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Exploring Experts' Perspectives on Supporting Primary School Students with ADHD in Inclusive Primary Classrooms: Implications for Teacher Professional Development

Uzma Khalil
uzma.urooj.khalil@gmail.com
Department of STEM Education, Lahore College for Women's University, Pakistan

Dr. Tayyabah Batool
Assistant Professor
batool.tayyaba786@gmail.com
Department of STEM Education, Lahore College for Women's University, Pakistan

Dr. Shumaila Mansha
Assistant Professor (Visiting Faculty)
University of Punjab, Lahore
shumailamunir33@gmail.com

Abstract

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a developmental disorder defined by patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. ADHD affects the academic performance of students in terms of their cognitive, behavioural, and emotional processes within inclusive learning classrooms. ADHD is highly important regarding the development of students in the inclusive education environment. This disorder causes poor academic performance, inability to concentrate, behaviour problems at school, susceptibility to peer rejection, anxiety and social isolation. According to a meta-analysis, approximately 5-8 percent of school-aged children are affected by ADHD. In Pakistan, despite the lack of data, the growing literature proves that ADHD is an emerging disorder that needs urgent recognition and prevention among teachers and psychologists. There is less awareness among teachers regarding the training for early and proper detection and effective classroom support for students with ADHD in Pakistan. The current study is based on an interpretivist framework and aims to explore perceptions of school psychologists and experts about ADHD, its identification, and the intervention process in inclusive classrooms. The current study's goal is to gather in-depth information from psychologists and experts that would eventually help teachers to recognize ADHD and to use effective intervention strategies to support such students. Expert reviews were conducted to assess the relevance and appropriateness of the interview guide. Changes were made after the validation to ensure the efficiency and relevance to match the objectives. Reliability was confirmed by conducting an interview with five subject matter experts. Their valuable recommendations were added to enhance the reliability of the interview guide. Based on qualitative research, the current study involves conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with school psychologists and educational experts selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data is analyzed using thematic analysis, leading to the emergence of multiple themes related to ADHD. These themes include: ADHD awareness and perception, identification challenges and management, teachers' readiness, classroom management strategies and interventions. Findings highlight that psychologists have strong conceptual knowledge about the disorder, but gaps exist in systematic identification strategies and teacher training. Teachers play an important role in classroom management of students with ADHD; however, they lack specialized knowledge and structured guidance for managing ADHD related behaviour. The study concludes that learning can be significantly improved for students with ADHD by improving diagnostic awareness and implementing evidence-based intervention strategies. The findings offer practical implications for curriculum developers and policymakers in promoting inclusive and psychologically informed educational environments.

Introduction

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is among the most frequently diagnosed neurodevelopmental disorders in childhood. It is characterized by persistent patterns of inattention,

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hyperactivity, and impulsivity that can interfere with an individual's daily functioning and overall development (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2022). Although ADHD is commonly identified during childhood, its symptoms may continue throughout adolescence and adulthood. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR), ADHD is classified into three presentations: predominantly inattentive, predominantly hyperactive-impulsive, and combined presentation (APA, 2022).

ADHD has emerged as an important educational and public health concern worldwide. Recent studies estimate that approximately 5–7% of children and adolescents experience ADHD symptoms that affect their academic, social, and emotional functioning (Faraone et al., 2021). Students with ADHD often face difficulties maintaining attention, following classroom instructions, completing assignments, organizing tasks, controlling impulsive behaviors, and managing their emotions. These challenges can negatively affect academic achievement, peer relationships, self-confidence, and overall adjustment to school life (Barkley, 2023).

Given its significant impact on students' learning and development, many countries have introduced school-based support systems and evidence-based interventions to address the needs of students with ADHD. Educational institutions increasingly promote inclusive educational practices, behavioral support strategies, classroom accommodations, and collaboration among teachers, parents, and mental health professionals. Teachers play a central role in identifying and supporting students with ADHD. Because they interact with students daily, teachers are often the first professionals to recognize symptoms such as inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Through effective classroom management, instructional modifications, positive reinforcement, and close collaboration with parents and specialists, teachers can help to create supportive learning environments that foster student success. The effectiveness of these efforts depends on teachers' knowledge, understanding, and training related to ADHD (Sciutto et al., 2023).

In Pakistan, ADHD is not well-known nor provided with support services. Most of teachers do not have proper training regarding ADHD, which results in misunderstanding, delayed identification and lack of support for the child. Moreover, there is a shortage of school psychologists in educational institutions to deal with mental health issues.

School psychologists have a key role in the assessment, identification, and management of ADHD within educational settings. They provide psychoeducation to students, parents, and teachers, conduct behavioral assessments, develop intervention plans, and assist in implementing evidence-based strategies. Psychologists always stressed the need for professional training programs that could equip teachers with practical skills to manage ADHD-related challenges in the classroom (Zhen & Zhou, 2023). To improve the well-being and educational experiences of the students with ADHD, there is an urgent need for in-service teacher training programs that foster ADHD-based interventions and help teachers to learn about the problems and issues of the ADHD students.

