

# “MISLIM, REALNO, TKO VOLI ŠKOLU?”: ISKUSTVO ŠKOLOVANJA OSNOVNOŠKOLSKIH DJEČAKA S ADHD-OM

## “I MEAN, REALLY, WHO LIKES SCHOOL?”: EXPERIENCES OF BOYS WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**Sažetak:** Iako je deficit pažnje/hiperaktivni poremećaj (ADHD) najčešći neurorazvojni poremećaj u dječjoj dobi, istraživanja ADHD-a u Republici Hrvatskoj iznimno su rijetka, a posebice se to odnosi na istraživanja u kojima su sudionici sama djeca s ADHD-om. Stoga je opći cilj ovog rada opisati osobno, doživljeno iskustvo svakodnevnog života vezanog uz školovanje osnovnoškolskih dječaka s ADHD-om. U istraživanje je uključen namjeran uzorak sudionika, 14 dječaka s ADHD-om kronološke dobi od 8 do 11 godina, koji su uključeni u redovan sustav obrazovanja. Sa svakim su dječakom provedena tri polustrukturirana fenomenološka intervjua. Posebna pažnja u ovom istraživanju posvećena je metodološkom pristupu usmjerenom na dijete, prilagođenom djetetovim razvojnim osobinama te sigurnom za dijete. Podaci su obrađeni metodom interpretativne fenomenološke analize (IPA), a iskustvo školovanja dječaka s ADHD-om prikazano je kroz dvije teme: (1) Izazovi školovanja s ADHD-om te (2) Podrška u školi: važnost uvažavanja, senzibiliziranosti i odnosa. Istraživanje je pokazalo da dječaci s ADHD-om prepoznaju svoje izazove vezane uz školovanje, a njihove teškoće najviše dolaze do izražaja u obrazovnim aktivnostima koje od njih zahtijevaju usmjerenje i održavanje pozornosti, organiziranost, ustrajnost, fleksibilnu pažnju i radno pamćenje. Posljedično se suočavaju s iskustvom školskog neuspjeha, frustracije te sniženog samopouzdanja kad su posrijedi njihove sposobnosti. Dječaci prepoznaju podršku koju u školi dobivaju od učiteljice i pomoćnice u nastavi, ali i ograničenja koja doživljavaju radi nerazumijevanja, manjka senzibiliziranosti za njihovu neurazličitost te neprimjenjivanja IOOP-a. Dječaci vrlo jasno opisuju koje prilagodbe bi im olakšale iskustvo školovanja. Rezultati ovog istraživanja upozoravaju da su djeca s ADHD-om u posebnom psihosocijalnom riziku, dok je

**Abstract:** Although attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders observed in childhood, ADHD research in Croatia, especially studies involving children, are extremely rare. Therefore, the aim of this paper was to describe the personal everyday school life experiences of boys with ADHD who were studying in elementary schools. This study included a purposive sample of 14 boys with ADHD aged 8 to 11 years who attended mainstream elementary schools. Three semi-structured phenomenological interviews were conducted with each boy. Special attention was given to ensure that the methodological approach used in this study was child-centred, child-friendly, and child-safe. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to analyse the data. Data collected on the school experiences of the boys with ADHD are presented via two themes: (1) challenges of schooling with ADHD, and (2) support at school: the importance of recognition, sensitivity, and relationships. This study demonstrates that boys with ADHD can recognize the challenges associated with their schooling and find it very difficult to take part in school activities that require directing and maintaining attention, organization, perseverance, flexible attention, and working memory. Consequently, the boys reported that they experience failure, frustration, and reduced self-confidence in their own abilities. Boys participating in this study were able to recognize the support received at school from their teachers and teaching assistants, as well as the obstacles that occurred due to misunderstandings, lack of sensitivity to their neurodiversity, and failure to apply the Individualised Education Program. The boys also provided clear descriptions of the adjustments necessary to make their school experience easier. The results of this study illustrate that children with ADHD face specific psycho-social risks, followed by recommendation that their experiences should be considered

u smislu participativnih prava djece, njihova iskustva potrebno uvažiti kao ravnopravnih dionika obrazovnih politika.

