their daily experiences with students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. van Manen's (2017) phenomenology of practice also guided this study. van Manen identified four fundamental themes that guide a reflection process of a study as lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations (van Manen, 2017). Special education teachers gave a direct account of their experiences based on their physical and emotional interactions with students and how these interactions helped to foster positive relationships. These interviews helped me gain a broad understanding of the participants' previous experiences and how these shaped their interaction not only with students identified with ADHD, but also general education teachers. Thus, reflections on the lived experiences of the special education teachers helped me uncover the themes deemed useful in the interpretation of the findings.

Positive Experiences

In the interviews, five teachers described their interactions with the students as part of their positive experiences. These participants noted that building a positive relationship with the students, especially those identified with ADHD, was beneficial for both teachers and students. They identified a routine and a token system as instrumental in their interaction with their students with ADHD in the inclusive classroom. These findings validated the current literature in Chapter 2 concerning the relationship between teachers and students identified with ADHD and how this connection impacts the students' behaviors and academics (Ali, 2018; Ewe, 2019; Frelin & Fransson, 2017; Wiener & Daniels, 2016). Recent research suggests that constructive relationships between teachers and students help to sustain teachers' devotion to the teaching practice and students (Frelin & Fransson, 2017).

Challenges

On the other hand, half of the participants indicated that an aspect of their challenges in inclusive classrooms was collaborating with general education teachers. They claimed that some of the general education teachers saw these students as the responsibility of the special education teachers. Other participants noted that their biggest challenge was getting general education teachers to buy into strategies and implement them with fidelity. This latter claim contradicts the current literature on general education teachers' perceptions of a technology-based intervention as a self-monitoring tool for students with ADHD (Vogelgesang et al., 2016). The results of this study indicated that after receiving training and implementing the intervention with fidelity, the general

education teachers deemed it viable and useful for students with behavioral challenges (Vogelgesang et al., 2016). Overall, this study supported the literature review in Chapter 2, which highlighted cooperation and coordination between general education teachers and special education teachers in inclusive classrooms (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Gebhardt et al., 2015; Khairuddin et al., 2016). The findings in these studies showed limited collaboration between the special and general education teachers in the general education setting; this is a major challenge to students' learning and behavior management.

Professional Development

The findings of this transcendental phenomenological study extend knowledge in the literature about teachers' preparedness to serve students identified with ADHD, as well as relevant professional development for teachers who work in inclusive classrooms with this student population. This study's findings confirmed previous reports that the majority of teachers, including general educators, lack training on teaching students with ADHD (Bradshaw & Kamal, 2013; Guerra et al., 2017; Moore et al., 2017; Murphy, 2015; Shroff et al., 2017; Zambo et al., 2013). All eight participants indicated that they had no professional development specific to ADHD or teaching students with ADHD. Only five participants identified trainings specific to ADHD or teaching students with ADHD as most effective in preparing them as special education teachers working with this student population in the inclusive classroom. These participants suggested training on working with students with disabilities, especially those with ADHD, for both special and general education teachers. They noted that classrooms are becoming increasingly

inclusive, yet general education teachers do not seem adequately prepared to meet the challenges presented by students with disabilities.

Ideal Inclusive Classroom

The current literature indicates that students identified with ADHD are less likely to have close relationships with their teachers compared to students without ADHD (Ewe, 2019; Zendarski et al., 2020). Some of the factors that impact the teacher–student relationship are medication use, academic functioning, behavior, and teacher experience (Zendarski et al., 2020). The participants in this study believed that both special and general education teachers should accommodate students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. The special education teachers interviewed noted that building a loving relationship with students identified with ADHD is of fundamental importance in inclusive classrooms. One participant remarked, “If they feel they do not like you or if they think you don’t like them, then they are not going to do it for you, so you have to build that relationship.” Another participant stated, “I love all my kids with ADHD and would never quit on them as much as sometimes they drive me crazy.” The participants in this study noted that having a personal relationship, understanding family background, and expressing care and love for students with ADHD make an ideal inclusive classroom for these individuals.

Recent studies have indicated that special and general education teachers consider collaboration among themselves as beneficial when working with students with disabilities, especially those identified with behavioral challenges in inclusive classrooms (Al-Natour et al., 2015; Gebhardt et al., 2015; Khairuddin et al., 2016). This study

supports the current literature in that the majority of participants identified collaboration with their general education counterparts as beneficial when working with students with ADHD in the inclusive classroom. The participants indicated that their ability to collaborate with general education teachers to plan lessons, coteach, and implement strategies had helped them to support their students with ADHD in the academic environment.

Students With ADHD can be Successful

The participants' responses relative to the need for effective strategies and resources to support students with ADHD confirmed the findings of previous research studies that intensive academic and behavioral interventions are beneficial for this student population (Chavez et al., 2015; Cirelli et al., 2016; Cooper et al., 2018; Dan, 2016; Hart et al., 2017; Tan et al., 2016; Tannock et al., 2018). For example, the participants cited visual instruction, manipulatives, positive reinforcers, check-in check-out, collaborative learning, and routine-based setting as useful for students with ADHD. In recent studies, researchers have also investigated the benefits of behavioral strategies and interventions that include check-in check-out, self-management, parental involvement, and physical training (Hoff & Ervin, 2013; Karhu et al., 2018; Marcelle et al., 2015; Tan et al., 2016).

The majority of participants expressed their belief in medication for students with ADHD. They indicated that consistent medication for students with ADHD contributes to their success in the academic environment. The participants described students who took medication consistently as under control, while those who were inconsistent in medication use often fell behind in their academics. They mentioned that their students'

behaviors always improved when they were on medication, as opposed to when they were not on medication. The participants suggested constant teacher–parent communication as beneficial in dealing with inconsistency in administering student medication. Participants noted that some parents stop medication because they cannot afford to purchase it. They suggested that schools should try and support such families with medication. These findings support current studies about the benefits of teacher–parent collaboration and the impact of medication in supporting students with ADHD (Marcelle et al., 2015; Moore et al., 2017).