Statement of the Problem

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a long-lasting neurodevelopmental condition that affects behavioural control and attention regulation. Additionally, it impacts ADHD

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adolescents' social skills and academic achievement. According to recent research, ADHD is a lifelong condition that requires structured support in an inclusive educational environment rather than being seen as a childhood behavioural disease (Zastudil et al., 2025). In an inclusive primary classroom, students with ADHD often encounter problems in learning due to difficulties in paying attention, impulse control, and sticking to classroom routines. Teachers, who are the key and actual players of inclusive education, suffer problems in diagnosing ADHD and implementing relevant intervention strategies due to insufficient training and lack of access to a specialist support system (Kalsoom & Masood, 2024; Syed & Hussein, 2024).

Despite the increasing focus on inclusive education in Pakistani policy, there are still considerable gaps in school-based psychological care and teacher professional development related to ADHD. The literature review indicates that pre-service and in-service teacher training programs fail to sufficiently address neurodevelopmental problems, such as ADHD (Laraib et al., 2025; Shaukat & Chowdhury, 2025). In addition, there is a lack of actual research on ADHD diagnosis and intervention methods from the perspective of school psychologists and educational specialists. Effective teacher training in inclusive classroom practices are usually hampered by a lack of expert perspectives. This study will examine how specialists view ADHD, how to diagnose and treat it, and how instructors can support students with ADHD in inclusive primary classrooms.

Research Objectives

1. To explore how school psychologists/experts perceive Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
2. To explore the methods of identifying ADHD.
3. To analyze teachers' roles in supporting students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms
4. To identify intervention strategies for supporting students with ADHD in inclusive classroom settings.

Research Questions

1. How do school psychologists/experts perceive Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?
2. What methods are used to identify ADHD?
3. What role do teachers play in supporting students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms?
4. What intervention strategies are used to support students with ADHD in inclusive classroom settings?

Significance of the Study

ADHD in primary education has a serious impact on a child's attention, compliance, and completion of tasks in class. Children with ADHD frequently have trouble with impulsivity and hyperactivity, which hinders their learning. Insufficient academic achievement, low self-esteem, and challenging interactions with teachers or other students are typically the outcomes of this issue. Therefore, a child's academic and social development is adversely affected by ADHD. This study is crucial since it adds to the body of literature on ADHD in inclusive primary education in the context of developing countries such as Pakistan. Recently, more and more literature has pointed at the increasing need for structured teacher training and interprofessional cooperation when

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supporting learners with neurodevelopmental disorders, including ADHD (Zastudil et al., 2025). By highlighting the expert perspectives on the problem of ADHD, this study will add to the current literature, which mainly focuses on the perspectives of teachers and leaves gaps for further expert insights. Thus, this study will contribute to evidence-based approaches to ADHD management in inclusive classrooms. The results of this study are especially relevant in terms of the improvement of teacher professional development programs. Recent literature suggests that teacher training programs in inclusive education do not cover the practical aspects related to neurodevelopmental disorders, making it difficult for teachers to use their theoretical knowledge in classroom practice (Shaukat & Chowdhury, 2025; Kalsoom & Masood, 2024). This study is important for school administration, curriculum developers, and policy makers providing recommendations for improving teacher training programs, promoting cooperation between teachers and psychologists, as well as developing intervention frameworks for ADHD in schools.

Literature Review

ADHD is a neurological developmental disorder that involves persistent patterns of inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsiveness (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). According to Faraone et al. (2023), ADHD disorder is age-inappropriate, continuous in multiple normal conditions, and may last until adulthood. Barkley (2021) defined ADHD as a deficit in behaviour and executive functioning, in which individuals find it hard to maintain their attention and goal-oriented behaviours. It is a complicated disorder that develops due to a combination of genetic, neurobiological, and environmental factors, which causes problems with attention, impulsivity, and activity control Thapar et al. (2024). A child's ability to function normally in day-to-day activities, learning and social interactions is highly affected by ADHD. ADHD is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders worldwide, affecting approximately 5–7% of school-aged children (Polanczyk et al., 2014; Danielson et al., 2021). However, in Pakistan, research on ADHD is very limited. Reported challenges include a lack of awareness, a limited number of trained professionals, and a lack of support systems within schools (Hussain et al., 2011; Khan et al., 2020).

Types of ADHD

ADHD is marked into three main presentations.