**Ključne riječi:** *neurorazličitost, intervju s djecom, interpretativna fenomenološka analiza*

during the development of educational policies, given their participatory rights and their role as equal stakeholders.

**Keywords:** *neurodiversity, child interview, interpretative phenomenological analysis*

## UVOD

### Neurobiološka i neuropsihološka obilježja ADHD-a

Deficit pažnje/hiperaktivni poremećaj (u nastavku teksta: ADHD od engl. *Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder*) razvojni je poremećaj samoregulacije. Neuropsihološke teorije upućuju da se u podlozi ovog sindroma nalaze teškoće u izvršnim funkcijama te posljedično teškoće u emocionalnoj, kognitivnoj, verbalnoj, motoričkoj i bihevioralnoj inhibiciji (samoregulaciji) (Barkley, 2015; Salkičević i Tadinac, 2017). Prema teorijama biološke podloge ADHD-a ova je neurorazličitost većim dijelom (iako ne jedino) posljedica sporijeg sazrijevanja moždanih struktura i puteva odgovornih za izvršne funkcije i inhibiciju (posebice prefrontalni korteks i anteriorni cingulate korteks), neujednačenog moždanog krvotoka te aktivnosti parasimpatikusa, nepravilnosti u metabolizmu neuroprijenosnika koji uključuju dopaminergičke, adrenergičke, serotoninergičke i acetilholineričke puteve (Cortese, 2012) te genetske podloge povezane s metabolizmom neuroprijenosnika (Faraone i Mick, 2010; Tye i sur., 2012). Sve navedeno ukazuje na objektivne biološke različitosti neurološkog sustava djece s ADHD-om u odnosu na normativne skupine (npr. Qiu i sur., 2011; Musser i sur., 2011).

Pri opisivanju ADHD-a potrebno je napomenuti da je riječ o neurorazvojnoj različitosti čija se obilježja pojavljuju u spektru, pri čemu se trajni obrazac teškoća pri regulaciji pozornosti te hiperaktivnosti/impulzivnosti kod pojedinog djeteta mogu ispoljavati u različitom intenzitetu. Ipak, za dijagnosticiranje ADHD-a simptomi bi se trebali pojaviti "prije 12. godine, a moraju biti prisutni najmanje 6 mjeseci u barem dva različita okruženja te biti izraženi u mjeri koja nije u skladu s razvojnim razinom, a pritom znatno ometa ili smanjuje kvalitetu socijalnog i akademskog funkcioniranja" (DSM-5). Stoga ovaj dijagnostički priručnik kate-

## INTRODUCTION

### Neurobiological and neuropsychological features of ADHD

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a developmental disorder associated with self-regulation. Neuropsychological theories suggest that the underlying issues in this disorder are difficulties in performing executive functions that consequently leads to difficulties in emotional, cognitive, verbal, motor, and behavioural inhibition (self-regulation) (Barkley, 2015; Salkičević and Tadinac, 2017). Studies on the biological basis of ADHD indicate that this neurodevelopmental disorder is largely (although not completely) a consequence of slower maturation of brain structures and pathways responsible for executive functioning and inhibition (i.e., the prefrontal and the anterior cingulate cortex); uneven cerebral blood flow and parasympathetic activity; a genetic background associated with neurotransmitter metabolism (Faraone and Mick, 2010; Tye et al., 2012); and abnormalities in neurotransmitter metabolism involving dopaminergic, adrenergic, serotonergic, and acetylcholinergic pathways (Cortese, 2012). These characteristics point to objective biological differences in the neurological system of children with ADHD in relation to normative groups (e.g., Qiu et al., 2011; Musser et al., 2011).