Characteristics of Students With ADHD

Recent studies have revealed that students with ADHD have average to high intelligence (Cornoldi et al., 2013; Hamilton & Astramovich, 2016). The findings of this transcendental phenomenological study support these studies. While all the participant believed that students with ADHD can be successful in the academic environment if given the necessary support, four participants specifically stated that they believed these individuals are smart and creative. One participant remarked, "ADHD is just a part of who they are." Another participant claimed that some people see students with ADHD as "loud, busy bothersome kids when in fact they can be creative, intelligent, and insightful." While the participants described students with ADHD as smart and talented, they also believed that they lack organizational and self-regulation skills. These findings also support the current literature on organizational skills among students with ADHD. A study identified in the literature review indicated that although young adolescents with ADHD lack organization skills, they benefit from organizational skills interventions

(Langberg et al., 2013). Molitor et al. (2016) concluded that the lack of organizational skills in students with ADHD impacts their writing, which requires planning, drafting, editing, and revising, compared to their peers without disabilities. All the participants in this study believed that students with ADHD lack organization skills. They suggested clear structure and routine as necessary in supporting these students in inclusive classrooms.

Limitations of the Study

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of special education teachers, particularly those who work in inclusive classrooms with students identified with ADHD. I was interested in capturing detailed information related to their daily experiences and beliefs that they held about this student population or working with these students. Through this study, some valuable themes emerged that reflect the beliefs and experiences of the participants; however, some limitations are worth noting.

In planning for this study, I intended to recruit 10-12 special education teachers from one school district. I sent out invitations to 56 prospective participants; 10 completed the consent form indicating that they met the inclusion criteria. However, one participant was excluded because she did not meet the inclusion criterion of 3 years of experience teaching special education. One other potential participant did not respond to my subsequent communication after the interview, leaving me with eight participants. The small sample of eight purposefully selected participants limited the transferability of the findings to other contexts beyond the realm of this study. Furthermore, this study was

limited to one school district, and the participants were entirely women of two races. In dealing with this limitation, future researchers should consider expanding their inclusion criteria to include more than one school district to increase the number and diversity of the participants, hence making transferability of the findings possible.

To recruit the participants, I used snowballing, a purposeful sampling approach that employs social networks, to recruit two additional teachers (Griffith et al., 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). One of the limitations of this sampling approach is its reliance on referrals, excluding individuals who did not belong to wider social networks. Therefore, the snowball sampling approach used in this study created selection bias and minimized the variety of the participants, making the findings unlikely to be transferable (Marcus et al., 2017).

Another limitation of this study was the data collection method. My original plan was to collect data using face-to-face, semi-structured, open-ended interview questions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I was forced to change to phone interviews, which lacked depth and posed challenges relating to establishing a rapport with the participants (Drabble et al., 2016). My purpose as a qualitative researcher was to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' beliefs and experiences teaching students with ADHD through their elaborate responses. However, this effort was hampered by the lack of face-to-face communication, which resulted in some superficial information. For example, some of the participants' responses were very brief, especially when highlighting their challenges and how the school system impacted their experiences in inclusive

classrooms. Face-to-face interviews could have helped in establishing rapport with participants, thus making them more comfortable in sharing in-depth information.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study consisted of eight participants recruited through purposeful sampling. Future qualitative research studies should include larger sample sizes to enhance the reliability of the findings. While this was a qualitative phenomenological study, future research studies should also include quantitative approaches to provide generalizations about the beliefs and experiences of teachers who work with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Additionally, this study covered schools within the city regions in one school district; thus, future studies should include suburban and rural areas of other school districts for transferability or generalization purposes. Other studies should also be expanded to include the experiences of special education teachers in middle and high school classrooms.

General and Special Education Teacher Collaboration

This phenomenological study may inspire other educators in the district to explore the extent of the collaboration of special and general education teachers who work with students with behavior challenges, especially in inclusive classrooms. This recommendation for future research was based on the challenges expressed by most participants in this study about their lack of effective collaboration with general education teachers in the inclusive classrooms.

Another recommendation for future research was that specific effective strategies or resources used by special or general education teachers who work with students with

ADHD in inclusive classrooms should be explored. This recommendation was based on perspectives shared by participants that students with ADHD can be successful with effective strategies and resources. The participants in this study identified behavior charts, brain breaks, explicit instructions, visual prompts, preferential seating, manipulatives, and positive reinforcement among others.

Trainings for Teachers

Another recommendation that came from this study's findings was related to training for both special and general education teachers on ADHD or teaching students with ADHD. Based on the literature review in Chapter 2, general education teachers, as well as special education teachers, are not adequately trained to deal with the challenges presented by students with ADHD (Blotnicky-Gallant et al., 2015; Bradshaw & Kamal, 2013; Shroff et al., 2017). All participants in this study indicated that they had no training specific to ADHD or teaching students with ADHD, even though they reported receiving professional development on behavior management, inclusion, and social-emotional learning, among others. Furthermore, the majority of participants believed that regular education teachers should receive regular professional development alongside special educators so they can be well-versed in working with students with disabilities, especially those identified with ADHD. Based on this information, future researchers should conduct both quantitative and qualitative studies to explore professional development that target students with ADHD or behavioral challenges for both special and general education teachers who work in inclusive classrooms.

Implications for Social Change

This transcendental phenomenological study has implications for social change, for it provides research in an area that has not been conducted before. A detailed literature review conducted in Chapter 2 shows that there are no existing specific studies that involve special education teachers who worked with students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. Therefore, the findings of this study will add to the current body of literature to understand special education teachers' experiences with students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. The emergent themes from this qualitative phenomenological study provide useful insights that may help school district administrators provide professional development specific to students with ADHD for both special and general education teachers.