1. **Predominantly Inattentive Presentation** is marked by difficulty in maintaining attention, organizing tasks, following instructions, and supporting mental effort. These students may appear distracted, forgetful, and disorganized, which usually results in delayed identification and academic difficulties (Willcutt, 2023; DuPaul & Langberg, 2023).
2. **Hyperactive-impulsive presentation** involves excessive motor activity, impulsive behaviours, poor self-control, restlessness, interrupting others, and difficulty following classroom rules. Although these behaviours seem similar to typical childhood hyperactivity, the presence of ADHD involves these symptoms for a long period of time and to a large extent that it affects different areas of life (Hoogman et al., 2023).
3. **The Combined presentation** displays symptoms of both inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity. It is considered as the most common and functionally impairing presentation, linked with problems such as impaired executive functioning, emotional control, academic performance, and social relationships (Posner et al., 2024; Faraone et al., 2024). A meta-analysis conducted indicates that it is the most common subtype, comprising between 50 and

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70 percent of cases and associated with a high degree of functional impairment in both learning and social spheres (Caye et al., 2023).

Symptoms of ADHD

1. **Cognitive Symptoms**
   Children with ADHD experience problems in maintaining attention during their academic activities. They get distracted easily, switch between different tasks and struggle with organising their work or following multi-step instructions. Such cognitive challenges directly affect the learning process and academic performance (DuPaul & Langberg, 2023).
2. **Behavioural Symptoms**
   Behavioural symptoms include restlessness, constant movement, and inability to sit still for a long period of time. Children tend to fidget, talk too much, and have problems being engaged in quiet activities in class (Barkley, 2023).
3. **Impulsivity Symptoms**
   Impulsivity among children with ADHD is reflected through rapid and uncontrolled responses, interrupting someone while talking, and the inability to wait for a turn. Their actions do not follow any planning, which leads to disruptive behaviour in classes and problems with classmates (Faraone et al., 2024).
4. **Emotional and Learning Challenges**
   ADHD symptoms are often associated with emotional problems such as getting frustrated easily, having little tolerance for academic expectations, and a low motivation level. The combination of such factors can result in lower self-esteem and reduced academic achievement over time.

Factors causing ADHD

1. **Genetic Factors**

Genetics is one of the leading reasons that lead to ADHD. The estimate of heritability is about 70–80%. According to twin and family studies, ADHD children have a greater chance to have other people in their families who suffer from this condition. Recent findings on the genetic basis of ADHD indicate that many genes contribute to dopamine pathway functioning and executive functioning (Thapar et al., 2024).

2. **Neurobiological Factors**

The neurobiological factor is connected with differences in brain development, functioning and structure that are observed in people with ADHD. These differences can be revealed with the help of imaging and show some changes in frontal-striatal circuitry. The reduction in activity in frontoparietal network and changes in dopamine transmission are considered to be the strongest risk factors for ADHD (Cortese et al., 2023).

3. **Environmental Factors**

There are some environmental factors which can influence ADHD and lead to this condition. For example, the maternal smoking, drinking or presence of stress during pregnancy increases the risk of ADHD significantly (Barkley, 2023). Environmental factors are considered to be risk amplifiers rather than the causes of this disease.

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4. Psychosocial and Developmental Factors

Although parenting style cannot be the reason of ADHD, inconsistent parenting, insufficient structure and excessive family stress can worsen the manifestation of symptoms. Some developmental problems could aggravate the condition (DuPaul & Langberg, 2023).

Consequences of ADHD in Early Childhood

1. Academic Underachievement

ADHD is strongly associated with poor academic outcomes during early childhood. Children find difficulties in sustaining attention, following instructions, and completing classroom tasks. ADHD children often struggle with reading, writing, and early mathematical skills despite having average intellectual abilities. With growing demands of academics, these children become more helpless to persistent learning gaps and reduced educational attainment (DuPaul & Langberg, 2023; Faraone et al., 2023).

2. Dysregulation of Behaviour and Disruptive Behaviour in Classrooms

One of the most visible effects of ADHD in early childhood is behavioural dysregulation. Children regularly display impulsivity, excessive movement, emotional outbursts, and difficulty adhering to classroom routines. Such behaviours often hinder teaching activities and require additional teacher control and supervision. Ongoing behavioural difficulties may also lead to disciplinary consequences and may reduce children's participation in classroom learning activities (American Psychiatric Association, 2022; Barkley, 2023).

3. Impaired Sense of Safety and Trust

Children with ADHD may experience an insecure sense of safety and trust due to continuous criticism, misunderstandings, and inconsistent social relations. Repeated correction from adults and unsuccessful interactions with peers can make a child emotionally vulnerable and uncomfortable. These experiences decrease their sense of belonging and confidence within educational environments (Thapar et al., 2024).

4. Reduced Self-Empowerment and Motivation

Issues related to academic progress and behavioural challenges can negatively affect children's self-belief and intrinsic motivation. Children with ADHD may perceive themselves as inferior and less capable than their peers. This belief led them to learned helplessness, which reduced their willingness to engage in challenging tasks next time. (Faraone et al., 2023; DuPaul & Langberg, 2023).

