



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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Title of dissertation: **Views and experiences of teachers and parents of children with ADHD regarding the meaning and diagnostic criteria of ADHD**

Abstract

This qualitative thesis study focuses on exploring the views and experiences of primary school teachers and parents (sample pairs) regarding Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), which is one of the most frequently diagnosed childhood disorders in recent decades. More specifically, it explores how participants conceptualise ADHD, the factors and causes of its occurrence, as well as their attitudes towards the diagnosis and diagnostic criteria and how these affect the educational process and children's everyday life. The literature review shows that ADHD is mainly approached from a clinical perspective, based on the subjective judgement of the individual specialist, with an emphasis on diagnosis and treatment, which leads to the medicalisation of the condition and the creation of social constructs that contribute to the stigmatisation of the individual. The ultimate aim of this research is therefore to attempt to critically approach the issue of ADHD by adopting the social model of disability, according to which society shapes the conditions that make a person disabled or not.

In line with the purpose of the study, the research questions were framed under three (3) thematic axes. The first thematic axis explores teachers' and parents' views on the meaning-making of ADHD. In the second, their views and experiences regarding the diagnostic process and its diagnostic criteria are studied. The third and last thematic axis is related to the participants' views and experiences about the influence of the

diagnosis on the educational path of children and their socio-emotional development. For data collection, semi-structured interviews were used as the most appropriate methodological tool, with an interview guide, with fourteen (14) open-ended interviews for teachers and thirteen (13) open-ended interviews for parents, which were analyzed using the content analysis method.

Through the analysis, the results of the survey revealed different conceptualizations of ADHD among teachers and parents. Teachers tend to perceive it mainly as a disorder that affects and is related to the difficulty of concentrating and adapting behavior in the classroom (school environment), while parents describe and experience it as a difficult situation, a daily challenge that requires constant support. Factors such as heredity, environmental influences and educational practices play a key role in shaping participants' views. At the same time, it was found that the educational process is often not adapted to the needs of children with ADHD, which can lead to increased levels of anxiety and difficulties in integration. Parents point to the importance of support and appropriate conditions at school, while teachers mention the need for more training and appropriate intervention programmes.

In conclusion, the research highlights the need for a more holistic and socially sensitive approach to ADHD, which takes into account not only the individual difficulties of children, but also the social structures that affect their learning and social integration. Changing attitudes towards diagnosis, which often leads to stigmatisation and labelling of children, and promoting inclusive educational practices are key steps towards reducing stigma and enhancing the participation of children with ADHD in educational and social life. In conclusion, the study concludes the importance of collaboration between teachers and parents to create a supportive environment that enhances the inclusion of children with ADHD in the school and social context.

Keywords-phrases: ADHD, conceptualization, diagnosis, diagnostic criteria, teachers' views, parents' views, social construction of disability