Another implication of this study is that it highlights the beliefs and lived experiences of special education teachers with students identified with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. Specifically, the participants described their positive collaboration with general education teachers and useful strategies they use to manage students' behaviors and promote their learning. Understanding the experiences of special education teachers through this study will allow educators in similar situations to reflect on their own practices so they can make necessary changes or learn how to deal with challenges for the sake of their students. The findings of this study could lead to the implementation of programs, strategies, and resources that target the teaching and learning of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative transcendental phenomenological study was to obtain a comprehensive understanding of eight special education teachers' beliefs and daily experiences working with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Using Dewey's constructivist worldview and van Manen's phenomenology of practice as the conceptual framework, I captured participants' beliefs and experiences about teaching students identified with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. My intent for this study was to understand the participants' daily experiences in inclusive classrooms, especially when dealing with students with ADHD. Additionally, I wanted to explore participants' beliefs regarding students with ADHD, ideal inclusive classrooms, effective behavior management strategies, and professional development.

Through investigation of the participants' experiences, six major themes emerged: *positive experiences*, *challenges*, *professional development*, *ideal inclusive classrooms*, *students with ADHD can be successful*, and *characteristics of students with ADHD.* The highlights of the participants' beliefs and experiences working with students with ADHD were distinct, although there were commonalities that could be established. The participants' descriptions of their experiences with professional development proved that none had received training specific to ADHD or teaching students with ADHD. Special education teachers interviewed described their collaboration with the general education teachers as part of the positive experiences when working with students with ADHD, but they also noted that this collaboration poses some challenges. This study contributes to a greater understanding of the beliefs and experiences of special education teachers who

work with students with ADHD in K-5 inclusive classrooms. The findings may be used to implement useful reforms or strategies for teaching and learning of the students with disabilities, especially those served in the general education classrooms.

References

Abed, M., Pearson, S., Clarke, P., & Chambers, M. (2014). Saudi Arabian teachers' knowledge and beliefs about ADHD. *Journal of International Association of Special Education, 15*(1), 67–74. https://adhd.org.sa/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Saudi-Arabian-Teachers-Knowledge-and-Beliefs-about-ADHD-Abed-M.-2014.pdf

Afeti, K., & Nyarko, S. H. (2017). Prevalence and effect of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder on school performance among primary school pupils in the Hohoe municipality, Ghana. *Annals of General Psychiatry, 16*(11), 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12991-017-0135-5

Ali, A. (2018). Individualized teacher-child relationship (ITCR) strategy to enhance academic performance of children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). *Journal of Educational Sciences & Research, 5*(2), 37–41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsp.2012.03.003

Al-Natour, M., Amr, M., Al-Zboon, E., & Alkhamra, H. (2015). Examining collaboration constrains on collaboration between special education and general education teachers in mainstream schools in Jordan. *International Journal of Special Education, 30*(1), 64–77. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1094801

Alshenqeeti, H. (2014). Interviewing as a data collection method: A critical review. *English Linguistics Research, 3*(1), 39–45. http://www.sciedu.ca/journal/index.php/elr/article/view/4081

Amankwaa, L. (2016). Creating protocols for trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Cultural Diversity, 23*(3), 121–127. https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29694754/

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). American Psychiatric Association.

Anderson, D. L., Watt, S. E., & Shanley, D. C. (2017). Ambivalent attitudes about teaching children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 22*(4), 332–349. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2017.1298242

Angelle, P. S. (2017). Leading beyond the classroom. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 45*(3), 101–106. https://web-b-ebscohost-com.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=12&sid=27be62d7-60e0-449e-b27e-08113ded7c70%40sessionmgr101

Anney, V. N. (2014). Ensuring the quality of the findings of qualitative research: Looking at trustworthiness criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies, 5*(2), 272–281. http://repository.udsm.ac.tz:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/256/Ensurin

Barry, T. D., Sturner, R., Seymour, K., Howard, B., McGoron, l., Bergmann, P., Kent, R., Sullivan, C., Tomeny, T. S., Pierce, J. S., Coln, K. L., Goodlad, J. K., & Werle, N. (2016). School-based screening to identify children at risk for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: Barriers and implications. *Children's Health Care, 45*(3), 241–265. https://doi.org/10.1080/02739615.2014.948160

Beam, H. D., & Mueller, T. G. (2017). What do educators know, do, and think about behavior? An analysis of special and general educators' knowledge of evidence-based behavioral interventions. *Preventing School Failure, 61*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2016.1164118

Beard, C. (2018). Dewey in the world of experiential education. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education,* 27–37. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20276

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., & Campbell, C. (2016). Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13). https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870

Blotnicky-Gallant, P., Martin, C., McGonnell, M., & Corkum, P. (2015). Nova Scotia teachers' ADHD knowledge, beliefs, and classroom management practices. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 30*(1), 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/0829573514542225

Blume, F., Göllner, R., Moeller, K., Dresler, T., Ehlis, A. C., & Caterina Gawrilow, C. (2019). Do students learn better when seated close to the teacher? A virtual classroom study considering individual levels of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity. *Learning and Instruction, 61,* 138–147. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.learninstruc.2018.10.004

Bradshaw, L., & Kamal, M. (2013). Teacher knowledge, training and acceptance of students with ADHD in their classrooms: Qatar case study. *Near and Middle Eastern Journal of Research in Education,* 1–11. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275491003_Teacher_knowledge_trainin

g_and_acceptance_of_students_with_ADHD_in_their_classrooms_Qatar_case_study

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2014). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Brown, M. J. (2015). John Dewey's pragmatist alternative to the belief-acceptance dichotomy. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science, 53,* 62–70. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2015.05.012

Capodieci, A., Lachina, S., & Cornoldi, C. (2018). Handwriting difficulties in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 74,* 41–49. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2018.01.003