5. Teacher-Students and Peer Relationships

Children with ADHD usually face poor interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers. Being inattentive, impulsive, having difficulty with following social norms, and classroom misbehaviour make the child be rejected both by the teacher and peers. This leads to social isolation and a lack of opportunity for collaborative work (Thapar et al., 2024; Barkley, 2023).

ADHD Based Interventions

ADHD-based interventions are evidence-based practices that are designed to improve the academic, behavioural, emotional, and social functioning of children with ADHD. These interventions are used by teachers, parents, educational psychologists, counsellors, and healthcare professionals to support children with ADHD across multiple school and home settings (Thapar et al., 2024). A teacher must be familiar with the ADHD based interventions to manage inattention, impulsiveness and hyperactivity behavioural disorders in the class. Researchers strongly

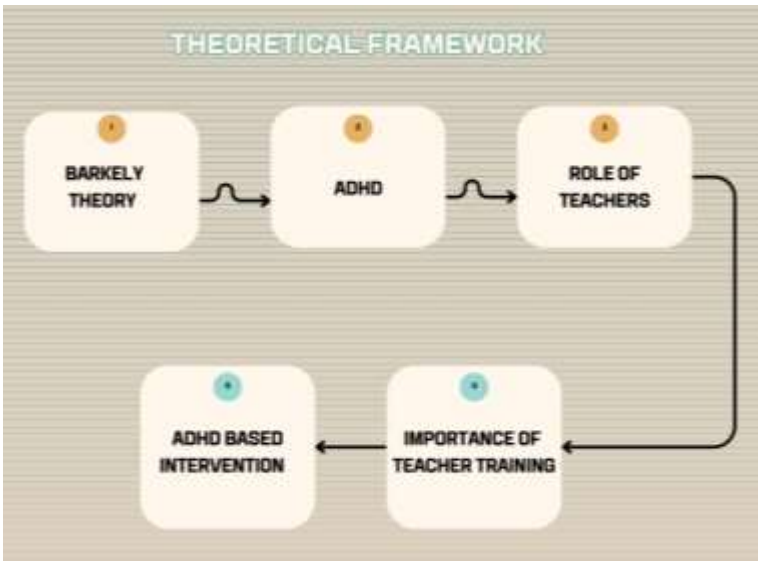
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recommend that teachers be equipped with ADHD related knowledge and practical intervention skills through continuous professional development and specialized training programmes (DuPaul & Langberg, 2023). Barkely (2023) greatly emphasized that the effective management of ADHD students in schools depends on trained teachers. Cognitive-behavioural-based interventions help students to improve their behavioural adjustments, increase academic performance, strengthen peer relations, and develop greater emotional resilience (Evans et al., 2022). Due to the increasing prevalence of ADHD, Sibley (2024) emphasized that collaboration among teachers, parents, and the school community can improve the behavioural management, academic success, and social skills of the affected child.

Theoretical Framework of ADHD Based Intervention

ADHD interventions are mainly grounded in Barkley's Executive Function Theory. This theory presents ADHD as a disorder of behavioural inhibition and self-regulation rather than just an attention deficit problem. According to Barkley (1997), disruption in controlling and inhibiting responses can have a negative effect on important executive functions, such as working memory, emotional and motivational regulation, internal speech, and problem-solving skills. These deficits contribute to academic difficulties, impulsive behaviours, and social challenges among children with ADHD.

Figure # 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study



Based on Barkley's theory, ADHD interventions provide external support to compensate for the deficits in self-regulation. In educational settings, behavioural interventions such as structured routines, continuous reinforcement, and behaviour management strategies are highly recommended to improve attention and reduce disruptive behaviours (DuPaul & Stoner, 2014). Cognitive-behavioural strategies help in the development of self-instruction, problem-solving, and self-monitoring skills, helping children to strengthen their executive functioning (Pelham & Fabiano, 2008).

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In addition, social and emotional learning interventions are used to enhance emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, and responsible decision-making (Strahan & Poteat, 2020). Effective ADHD support also requires collaboration among teachers, psychologists, and parents, with parent training programmes promoting consistent behavioural management across home and school settings (Chronis-Tuscano et al.,). Overall, Barkley's theory provides a strong foundation for evidence-based ADHD interventions focused on improving self-regulation, behaviour, and educational outcomes. These training programs basically focus on strategies such as clear instruction delivery, task breakdown into smaller steps, visual supports, immediate feedback, reinforcement techniques, and the use of consistent classroom routines. Such strategies directly help students to compensate for difficulties in working memory and behavioural inhibition, as well as enabling students with ADHD to improve their attention, task completion, and classroom participation (Barkley, 1997; DuPaul & Stoner, 2014).

Role of Psychologists

Psychologists play an important role in the well-being of students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) by addressing their academic, behavioural, emotional, and social needs. ADHD affects attention, impulse control, executive functioning, and emotional regulation, which can create significant challenges in educational settings.