ADHD can be described as a type/form of neurodevelopmental diversity with specific features that appear in the spectrum of neurodevelopmental disorders: a child with ADHD experiences persistent patterns of difficulty in regulating attention, as well as hyperactivity impulsivity that can manifest in varying intensities. However, for a clinical diagnosis, ADHD *symptoms should appear before the child is 12 years old: these symptoms have to be persistent for at least six months in at least two different settings to a degree that is inconsistent with the child's developmental status, and they must interfere with, or reduce the quality of social and academic functioning* (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, DSM-5). Therefore, DSM-5

gorizira pojavnost (1) dominantno nepažljivog, (2) hiperaktivnog/impulzivnog ili (3) kombiniranog tipa obje skupine simptoma (APA, 2013). Osim simptoma navedenih u nazivu ovog poremećaja prisutne su i brojne druge, “nevidljive” teškoće koje se povezuju s nezrelošću inhibitornih i regulirajućih izvršnih funkcija kao što su: kognitivna, verbalna i motorička impulzivnost, slabiji kapacitet radnog pamćenja, odgođeno postizanje socijalne zrelosti, teškoće u učenju, narušen osjećaj za vrijeme, otežano učenje iz nagrada i kazni te niska tolerancija na frustraciju (Barkley, 2015), kao i teškoće sa spavanjem (Yürümez i Kılıç, 2016). Kofler i suradnici (2019) potvrđuju narušenost izvršnih funkcija u 89% djece s ADHD-om (od toga najviše u području radnog pamćenja, 62%). Barkley (2015) navodi da ADHD usporava razvoj izvršnih funkcija za 25–40%. Drugim riječima, djetetu koje kronološki ima deset godina izvršne funkcije razvijene su na razini sedmogodišnjaka.

Unatoč čestom pripisivanju djetetovog ponašanja različitim socijalnim čimbenicima (Mikami i sur., 2015; Lebowitz, 2016) u literaturi ne nalazimo znanstvene dokaze koji bi ukazivali da je ADHD **uzrokovan** neprimjerenim roditeljskim postupcima (odgojem), igranjem videoigara, gledanjem televizora ili konzumiranjem šećera, već je riječ o biološkoj različitosti razvoja središnjeg živčanog sustava (Barkley, 2015). Zbog društvenog nepoznavanja i nerazumijevanja uzroka djetetova ponašanja, odnosno pripisivanja takvog ponašanja namjeri ili pretjerano popustljivom odgoju, ova djeca, pa i cijela obitelj, izloženi su stigmatizirajućim stavovima okoline (Lin i sur., 2009; Moen i sur., 2011; Mueller i sur., 2012; Lebowitz, 2016).

### **Izazovi školovanja djece s ADHD-om i mogućnosti podrške**

Istraživanja i praksa potvrđuju da ADHD ima značajan utjecaj na sve vidove života djeteta, kao što su: nesamostalnost u svakodnevnim aktivnostima (Mendes i sur., 2018; Spaulding i sur., 2020), narušeni obrasci igre (Cordier i sur., 2010; Zainab i Delpont, 2019) te izazovi socijalizacije s vršnjacima (npr. Velki i Dudaš, 2016; Kouvava i Antonopoulou, 2020). Simptomi ADHD-a posebno dolaze do izražaja u strukturiranom školskom okružju, a istraživači bilježe teškoće u akadem-

provides a categorization of observed symptoms: (1) a predominantly inattentive presentation, (2) a predominantly hyperactive/impulsive presentation, or (3) a combined presentation of both groups of symptoms (APA, 2013). In addition to the symptoms associated with the name of this disorder (i.e. difficulty regulating attention and motor activity), there are numerous other “invisible” difficulties associated with immaturity of inhibitory and regulatory executive functions, including cognitive, verbal, and motor impulsivity, weaker working memory capacity, delayed achievement of social maturity, learning difficulties, impaired sense of time, difficulty learning from rewards and punishments, low tolerance to frustration (Barkley, 2015), and disturbed sleep patterns (Yürümez and Kılıç, 2016). Kofler et al. (2019) reported impaired executive functioning in 89% of children with ADHD (mostly in the area of working memory, 62%). Barkley (2015) stated that ADHD slows the development of executive functions by 25–40%. In other words, a child, who is ten years old chronologically, was only able to develop the capability to perform executive functions like a seven-year-old.