Castillo-Montoya, M. (2016). Preparing for interview research: The interview protocol refinement framework. *The Qualitative Report, 21*(5), 811–831. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol21/iss5/2/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2014). *Introduction to public health surveillance.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC. https://www.cdc.gov/publichealth101/surveillance.html

Chavez, J. N., Martinez, J., & Pienta, R. S. (2015). Effects of story mapping on third grade students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Journal of Pedagogy, 6* (1), 95–121. https://doi.org/10.1515/jped-2015-0006

Cho, S.-J., & Blair, K.-S. C. (2017). Using a multicomponent function-based intervention to support students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *The Journal of Special Education, 50*(4), 227–238. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022466916655186

Cirelli, C. A., Sidener, T. M., Reeve, K. F., & Reeve, S. A. (2016). Using activity schedules to increase on-task behavior in children at risk for attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Education and Treatment of Children, 39*(3), 283–300. https://doi.org/10.1353/etc.2016.0013

Cook, B. G., & Odom, S. L. (2013). Evidence-based practices and implementation science in special education. *Exceptional Children, 79,* 135–144. https://doi.org/10.1177/001440291307900201

Cooper, J. T., Gage, N. A., Alter, P. J., LaPolla, S., MacSuga-Gage, A. S., & Scott, T. M. (2018). Educators' self-reported training, use, and perceived effectiveness of evidence-based classroom management practices. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth, 62*(1), 13–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2017.1298562

Cornoldi, C., Giofre`, D., Calgaro, G., & Stupiggia, C. (2013). Attentional WM is not necessarily specifically related with fluid intelligence: The case of smart children with ADHD symptoms. *Psychological Research, 77*(4), 508–515. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-012-0446-8

Corona, L. L., Christodulu, K. V., Rinaldi, M. L. (2017). Investigation of school professionals' self-efficacy for working with Students with ASD: Impact of prior experience, knowledge, and training. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 19*(2), 90–101. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300716667604

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Dan, A. (2016). The results of an early intervention program for children with ADHD. *International Journal of Early Childhood Learning, 23*(3), 11–20. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-7939/CGP/v23i03/11-20

Danielson, M. L., Bitsko, R. H., Ghandour, R. M., Holbrook, J. R., Kogan, M. D., & Blumberg, S. J. (2018). Prevalence of parent-reported ADHD diagnosis and associated treatment among U.S. children and adolescents, 2016. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 47*(2), 199–212. https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2017.1417860

David, N. (2013). ADHD in Indian elementary classrooms: Understanding teacher perspectives. *International Journal of Special Education, 28*(2), 4–16. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1023228.pdf

Dev, P., & Haynes, L. (2015). Teacher perspectives on suitable learning environments for students with disabilities: What have we learned from inclusive, resource, and self-contained classrooms? *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences: Annual Review, 9*(1), 53–64. https://doi.org/10.18848/1833-1882/CGP/v09/53554

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.

Drabble, L., Trocki, K. F., Salcedo, B., Walker, P. C., Korcha, R. A. (2016). Conducting qualitative interviews by telephone: Lessons learned from a study of alcohol use among sexual minority and heterosexual women. *Qualitative Social Work, 15*(1), 118–133. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325015585613

DuPaul, G. J., & Jimerson, S. R. (2014). Assessing, understanding, and supporting students with ADHD at school: Contemporary science, practice, and policy [Editorial]. *School Psychology Quarterly, 29*(4), 379–384. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000104

DuPaul, G. J., & Langberg, J. L. (2014). *Educational impairments in children with ADHD: A handbook for diagnosis and treatment.* Guilford Press.

DuPaul, G. J., Morgan, P. L., Farkas, G., Hillemeier, M. M., & Maczuga, S. (2016). Academic and social functioning associated with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: Latent class analyses of trajectories from kindergarten to fifth grade. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 44,* 1425–1438. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-016-0126-z

DuPaul, G. T., Reid, R., Anastopoulos, A. D., & Power, T. J. (2014). Assessing ADHD symptomatic behaviors and functional impairment in school settings: Impact of student and teacher characteristics. *School Psychology Quarterly, 29*(4), 409–421. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000095

Ennis, R. P., Lane, K. L., & Oakes, W. P. (2018). Empowering teachers with low-intensity strategies to support instruction: Self-monitoring in an elementary resource classroom. *Preventing School Failure, 62*(2), 176–189. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2017.1408055

Ewe, L. P. (2019). ADHD symptoms and the teacher-student relationship: A systematic literature review. *Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties, 24*(2), 136–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2019.1597562

Fabiano, G. A., Pelham, W. E., Majumdar, A., Evans, S. W., Manos, M. J., Caserta, D., . . . Carter, R. L. (2013). Elementary and middle school teacher perceptions of attention-deficit / hyperactivity disorder prevalence. *Child Youth Care Forum, 42,* 87–99. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-013-9194-1

Forner, C. B., Miranda, B. R., Fortea, I. B., Castellar, R. G., Diago, C. C., & Casas, A. M. (2017). ADHD symptoms and peer problems: Medication of executive function and theory of mind. *Psicothema, 29*(4), 514–519. https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2016.376

Frelin, A., & Fransson, G. (2017). Four components that sustain teachers' commitment to students: A relational and temporal model. *Reflective Practice, 18*(5), 641–654. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2017.1307722

Frenzel, A. C., Pekrun, R., Goetz, T., Daniels, L. M., Durkson, T. L., Becker-Kurz, B., & Klassen, R. M. (2016). Measuring teachers' enjoyment, anger, and anxiety: The teacher emotions scales (TES). *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 46,* 148–163. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2016.05.003

Frey, T. J., Andres, D. K., Mckeeman, L. A., Lane, J. J. (2012). Collaboration by design: Integrating core pedagogical content and special education methods courses in a preservice secondary education program. *The Teacher Education, 47*(1), 45–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2011.632473