- **Assessment and Identification:** Psychologists conduct psychological assessments, behavioural observations, clinical interviews, and also gather information from teachers, parents, and peers. Such standardized assessment helps accurately identify ADHD and differentiate it from other behavioural or learning difficulties. Wiener (2023) highlighted accurate assessment supports timely intervention and effective educational planning
- **Psychoeducation and Awareness:** Psychologists provide teachers, parents, and students with psychoeducation about the challenges, characteristics, and strengths of ADHD. This helps them to reduce misconceptions, strengthen home-school cooperation, and encourage more supportive strategies to fulfil students' needs (Rutter & Atkinson, 2023).
- **Interventions:** Another significant role includes the implementation of cognitive-behavioural interventions, behaviour modification techniques, and executive functioning support. Research confirms that such interventions help improve attention, self-regulation, classroom behaviour, and overall academic functioning (Journal of School Psychology, 2023).
- **Teacher Training and Multidisciplinary Collaboration:** Psychologists support teachers, parents, counsellors, and healthcare professionals by working together. Such training enhances teachers' skills and attitude, and makes them confident to work with children with ADHD in inclusive classrooms (Mohr-Jensen & Steinhausen, 2023).

Teacher-Student Relationship

An institute can have certain policies, but only a teacher can formulate and implement them in a classroom. A strong student-teacher relationships and pedagogical methods can make the students feel positive and comfortable with pedagogical problems (Cavanaugh, 2016). Owens et al. (2024) stated that it is important to understand that warmth, empathy, patience, and consistency are some of the key characteristics of a good teacher-student relations for children with ADHD.

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Recent studies proved that good teacher-student relations can protect children with ADHD from academic underachievement, poor self-esteem, and isolation from society (Sasser et al., 2024).

Positive teacher–student relationships are significant for students with ADHD, as these students often struggle with attention, impulsivity, emotional regulation, and social interactions. Supportive and trusting teacher-student relationships can boost students' academic engagement, classroom behaviour, and overall well-being (Mohr-Jensen & Steinhausen, 2023).

Research Methodology

Research Paradigm

The foundation of the study lies in the interpretive paradigm that holds that reality can only be created by subjective meanings and experiences of individuals and that it is constructed socially (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Interpretivists believe that knowledge cannot be objective, and hence can only be achieved through interpretation. This study focuses on the perceptions of educational psychologists and experts regarding children with ADHD in an educational setting. Interpretivism plays a very useful role in qualitative studies as it facilitates a deep analysis of social and educational events (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Furthermore, this paradigm is also useful in studying perceptions and experiences since it stresses interpretation over measurement.

Population

All the school psychologists and educational professionals working within the Sargodha district were the population of the present study. Creswell & Poth (2021) define a population as an entire group of people who have certain characteristics related to the purpose of the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The participants for this study were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling, in which participants are selected based on their experiences related to the objectives of the study and to the phenomena being studied (Palinkas et al., 2020). In this case, the participants were chosen due to their experience working with ADHD students within a school setting. In all, fourteen participants were involved in this study, providing detailed and rich qualitative data.

Instrumentation

In qualitative research, the choice to go for semi-structured interviews has been widely utilised because they are flexible in nature and allow the researcher to gather evidence-based and in-depth confirmations from the interviewees (Magaldi & Berler, 2023).

The interview questions were created after reviewing the relevant studies on ADHD, inclusive education, and teacher support networks. The semi-structured format allowed participants to discuss their experiences, perceptions, and professional insights in detail, resulting in a deeper understanding of ADHD-related practices within educational settings. The following topics were highlighted in the interview guide:

- Experts' knowledge and understanding of ADHD.
- School-based identification practices.
- Intervention strategies used to support students with ADHD.

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- Teachers' roles in inclusive classrooms.

Instrument Validity

In order to ensure the content validity, the interview guide was evaluated by four highly regarded subject-matter experts from the domains of psychology and inclusive education. In the opinion and light of expert review and constructive advice, some modifications were made to enhance the clarity and relevancy of the questions with respect to the research objectives. Initially, there total of fifteen questions in the interview guide based on exploring the views of experts regarding ADHD. After the validation, some of the changes were made to enhance the efficiency and relevance to match the objectives of the study.

13.6 Reliability

The reliability of the interview guide was assessed through a pilot study. The selected panel of five subject-matter experts, known to be highly regarded in the research area, expressed their valuable thoughts on the content as well as the components of the interview guide. Recognizing the recommendations of the experts, the researcher identified modifications to the selected questions. The probes were aimed to gather more in-depth and detailed answers about ADHD diagnosis, strategies, dealing with it, knowledge of teachers, and inclusiveness in the classroom.

Ethical Considerations

The study

was conducted in accordance with established ethical guidelines. All participants were informed about the purpose of the research and were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. With participants' permission, interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. All collected data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes.