Even though the behaviour of children is frequently attributed to various social factors (Mikami et al, 2015; Lebowitz, 2016), there is no scientific evidence to support the claims that ADHD is caused by inadequate parenting styles, playing video games, watching TV or consuming sugar. In contrast, there is strong evidence for the biological diversity in the development of the central nervous system (Barkley, 2015). Due to the lack of social awareness and understanding about the causes of the child’s behaviour (e.g., attributing such behaviour to the child’s intentions or an excessively lenient upbringing), children with ADHD and their families are exposed to stigmatizing social attitudes (Lin et al., 2009; Moen et al., 2011; Mueller et al., 2012; Lebowitz, 2016).

### **Schooling challenges for children with ADHD and support options**

Research and practice confirm that ADHD has a significant impact on all aspects of a child’s life, such as lack of independence in daily activities (Mendes et al., 2018; Spaulding et al., 2020), impaired play patterns (Cordier et al., 2010; Zainab and Delpont, 2019), and challenges in peer socialization (e.g., Velki and Dudaš, 2016; Kouvava and Antonopoulou, 2020). The symptoms of ADHD are particularly pronounced in a struc-

skom funkcioniranju, odnosno slabije akademsko postignuće u odnosu na intelektualne kapacitete (npr. Katusic i sur., 2011; DosReis i sur., 2010; DuPaul i Langberg, 2015). U longitudinalnom istraživanju koje su provele Taanila i suradnice (2012) pokazalo se da učenici s ADHD-om tijekom školovanja imaju značajno nižu srednju vrijednost školskih ocjena za teorijske predmete od njihovih neurotipičnih vršnjaka. Kod djece s ADHD-om prisutni su narušeno radno pamćenje i kognitivna tromost koji otežavaju praćenje nastave i uputa, teškoće s pisanjem bilješki te izvršavanjem domaćih zadataka, nezrele izvršne funkcije koje otežavaju organiziranje materijala i planiranje vremena za učenje, općenito niže ocjene i rezultati na standardiziranim testovima u usporedbi s vršnjacima, kao i teškoće u prilagođavanju socijalnim zahtjevima u školi (Tamm i sur., 2020; Tamm i sur., 2016; Taanila i sur., 2014; Langberg i sur., 2011).

Podaci iz svjetskih statistika upućuju na prevalenciju od 7,2% školske djece (metaanaliza Thomas i suradnika, 2015; Danielson i sur., 2018). To znači da jedno od petnaestoro djece u dobi od 4–10 godina, odnosno jedno od devetoro djece u dobi od 11–14 godina ima dijagnosticiran ADHD (US CDC, 2014). Iako nemamo službene podatke o postotnom udjelu djece s ADHD-om u Hrvatskoj, istraživanje Sekušak Galešev i suradnica (2015) ukazuje na samo 0,95% prevalencije ADHD-a u njihovu uzorku hrvatskih osnovnoškolaca. Taj podatak govori o ozbiljnom poddijagnosticiranju ovog neurorazvojnog poremećaja, što ukazuje na to da teškoće znatnog broja djece nisu prepoznate i stoga ne dobivaju primjerenu sustavnu podršku. U Hrvatskoj je planirana socijalna i obrazovna politika kao oblik sustavne podrške ovoj djeci još uvijek nedostatna, a farmakoterapija rijetko je metoda terapijskog izbora. Pravilnik o osnovnoškolskom i srednjoškolskom odgoju i obrazovanju učenika s teškoćama u razvoju (NN, 24/15) navodi djecu s ADHD-om kao moguće korisnike prava na *primjerene programe školovanja i primjerene oblike pomoći školovanja*. Kriterij koji navodi Pravilnik iz *Orijentacijske liste vrsta teškoća*, a koji škola može koristiti kao argument za određivanje *Redovitog programa uz individualizirane postupke* (individualizirani odgojno-obrazovni program, IOOP) za dijete s ADHD-om zastario je i neusklađen sa

tured school environment and research has reported difficulties in academic functioning, i.e., poor academic achievement in relation to intellectual capacity (e.g., Katusic et al., 2011; DosReis et al., 2010). This includes impaired working memory and cognitive sluggishness that make it difficult to follow classes and instructions, difficulties with notetaking and completing homework, immature executive functioning that make it difficult to organize learning materials and plan learning time, generally lower grades and results on standardized tests compared to peers, as well as difficulties in adapting to social demands at school (Tamm et al., 2020; Tamm et al., 2016; Taanila et al., 2014; Langberg et al., 2011).