Gage, N. A., Adamson, R., MacSuga-Gage, A. S., & Lewis, T. J. (2017). The Relation between the academic achievement of students with emotional and behavioral

disorders and teacher characteristics. *Behavioral Disorders, 43*(1), 213–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/0198742917713211

Gebhardt, M., Schwab, S., Krammer, M., & Gegenfurtner, A. (2015). General and special education teachers' perceptions of teamwork in inclusive classrooms at elementary and secondary schools. *Journal for Educational Research Online, 7*(2), 129–146. http://doi.org/10.1.1.869.4776&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Gonçalves, J. S., & Crenitte, P. A. P. (2014). Conceptions of elementary school teachers about learning disorders. *Revista CEFAC, 16*(3), 817–829. https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-0216201427312

Gormley, M. J., & DuPaul, G. J. (2015). Teacher-to-teacher consultation: Facilitating consistent and effective intervention across grade levels for students with ADHD. *Psychology in the Schools, 52*(2), 124–138. https://doi.org/10.1521/adhd.2015.23.1.9

Graham, S., Fishman, E. J., Reid, R., & Hebert, M. (2016). Writing characteristics of students with attention deficit hyperactive disorder: A meta-analysis. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 31*(2), 75–89. https://doi.org/10.1111/ldrp.12099

Granot, D. (2016). Socioemotional and behavioural adaptation of students with disabilities: The significance of teacher-student attachment-like relationships. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 21*(4), 416–432. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2016.1235324

Gremmen, M.C., van den Berg, Y. H. M., Steglich, C., Veenstraa, R., Dijkstra, J.K. (2018). The importance of near-seated peers for elementary students' academic engagement and achievement. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 57,* 42–52. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appdev.2018.04.004

Griffith, D. A., Morris, E. S., & Thakar, V. (2016). Spatial autocorrelation and qualitative sampling: The case of snowball type sampling designs. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers, 106*(4), 773–787. https://doi.org/10.1080/24694452.2016.1164580

Guerra, F., Tiwari, A., Das, A., Vela, J. C., & Sharma, M. (2017). Examining teachers' understanding of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. *Journal of Research in Special Education Needs, 17*(4), 247–256. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12382

Gűleç-Aslan, Y. (2013). A training programme for a teacher working with a student with ASD: An Action Research. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 13*(4), 2229–2246. https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2013.4.1738

Hamilton, N., & Astramovich, R. L. (2016). Teaching strategies for students with ADHD: Findings from the field. *Education, 136*(4), 451–460. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1104213

Hart, K. C., Fabiano, G. A., Evans, W., Manos, M. J., Hannah, J. N., & Vujnovic, R. K. (2017). Elementary and middle school teachers' self-reported use of positive behavioral supports for children with ADHD: A national survey. *Journal of*

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 25(4), 246–256. https://doi.org/10.1177/1063426616681980

Hauerwas, L. B., & Mahon, J. (2018). Secondary teachers' experiences with students with disabilities: Examining the global landscape. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 22*(3), 306–322. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1364793

Heilbronn, R. (2017). Dewey and culture: Responding to 'extreme views.' *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 51*(1), 89–101. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12217

Hildebrand, D. L. (2018). Experience is not the whole story: The integral role of the situation in Dewey's democracy and education. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 52*(2), 287–300. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12286

Hoff, K. E., & Ervin, R. A. (2013). Extending self-management strategies: The use of a classwide approach. *Psychology in the Schools, 50*(2), 151–164. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21666

Husserl, E. (1963). *Ideas: A general introduction to pure phenomenology* (Trans. W. R. Boyce Gibson). Collier Books.

Jurgensen, C. G. (2015). Discovering a route to revitalize the foundations of education: Reflective thinking from theory to practice. *Educational Foundations, 28*(1), 121–134. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1078554.pdf

Kamens, M., Susko, J., & Elliot, J. (2013). Evaluation and supervision of co-teaching: A study of administrator practices in New Jersey. *NASSP Bulletin, 92*(2), 166–190. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636513476337

Karhu, A., Närhi, V., & Savolainen, H. (2018). Inclusion of pupils with ADHD symptoms in mainstream classes with PBS. *International Journal of Inclusive Education, 22*(5), 475–489. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1370741

Khairuddin, K. F., Dally, K., & Foggett, J. (2016). Collaboration between general and special education teachers in Malaysia. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs, 16*(1), 909–913. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12230

Kumar, R. (2014). *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners* (4th ed). Sage.

Langberg, J. M., Dvorsky, M. R., & Evans, S. W. (2013). What specific facets of executive function are associated with academic functioning in youth with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder? *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 41*(7), 1145–1159. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-013-9750-z

Lasisi, D., Ani, C., Lasebikan, V., Sheik, L., & Omigbodun, O. (2017). Effect of attention deficit-hyperactivity-disorder training program on the knowledge and attitudes of primary school teacher in Kadun, North West Nigeria. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health, 1*, 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-017-0153-8

Lauer, C., Brumberger, E., & Beveridge, A. (2018). Hand collecting and coding versus data-driven methods in technical and professional communication research. *IEEE*

Transactions on Professional Communication, 61(4), 389–408. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-017-0153-8

Laverty, M. J. (2016). Thinking my way back to you: John Dewey on the communication and formation of concepts. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 48*(10), 1029–1045. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2016.1185001

Lefler, E. K., Hartung, C. M., Bartgis, J., Thomas, D. G. (2015). ADHD symptoms in American Indian/Alaskan native boys and girls. *The Journal of the National Center, 22*(2), 23–40. https://doi.org/10.5820/aian.2202.2015.23

Liang, L., & Gao, X. (2016). Pre-service and in-service secondary school teachers' knowledge about attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and attitudes toward students with ADHD. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 63*(3), 369–383. https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2015.1123231

Lopes, R. C. F., & Crenitte, P. A. P. (2013). Analytical study of teachers' knowledge about learning disorders. *Revista CEFAC, 15*(5), 1214–1226. https://www.scielo.br/pdf/rcefac/v15n5/en_135-11.pdf