Data Collection

Data was collected through both face-to-face interviews. A total of eighteen semi-structured interviews were conducted, with each interview lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent. Participants provided detailed information regarding ADHD identification practices, intervention strategies, and the ways in which teachers support students with ADHD in inclusive classrooms.

Data Analysis

Following data collection, all interviews were transcribed exactly. The recordings were reviewed repeatedly to ensure accuracy and completeness. The transcripts were then read several times to develop familiarity with the data. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Creswell & Poth, 2021). The resulting themes reflected participants' perspectives on ADHD conceptualization, identification procedures, intervention strategies, and the role of teachers within inclusive educational settings. These themes provided an in-depth understanding of ADHD management in schools from the perspectives of educational and psychological professionals.

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Table # 1: The Demographic Information of the Participants

Serial #	Gender	Disciplinary Background	Designation	Field Experience
1.	Female	Ph.D. Clinical Psychology	Psychologist	19 years
2.	Female	Ph.D. Clinical Psychology	Psychologist	11 years
3.	Male	Ph.D. Clinical Psychology	Neuropsychologist	15 years
4.	Female	M.S. Clinical Psychology	Psychologist	15 years
5.	Female	MS Psychology	Psychologist	27 years
6.	Female	Ph.D. Psychology	Psychologist	27 years
7.	Male	M.S. Psychology	Psychologist	11 years
8.	Female	M.S. Psychology	Psychologist	7 years
9.	Female	PhD Education	Educationist	26 years
10.	Male	PhD Special Education	Educationist	15 years
11.	Male	MS Education	Educationist	13 years
12.	Female	PhD Special Education	Educationist	20 years
13.	Female	MS Education	Educationist	10 years
14.	Male	MBBS /Clinical Psychology	Psychologist	35 years

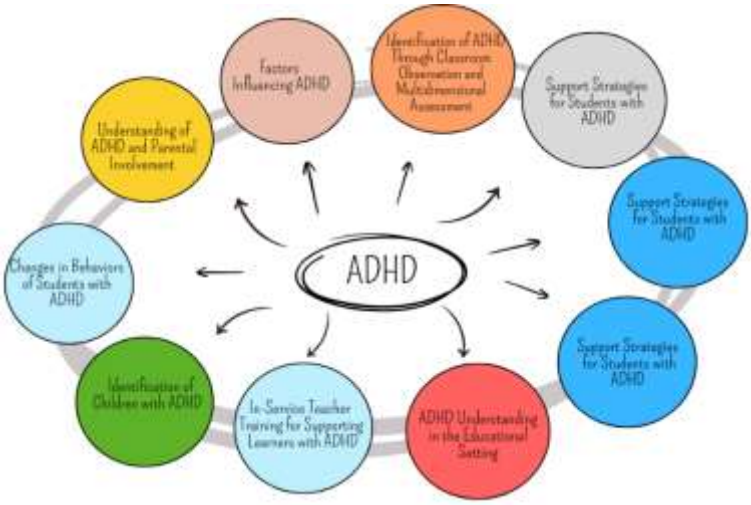


Figure # 2: Themes identified by the study

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Presentation of Themes in Detail

1.	ADHD Understanding in the Educational Setting
2.	Identification of Children with ADHD
3.	Influence of ADHD on Children
4.	Changes in Behaviors of Students with ADHD
5.	Learning Abilities of ADHD
6.	Understanding of ADHD and Parental Involvement
7.	Factors Influencing ADHD
8.	Identification of ADHD Through Classroom Observation and Multidimensional Assessment
9.	Support Strategies for Students with ADHD
10.	In-Service Teacher Training for Supporting Learners with ADHD

1. ADHD Understanding in the Educational Setting

To answer the question about understanding of ADHD in the educational context, most of the participants stated that this is a neurodevelopmental disorder that significantly impacts children's emotional regulation, cognition, and physical activity. Psychologists and educators usually understand ADHD as the condition manifested through persistent problems of inattentiveness, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.

Some participants noted that children diagnosed with ADHD face difficulties in the academic environment and often behave irresponsibly and are prone to misconducts that could be misinterpreted as laziness and other inappropriate behaviors. A Clinical Psychologist reported that, children with ADHD are *"Often confused with those having behavior problems because they can be disorganised, forgetful, distractible, and act impulsively" (R6).*

Another child psychologist mentioned "A*cademic symptoms of ADHD include "incomplete homework, difficulty following instructions, and erratic academic performance" (R8).*

An educational psychologist described that, *The main problem with ADHD-related behavior is self-regulation issues, which lead to significant problems at academic and social levels"* (R2). ADHD-related symptoms worsen under academic pressure and result in distractibility and misconduct.