Global statistics suggest that the prevalence of ADHD among school-aged children is 7.2% (as per a meta-analysis by Thomas et al., 2015; Danielson et al., 2018). This means that one in fifteen children aged 4–10 years, or one in nine children aged 11–14 years, has been diagnosed with ADHD (US CDC, 2014). Although we do not have official data on the prevalence of children with ADHD in Croatia, Sekušak Galešev et al. (2015) reported that children with ADHD represented only 0.95% of their sample of Croatian elementary school students. This data indicates a serious underdiagnosis of this neurodevelopmental disorder, suggesting that the difficulties of a significant number of children are not recognized and, therefore, do not receive adequate systematic support. In Croatia, current social and educational policies, planned as a form of systematic support for these children, are insufficient and pharmacotherapy is rarely used as a method of choice. The *Policy on primary and secondary education of students with disabilities* (NN 24/15) identifies children with ADHD as possible beneficiaries of the right to *'appropriate school programs and appropriate forms of school assistance'*. The criterion listed in the Policy under the *Orientation List of Types of Difficulties*, which the school can use as an argument for developing the Individualised Education Program (IEP) for a child with ADHD, is outdated and not consistent with contemporary categorisations<sup>1</sup>. If the school is responsive and submits the appropriate

<sup>1</sup> This Policy classifies ADHD as a group of behavioral disorders and mental health impairments, while DSM-5 has defined ADHD as a neurodevelopmental disorder since 2013. This categorisation exposes children to additional prejudices associated with mental health problems, rather than applying a more accurate categorisation that classifies their difficulties within a group of developmental neurodiversities that are based on a biological foundation.

suvremenim kategorizacijama.<sup>1</sup> Ukoliko se škola angažira i podnese zahtjev, u pojedinačnim slučajevima djetetu može biti omogućena podrška pomoćnika u nastavi (u skladu s *Pravilnikom o pomoćnicima u nastavi i stručnim komunikacijskim posrednicima*, NN 102/2018), koji se uglavnom financira iz proračuna osnivača škola kroz projektna sredstva udruga ili EU-fondova, no u ograničenom broju sati nastave tjedno. Koliko je ovakav oblik podrške prisutan u obrazovnom sustavu, u kojoj se mjeri dosljedno provodi i koliko ga uspješnim doživljavaju krajnji korisnici (djeca s ADHD-om i njihovi roditelji), tek je potrebno istražiti.

### Djeca s ADHD-om kao aktivni sudionici istraživanja

U akademskim elektroničkim izvorima (npr. EBSCO, Google Scholar) u posljednjih je 20 godina registrirano preko 400 tisuća znanstvenih radova koji se bave ADHD-om. Unatoč tome iz uvida u istraživačke baze vidljivo je da su perspektive djece s ADHD-om rijetko zastupljene u istraživanjima te se premalo pažnje pridaje djetetovu iskustvu življenja s ADHD-om (Singh, 2011; Brady, 2014). Ringer (2020) je u svoju recentnu metasintezu kvalitativnih istraživanja provedenih s djecom i adolescentima s ADHD-om uključio tek 16 kvalitativnih istraživačkih radova, od kojih su četiri bile neobjavljene disertacije. Ringer zaključuje da djeca i mladi s ADHD-om imaju brojne ambivalentne osjećaje i iskustva; imaju snažnu potrebu prilagoditi se neurotipičnoj većini, ali i biti prihvaćeni takvi kakvi jesu, osjećaju nedostatak pripadnosti i stigmatu, ali istovremeno i potrebu za tuđom pomoći. Ujedno ih prati osjećaj nedostatka kontrole te iskustvo poteškoća pri sudjelovanju u svakodnevnim aktivnostima, a posebno školi. Međutim, u metasintezi je većina uključenih istraživanja obuhvaćala djecu adolescentske dobi od 10 do 19 godina starosti, dok su djeca mlađe osnovnoškolske dobi i dalje ostala podzastupljena. Prikupljanje valjanih i pouzdanih, strukturiranih podataka od djece koja imaju biološ-