McQuade, J. D., Breaux, R, P., Miller, R., & Mathias, L. (2017). Executive functioning and engagement in physical and relational aggression among children with ADHD. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 45,* 899–910. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-016-0207-z

Marcelle, E., Tresco, K. E., & Power, T. J. (2015). Assessing the quality of parent-teacher relationships for students with ADHD. *Psychology in the Schools, 52*(2), 196–207. https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21817

Marcus, B., Weigelt, O., Hergert, J., Gurt, J., & Gelléri, P. (2017). The use of snowball sampling for multi source organizational research: Some cause for concern. *Personnel Psychology, 70*(3), 635–673. https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12169

Meeks, M. D., Knotts, T. L., James, K. D., Williams, F., John A. Vassar, J. A., & Wren, A. O. (2013). The impact of seating location and seating type on student performance. *Education Sciences, 3*(4), 375–386. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci3040375

Merriam, S., B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merritt, P. H. (2017). *How does a teacher's level of knowledge of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder impact a teacher's efficacy in student engagement, instructional practices, and classroom management?* (Doctoral dissertation, Gardner-Webb University). https://digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu/education_etd/259

Moats, L. (2014). What teachers don't know and why they aren't learning it: Addressing the need for content and pedagogy in teacher education. *Austrian Journal of Learning Difficulties, 19*(2), 75–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2014.941093

Modesto-Lowe, V., Charbonneau, V., & Farahmand, V. (2016). Psychotherapy for adolescents with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder: A pediatrician's guide. *Clinical Pediatrics, 56*(7), 667–674. https://doi.org/10.1177/0009922816673308

Molitor, S. J., Langberg, J. M., & Evans, S. W. (2016). The written expression abilities of adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 51,* 49–59. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2016.01.005

Moldavsky, M., Pass, S., & Sayal, K. (2014). Primary school teachers' attitudes about children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder and the role of pharmacological treatment. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 19*(2), 202–216. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359104513485083

Moore, D. A., Russell, A. E., Arnell, S., & Ford, T. J. (2017). Educators' experiences of managing students with ADHD: A qualitative study. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 43*(3), 489–498. https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12448

Morse, J. M. (2015). Critical analysis of strategies for determining rigor in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Health Research, 25*(9), 1212–1222. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315588501

Morsink, S., Sonuga-Barke, E., Mies, G., Glorie, N., Lemiere, J., Oord, S. V., & Danckaerts, M. (2017). What motivates individuals with ADHD? A qualitative analysis from the adolescent's point of view. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 26,* 923–932. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-017-0961-7

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Sage.

Mulholland, S. (2016). ADHD-specific knowledge and attitudes of teachers (ASKAT): Development and validation of a new research instrument. *International Journal of Educational Research, 77,* 109–116.

https://education.biu.ac.il/sites/education/files/shared/adhd-specific_knowledge_and_attitudes_of_teachers.pdf

Mulholland, S., Cumming, T., & Jung, J. (2015). Teacher attitudes towards students who exhibit ADHD type behaviours. *Australasian Journal of Special Education, 39*(1), 15–36. https://doi.org/10.1017/jse.2014.18

Murphy, S. (2015). "How do we teach them to read if they can't pay attention?": Chang in literacy teaching practice through collaborative learning. *Language and Literacy: A Canadian Educational E-Journal, 17*(1), 83–125. https://doi.org/10.20360/G2XK5M

National Center for Education Statistics. (2016). *Digest of education statistics, 2015.* Author. https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=59

National Survey of Children's Health. (2017). *Data resource center for child and adolescent health.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). https://www.childhealthdata.org

Noble, H., & Smith, J. (2015). Issues of validity in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing, 18*(2), 34–35. https://doi.org/10.1136/eb-215-102054

Nosouhian, H., & Javadi, F. (2018). The comparison between self-confidence and symptoms of aggression and hyperactivity (ADHD) in children. *Early Child Development and Care, 188*(6), 723–730. https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2016.1230608

O'Connor, R. E., Sanchez, V., Beach, K. D., & Bocian, K. M. (2017). Special education teachers integrating reading with eighth grade U.S. history content. *Learning Disabilities and Research and Practice, 32*(2), 99–111. https://doi.org/10.1111/ldrp.12131

Patel, K., Auton, M. F., Carter, B., Watkins, C. L., Hackett, M., Leathley M. J., . . . Lightbody, C. E. (2016). Parallel-serial memoing: A novel approach to analyzing qualitative data. *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1745–1752. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315614579

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.

Pennington, R. C., & Courtade, G. R. (2015). An examination of teacher and student behaviors in classrooms for students with moderate and severe intellectual disability. *Preventing School Failure, 59*(1), 40–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/1045988X.2014.919141

Peters, K., & Halcomb, E. (2015). Interviews in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher, 22*(4), 6–7. https://www.deepdyve.com/lp/royal-college-of-nursing-rcn/interviews-in-qualitative-research-PakhWw81kZ

Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2014). *Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice* (8th ed.). Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

Quay, J. (2016). Learning phenomenology with Heidegger: Experiencing the phenomenological 'starting point' as the beginning of the phenomenological research. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 48*(5), 484–497. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2015.1035632

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological.* Sage.