2. Identification of Children with ADHD

Regarding identification of children with ADHD, a number of psychologists and educational experts highlighted that students with ADHD have obvious behaviors in classroom settings. Those behaviors include inability to pay attention, distraction, impulsivity, excessive movement, and failure to follow instructions. A clinical psychologist commented,

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An ADHD Consultant added that, *ADHD-related behaviours are evident in everyday classwork and are characterized by restlessness, inability to sit still, and inability to perform tasks independently* (R1). Moreover, it was noted that children with ADHD do not want to participate in structured academic activities, such as presentations, discussions, and writing. On the other hand, there are children who are oppositional and disruptive in their behaviors because of the pressure from the academic environment.

A Clinical Researcher explained that "*ADHD students are different due to their persistence, intensity, and frequency of its symptoms, which ultimately lead to functional impairment*" (R10).

3. Influence of ADHD on Children

Responding to the question of how ADHD influences the students in educational settings, most of the respondents stated that ADHD negatively impacts children's academic, cognitive, emotional, and social functioning. It was often noted that children with ADHD have difficulties with memory retention, attention maintenance, classroom involvement, and academic results in general. Distractibility, impulsivity, and poor performance were also noted as major problems of ADHD that influence academic performance.

One of the psychologists reported, *"Children with ADHD avoid dealing with academic demands since they tend to"avoid facing the situation"* (R3). Another school counsellor added, *"The avoidance disrupts usual classroom dynamics and finally it results in bad relationships between teachers and children that make children look weak in academic settings"* (R10).

According to a Clinical Psychologist, *"Children with ADHD experience constant criticism and academic failures, which gradually lower their self-esteem and make them doubt their abilities and potential"* (R1).

4. Changes in Behaviors of Students with ADHD

Most of the psychologists identified a set of behavioral changes related to ADHD, including irritability, restlessness, impulsivity, hyperactivity, outbursts, social withdrawal, and inability to have consistent classroom behavior. These behaviors are not only disruptive in terms of academic performance but also disrupt peer relationships.

A pediatric neurologist stated, *"Children with ADHD are easily distracted by external stimuli, frequently leave tasks unfinished, and have difficulty maintaining attention during academic activities"* (R5).

Another distinguished characteristic discussed by experts was low frustration tolerance. They reported that children with ADHD may become impatient or discouraged when faced with challenging tasks, which can affect their persistence and motivation. As a Clinical Researcher pointed out, *"Children with ADHD often exhibit a low frustration tolerance and may become impatient, irritated or give up quickly when tasks become challenging"* (R7).

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5. Learning Abilities of ADHD

Most of the psychologists stated, ADHD affects students is their learning ability, namely attention regulation, classroom participation and cognition. It was also claimed that children with this disorder cannot concentrate and stay focused during instruction processes; they usually are easily distracted and have some other mental problems to concentrate.

A child psychologist pointed out that, *"They look like being lost and cannot pay any attention to anything, which makes it impossible for them to learn and remember something"* (R7). A school counsellor stated, *"Students find it difficult to finish tasks, need to be told things over and over again, and they are not able to sit down, not because they do not want to, but because they have little or no self-control ability."* (R1)

Moreover, it was mentioned that this problem also has an impact on classroom participation and involvement since it makes students stay silent or absent and even not react to something when they are called. According to one of the psychologists, "*people who have ADHD usually have difficulties in paying attention and staying concentrated during the lecture since they usually distract and sometimes do not give an appropriate answer"* (R9).

6. Understanding of ADHD and Parental Involvement

Parental awareness was indicated by participants as a critical component affecting the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD. There is less awareness among the parents about the illness, which frequently leads to misconceptions, delayed recognition, and decreased participation in support and intervention processes, both individually and as a whole.

A clinical psychologist addresses, *"Parents think ADHD is just a typical child behaviour instead of a neurodevelopmental disorder. They must know their child needs immediate help and intervention"* (R1).

Parents can promote a productive home-school partnership by understanding the importance of ADHD. An educational psychologist highlighted that, "*There must be a collaboration between home and school, which is directly affected by parental involvement and knowledge. Involvement of parents in educational support is limited which is harming children with ADHD"* (R4).

The significance of educating parents about ADHD on a periodic schedule was highlighted by all the respondents. A clinical researcher emphasized, *"We must have structured parent awareness programs, seminars or workshops, informing the families about ADHD symptoms, available interventions, as well as different ways to support children at home and in school"* (R5).

7. Factors Influencing ADHD

In response to the question what the hidden factors affecting ADHD are, the majority of psychologists replied that ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition, and various environmental and contextual factors also have a negative influence on the child. A clinical psychologist mentioned, "*ADHD does not cause by poor parenting; uneven routines, family stress, and limited parental support may worsen the symptoms"* (R1).

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The effect of traumatic childhood events and challenging situations in life was also emphasized by participants. A child psychiatrist insists that, "*Children who have been subjected to trauma, neglect, or extended exposure to stressful situations may display behaviours that mimic or worsen symptoms of ADHD"* (R2).