request, the child may be provided the support of teaching assistants in individual cases (in accordance with the *Policy on teaching assistants and professional communication mediators*, NN 102/2018). Support from teaching assistants is typically limited to a few hours per week and is predominantly financed using the local budget of school founders, or through funds acquired from civil association projects, or the EU. The extent to which this form of support is present in the education system, its consistent implementation, and its success with respect to the experience of the end user (children with ADHD and their parents) remains to be explored.

### Children with ADHD as active research subjects

In the last 20 years, 400,000 scientific papers on ADHD have been registered in electronic databases (e.g., EBSCO, Google Scholar). However, a review of this subject indicates that the perspectives of children with ADHD are rarely represented in scientific papers, and very few studies have addressed the experiences of the children who live with ADHD (Singh, 2011; Brady, 2014). A recent meta-synthesis of qualitative research involving children and adolescents with ADHD (Ringer, 2020) included a total of 16 qualitative research papers, of which, four were unpublished dissertations. Ringer (2020) concluded that children and young people with ADHD have a number of ambivalent feelings and experiences: they have a strong desire to adapt to the neurotypical majority, but also to be accepted as they are, and they need help from others, but at the same time, feel stigmatised and like they do not belong. Furthermore, Ringer (2020) reported that these children feel a lack of control and experience difficulties in participating in daily activities, especially in school. It is important to note that most of the studies included in this meta-synthesis involved adolescents aged 10–19 years; younger children of primary school age remained underrepresented.

Collecting valid and reliable structured data from children with a biological predisposition for difficulties in directing and maintaining attention (especially for monotonous questionnaire material<sup>2</sup>), such as children

1 Ovaj Pravilnik svrstava ADHD u skupinu poremećaja u ponašanju i oštećenja mentalnog zdravlja iako DSM-5 još od 2013. godine ADHD definira kao neurorazvojnu teškoću. Ovakva kategorizacija u većoj mjeri izlaže djecu dodatnim predrasudama koje se povezuju s teškoćama mentalnog zdravlja negoli točnija kategorizacija koja njihove teškoće svrstava u skupinu razvojnih neurorazličitosti s biološkom podlogom.

2 Fatigue that occurs while completing the questionnaire can cause a significant drop in attention. At the same time, it is possible that children with ADHD make systemic errors due to their impulsive cognitive nature, which is why they fill in the questionnaire too quickly, raising reasonable doubts about the reliability of the data collected.

ku predispoziciju za otežano usmjerenje i održavanje pažnje (osobito uz monoton upitnički materijal), kao što su to djeca s ADHD-om, predstavlja poseban izazov te čest argument za rijetko uključivanje ove djece kao aktivnih sudionika istraživanja.<sup>2</sup> Ipak, istraživanja s djecom kao aktivnim sudionicima pokazala su da su upravo oni najbolji izvor informacija koji pomaže u razumijevanju njihova iskustva (Christensen i James, 2008). Istraživanja u središtu čijeg interesa su djeca mijenjaju svoj fokus, što je vidljivo u pristupu koji umjesto da traži informacije o djeci, počinje tražiti informacije izravno od njih (Docherty i Sandelowski, 1999). To znači da se djecu pita da svojim riječima objasne kako doživljavaju svijet u kojem žive. Car i Jeđud Borić (2016:118) te Einarsdóttir (2007) naglašavaju nužnost uvažavanja *dječjeg glasa* koja proizlazi iz uvjerenja da su djeca, jednako kao i odrasli, cjelovite osobe koje imaju jedinstveno viđenje vlastitog iskustva i svijeta u kojem žive te imaju pravo da ih se čuje. Drugim riječima, djeca su u stanju govoriti u svoje ime ukoliko se u komunikaciji s njima koriste primjerene metode. Koller-Trbović i Širanović (2017: 48) potvrđuju da su takva "istraživanja od posebnog značaja jer donose perspektivu sudionika/djece, posebno kad je riječ o marginaliziranoj i stigmatiziranoj populaciji, djeci u riziku i sl. te djeci s vrlo specifičnim iskustvom vezanim uz određene životne faze i događaje". Ove autorice, na temelju provedene analize publiciranih radova iz područja participacije djece, zaključuju da je znanstvena, istraživačka produkcija o participaciji djece u Hrvatskoj u posljednjih 25 godina brojčano slaba, posebice kada je riječ o djeci s teškoćama u razvoju te bi trebalo intenzivirati takav tip i pristup istraživanjima. Stoga se ovim istraživanjem nastojao premostiti taj nedostatak kroz uključivanje osnovnoškolske djece s ADHD-om kao ravnopravnih (su)dionika koji zaslužuju priliku iznijeti svoje viđenje vlastitih životnih iskustava.