Raymond, A. (1997). Inconsistency between a beginning elementary school teacher's mathematics beliefs and teaching practices. *Journal Research in Mathematics Education, 28*(5), 550–576. https://doi.org/10.2307/749691

Re, A. M., Mirandola, C., Esposito, S. S., & Capodieci, A. (2014). Spelling errors among children with ADHD symptoms: The role of working memory. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 35*(9), 2199–2204. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2014.05.010

Reeves, P. M., Pun, W. H., & Chung, K. S. (2017). Influence of teacher collaboration on job satisfaction and student achievement. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 67,* 227–236. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.016

Roberts, G., Rane, S., Fall, A. M., Denton, C. A., Fletcher, J. M., & Vaughn, S. (2015). The impact of intensive reading intervention on level of attention in middle school students. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology, 44*(6), 942–953. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4254375/

Robins, C. S., & Eisen, K. (2017). Strategies for the effective use of NVivo in a large-scale study: Qualitative analysis and the repeal of don't ask, don't tell. *Qualitative Inquiry, 23*(10), 768–778. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417731089

Robinson, O. C. (2014). Sampling in interview-based qualitative research: A theoretical and practical guide. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 11,* 25–41. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2013.801543

Rodríguez, C., Grünke, M., González-Castro, P., García, T., & Álvarez-García, D. (2015). *How do students with attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorders and writing learning disabilities differ from their nonlabeled peers in the ability to compose texts?* https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1085156

Rogers, M., Bélanger-Lejars, V., Toste, J. R., & Heath, N. L. (2015). Mismatched: ADHD symptomatology and the teacher-student relationship. *Emotional & Behavioural Difficulties, 20*(4), 333–348. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2014.972039

Ross, P., & Sliger, B. (2015). The current state of evidence-based practices with classroom management. *National Social Science Journal, 43*(2), 89–94. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cel_pubs/85/

Roulston, K., deMarras, K., & Lewis, J. B. (2003). Learning to interview in the social sciences. Qualitative Inquiry, 9(4), 643–668. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800403252736

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2012). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. (2015). *Surviving your dissertation* (4th ed.). Sage.

Ryan, J., Ross, S., Reyes, R., Kosmerly, S., & Rogers, M. (2016). Social functioning among college students diagnosed with ADHD and the mediating role of emotion regulation. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties, 21*(4), 387–402. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752

Sagner-Tapia, J. (2018). An analysis of alterity in teachers' inclusive pedagogical practices. International Journal of Inclusive Education, 22(4), 375–390. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2017.1370735

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* Sage.

Sartor, A. (2016). Developing teacher identity through service learning. *Australasian Journal of University-Community Engagement, 10*(1), 107–131. http://www.engagementaustralia.org.au/uploads/Vol_10_Issue_1.pdf

Schauer, M. M. (2018). "Vygotsky for the Hood": Connecting teacher prior life experiences and university teacher preparation curriculum for service in urban schools. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 74,* 1–9. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.04.009

Schuck, S., Emmerson, N., Ziv, H., Collins, P., Arastoo, S., Warschauer, M., Francis, C., & Lakes, K. (2016). Designing an iPad App to Monitor and Improve Classroom Behavior for Children with ADHD: iselfcontrol feasibility and pilot studies. *PLoS ONE, 11*(10), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0164229

Seidman, I. (2012). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (4th ed.). Teachers College Press.

Shroff, H. P., Hardikar-Sawant, S., & Prabhudesai, A. D. (2017). Knowledge and misperceptions about attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) among school teachers in Mumbai, India. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 64*(5), 514–525. https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2017.1296937

Sibley, M. H., Altszuler, A. R., Morrow, A. S., & Merrill, B. M. (2014). Mapping the academic problem behaviors of adolescents with ADHD. *School Psychology Quarterly, 29*(4), 422–437. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000071

Slattery, L., Crosland, K, & Iovannone, R. (2016). An evaluation of a self-management intervention to increase on-task behavior with individuals diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 18*(3), 168–179. https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300715588282

Sousa, D. (2014). Phenomenological psychology: Husserl's static and genetic methods. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 45*(1), 27–60. https://doi.org/10.1163/15691624-12341267

Spall, S. (1998). Peer debriefing in qualitative research: Emerging operational models. *Qualitative Inquiry, 4*(2), 280–292. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049800400208

Steiner, N. J., Sheldrick, R. C., Frenette, E. C., Rene, K. M., & Perrin, E. C. (2014). Classroom behavior of participants with ADHD compared with peers: Influence of teaching format and grade level. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 30*(3), 209–222. https://doi.org/10.1080/15377903.2014.896297

Sumskis, S., & Moxham, L. J. (2017). The use of van Kaam's psychophenomenological method to interpret the meaning of resilience in the experiences of people with schizophrenia. *Nurse Researcher, 25*(3), 8–13. https://doi.org/10.7748/nr.2017.e1514

Sutinen, A. (2008). Constructivism and education: Education as an interpretative transformational process. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 27,* 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-007-9043-5

Sun, R. C. F. (2015). Teachers' experiences of effective strategies for managing classroom misbehavior in Hong Kong. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 46,* 94–103. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.11.005

Tan, B. W. Z., Pooley, J. A., & Speelman, C. P. (2016). A meta-analytic review of the efficacy of physical exercise interventions on cognition in individuals with autism spectrum disorder and ADHD. Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, *46,* 3126–3143. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-016-2854-x

Tannock, R., Frijters, J. C., Martinussen, R., White, E. J., Ickowicz, A., Benson, N. J., & Lovett, M. W. (2018). Combined modality intervention for ADHD with comorbid reading disorders: A proof of concept study. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 51*(1), 55–72. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219416678409

Tatlow-Golden, M., Prihodova, L., Gavin, B., Cullen, W., & McNicholas, F. (2016). What do general practitioners know about ADHD? Attitudes and knowledge among first-contact gatekeepers: Systematic narrative review. *BMC Family Practice, 17*(1), 129. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12875-016-0516-x

Todorova, M., Sunder, C., Steffensky, M., & Moller, K. (2017). Pre-service teachers' professional vision of instructional support in primary science classes: How content-specific is this skill and which learning opportunities in initial teacher

education are relevant for its acquisition? *Teaching and Teacher Education, 68:* 275–288. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.08.016

Tomlinson, C. A. (2015). Teaching for excellence in academically diverse classrooms. *Society, 52*(3), 203–209. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-015-9888-0