According to psychologists, there are many different factors that can cause these kinds of disorders, namely family problems, strict parenting styles, emotional neglect, high parental expectations, relationship problems with peers and abuse/harassment. One of the respondents stressed, *"Nowadays adolescent relationship-related stressors become a more frequent source of problems that affect attention regulation and behaviour of people"* (R12).

8. Identification of ADHD Through Classroom Observation and Multidimensional Assessment

Psychologists described ADHD identification as a process that often begins with observations made within the classroom. They highlighted that persistent patterns of inattentiveness, hyperactivity, impulsivity, and academic difficulties usually alert teachers to the possibility of ADHD. A school psychologist stated, *"ADHD in inclusive classrooms, is oftenly identified through consistent patterns of inattention, difficulty remaining seated, regular disruption, and impulsive behaviour that carries across different activities"* (R1).

Participants emphasized that though teachers interact with students on a daily basis, they are often the first professionals to observe behavioural and attentional difficulties across different learning situations. A Special Education Expert commented, *"Because they observe children every day and can spot persistent behavioural and attentional issues that could be signs of ADHD, classroom teachers play a critical role in early identification" (R3).*

Respondents emphasized that teacher observations should not be the only source for identification, even though classroom observations are considered significant. *"A multi-layered approach, including teacher reports, parental feedback, and clinical assessment, is necessary for an accurate and reliable identification of ADHD in inclusive settings" (R4)* stated by a clinical psychologist,

9. Support Strategies for Students with ADHD

Educational experts highlighted several varieties evidence-based teaching strategies that can in real help ADHD students in their academic, behavioural, and social interactions. The majority of psychologists asserted that effective intervention requires structured teaching approaches, positive behaviour support, and flexible instructional practices especially designed according to students' needs.

A clinical psychologist stated, "*ADHD children benefit meaningfully from a structured classroom, where routines are clearly defined and consistently implemented"* (R1).

Participants also highlighted the significance of positive behaviour management strategies to support students with ADHD. According to a psychologist, *"Token systems, clear behavioural*

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expectations, and positive reinforcement are effective strategies to manage impulsive and inattentive behaviours in ADHD learners" (R2).

According to a school counsellor, *"It is important to divide large academic tasks into smaller, manageable steps to help children with ADHD. This will maintain their attention complete assignments on time" (R14).*

Participants further highlighted the value of interactive and multisensory instructional methods. Compared to typical lecture-based instruction, these methods were thought to be more successful and entertaining for students with ADHD. *"Compared to traditional lecture-based approaches, interactive and multisensory teaching methods improve engagement and help sustain attention in learners with ADHD"* (R4).

10. In-Service Teacher Training for Supporting Learners with ADHD

Participants stressed the significance of in-service teachers for helping the process of giving assistance to students with ADHD in an inclusive classroom. A clinical psychologist stated, *"Teachers should be trained in practical ways to manage their classrooms and diagnose ADHD because they are the first person who could identify ADHD" (R12).*

An educational psychologist explained, *"Teachers must be trained to fully understand neurodevelopmental disorders like ADHD, so that they respond appropriately to students' needs"* (R2).

Experts and psychologists also mentioned the gap between clinical knowledge of ADHD and its practical application in educational settings. A child psychiatrist made the following statement, *"Teachers require continuous professional training programs and also updated strategies for effective classroom management"* (R4).

Discussion and Conclusion

The current study suggests that ADHD has a major effect on children's behaviour, academic performance, emotional control, and social development in inclusive classrooms. The study also suggests that ADHD should not be viewed as a behavioural disorder but rather as a neurodevelopmental disorder that requires timely diagnosis and appropriate intervention. Additionally, this study also highlights the lack of ADHD-focused teacher training programs within inclusive education.

The findings of this study indicate that identifying the presence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder among students is one of the most essential components of inclusive education. Inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity are key characteristics of ADHD that significantly impact students' behaviour, academic performance, and socioemotional growth. Developing successful inclusive practices requires knowledge and understanding of diverse symptoms of ADHD as well as working together with parents, psychologists, and teachers. Furthermore, recent research found that a structured teacher training program is essential for improving teachers' preparedness and contributing to the early detection of neurodevelopmental disorders in children (Donath et al., 2025).

Thus, the current study has managed to reveal an important gap in existing knowledge, especially in the case of Pakistan, which proves how little has been done in terms of teacher

training initiatives focused on ADHD. The main reason for ADHD detection problems in Pakistani schools is the fact that the information about ADHD has not been included in the curriculum of teacher preparation programs. However, there is another important gap in knowledge revealed by this study; understanding, detecting and managing the disorder has not been included in the professional preparation of future teachers. There is a significant knowledge gap that does not consider one of the crucial aspects of inclusive education, educational leadership and student support services. This study reveals quite clearly that insufficient consideration has been paid to ADHD in terms of existing teacher professional development initiative programs. The result is that not only can teachers not help children with ADHD due to lack of proper training but the existing educational training policy as well faces certain problems.

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