Tseng, W. L., Kawabata, Y., Gau, S. S. F., & Crick, N. R. (2014). Symptoms of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and peer functioning: A transactional model of development. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology, 42,* 1353–1365. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-014-9883-8

Ültanır, E. (2012). An epistemological glance at the glance at the constructivist approach: Constructivist learning in Dewey, Piaget, and Montessori. *International Journal of Instruction, 5*(2), 195–212. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED533786.pdf

van Manen, M. (2017). But is it phenomenology? *Qualitative Health Research, 27*(6), 775–779. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732317699570

Venkata, J. A., & Panicker, A. S. (2013). Prevalence of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in primary school children. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry, 55*(4), 338–342. https://doi.org/10.4103/0019-5545.120544

Vogelgesang, K. L., Bruhn, A. L., Coghill-Behrends, W. L., Kern, A. M., & Troughton, L. C. W. (2016). A single-subject study of a technology-based self-monitoring intervention. *Journal of Behavioral Education, 25,* 478–497. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10864-016-9253-4

Washburn, E. K., Mulcahy, C. A., Musante, G., & Joshi, R. M. (2017). Novice teachers' knowledge of reading-related disabilities and dyslexia. *Learning Disabilities: A*

Contemporary Journal, 15(2), 169–191. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1160653.pdf

Wiener, J., & Daniels, L. (2016). School experiences of adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 49*(6), 567–581. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219415576973

Wilkes-Gillan, S., Bundy, A., Cordier, R., & Lincoln, M. (2016). Child outcomes of a pilot parent-delivered intervention for improving the social play skills of children with ADHD and their playmates. *Developmental Neurorehabilitation, 19*(4), 238–245. https://doi.org/10.3109/17518423.2014.948639

Wall, J. B. (2019). *A phenomenological study of lives experiences of transport nurses experiencing patient death* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University). https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/6870/

Woods, M., Paulus, T., Atkins, D. P., & Macklin, R. (2016). Advancing qualitative research using qualitative data analysis software (QDAS)? Reviewing potential versus practice in published studies using ATLAS.ti and NVivo, 1994-2013. *Social Sciences Computer Review, 34*(5), 597–617. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439315596311

Xyst, K. (2016). Constructivism, Dewey, and academic advising. *NACADA Journal, 36*(2), 11–19. https://doi.org/10.12930/NACADA-14-027

Yeari, M., Avramovich, A., & Schiff, R. (2017). Online inferential and textual processing by adolescents with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder during reading comprehension: Evidence from a probing method. *Journal of Clinical and*

Experimental Neuropsychology, 39(5), 485–501. https://doi.org/10.1080/13803395.2016.1236906

Yüksel, P., & Yildirim, S. (2015). Theoretical framework, methods, and procedures for conducting phenomenological studies in educational settings. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry, 6*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.17569/tojqi.59813

Zambo, D., Zambo, R., & Sidlik, L. (2013). Preservice teachers' perceptions of neuroscience, medicine, and students with ADHD. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching, 24*(3), 51–67. http://celt.muohio.edu/ject/issue.php?v=24&n=3

Zendarski, N., Haebich, K., Bhide, S., Quek, J., Nicholson, J. M., Jacobs, K. E., . . . Sciberras, E. (2020). Student-teacher relationship quality in children with and without ADHD: A cross-sectional community-based study. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 51*(2), 275–284. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2019.12.006

Appendix A: Request for Participants Letter

Dear Teacher,

My name is Ruth Omunda and I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University. I am scheduled to conduct a doctoral study in partial fulfillment of my doctoral degree. My interest is to gain a better understanding about the beliefs and experiences of special education teachers who teach in K-5 inclusive classrooms. I am especially interested in learning about these educators' experiences with students who have been identified with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Your knowledge and experiences working with students with ADHD will be useful in helping other educators, including school administrators, in making decisions that pertain to improving teachers' services to students, not only students identified with ADHD but also those who exhibit similar characteristics. Through a link, I am forwarding an online consent form that details information about my background as well as the requirements, risks, benefits, and any other relevant information that pertain to this research project. Please respond to the two questions on the form if you choose to participate.

Should you have any questions concerning this research, please feel free to contact me at 336-662-3179 or ruth.omunda@waldenu.edu.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth Omunda

Doctoral Student, Walden University

Appendix B: Semistructured Interview Guiding Questions

Introduction: My research interests lie in the lived experiences of special education teachers of students who have been identified with ADHD (or students who exhibit similar symptoms). I am interested in understanding your experiences in teaching these students in an inclusive K-5 setting, the challenges you face, the interventions you use, and any recommendations you may have for other educators who work with this student population. Please note that, during this study, your identity will be kept anonymous and everything you say will be presented anonymously and in aggregate with other participants' responses. Throughout the interview process, you are encouraged to stop and ask any questions as necessary. Participation in this research is voluntary, so you are not required to answer any questions for any reason if you so choose. Do you have any questions?

a. Tell me about yourself
b. How would you describe your race or culture?
c. Describe your experiences with a student (or students) with ADHD
d. What is your interaction like with these students?
e. How long have you taught in inclusive classrooms and have you received any professional development training?
f. How would you describe your experiences working with general education teachers in inclusive classrooms?
g. How has the school system impacted your experience as a special education teacher in an inclusive classroom?

h. From your perspective, describe what you consider to be fundamental for you as a special education teacher to know or do in order to be successful working with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms. Why?

i. What is your idea of an ideal inclusive classroom for students with ADHD?

j. In your view, describe professional development opportunities or training that would be most effective to prepare you as a special education teacher working with students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms? Give specific examples.

k. What beliefs do you hold about students with ADHD?

l. Describe any other information that you deem pertinent to this research.

Appendix C: Confidentiality Agreement Form

Name of Signer:

During the course of my activity in reviewing this research:

"_____" I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement, I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge, copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access, and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or

devices to unauthorized individuals. Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature	Date

Appendix D: Coding Map