## CILJ ISTRAŽIVANJA

Cilj je istraživanja opisati doživljeno iskustvo svakodnevnog života vezanog uz školovanje

2 Zamor koji se javlja tijekom ispunjavanja upitnika može uzrokovati značajan pad koncentracije. Jednako tako moguće je i da djeca s ADHD-om čine sistemske pogreške zbog impulzivnog kognitivnog stila zbog čega prebrzo ispunjavaju upitnik, što sve u opravdanu sumnju dovodi pouzdanost prikupljenih podataka.

with ADHD, is a specific challenge; this is used as a frequent argument for the lack of inclusion of these children as active research subjects. Nevertheless, research with children as active participants has shown that they are the best source of information to gain a better understanding of their experience (Christensen and James, 2008). Studies examining the experiences of children have changed their focus, as evidenced by an approach that seeks information directly **from** children rather than seeking information **about** them (Docherty and Sandelowski, 1999). This means asking children to explain, in their own words, how they experience the world in which they live. Car and Jeđud Borić (2016: 118) and Einarsdóttir (2007) emphasise the need to respect the voices of these children, stemming from the belief that children, like adults, are whole people who have a unique view of their own experience and the world in which they live in, and have the right to be heard. In other words, when the appropriate methods are used to communicate with them, children are able to speak on their own behalf. Koller-Trbović and Širanović (2017: 48) confirmed that '*such research is of special importance because it brings the perspective of participants/children, especially when it comes to marginalized and stigmatized populations, children at risk etc., and children with very specific experiences related to certain life stages and events*'. Based on an analysis of papers published in the field of child participation, these authors concluded that there is very limited research examining child participation in Croatia over the last 25 years, especially when it comes to children with disabilities. In line with their call to intensify this type of/approach to research, the present study aimed to overcome these shortcomings by including primary school children with ADHD as equal participants who deserve the opportunity to present their own views regarding their life experiences.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study was to describe the experiences of elementary school boys with ADHD during everyday school life. Based on these objectives, we formulated the following research questions: (1) How do boys with ADHD describe their school experience?; (2) Do boys with ADHD recognise the sources of support that are provided and the limitations they face during school?; (3) What would boys with ADHD want to change in their everyday school life?

osnovnoškolskih dječaka s ADHD-om. U skladu s ciljem istraživanja oblikovana su sljedeća istraživačka pitanja: (1) Kako dječaci s ADHD-om opisuju svoje iskustvo školovanja? (2) Prepoznaju li dječaci s ADHD-om izvore podrške i ograničenja s kojima se susreću tijekom školovanja? (3) Što bi dječaci s ADHD-om željeli promijeniti u svojoj školskoj svakodnevnici?

## METODOLOGIJA

S obzirom na postavljene ciljeve te nedostatak dosadašnjih istraživanja ove tematike, u ovom je istraživanju primijenjena kvalitativna istraživačka metodologija. Kako bi se dobio dublji uvid u doživljeno iskustvo svakodnevnog života dječaka s ADHD-om, primijenjen je polustrukturirani **fenomenološki intervju**. Kako ističu Smith i Osborn (2008) u fenomenološkom intervjuu sudionici se smatraju iskustvenim ekspertima o temi i stoga im je nužno omogućiti i prepustiti pričanje vlastite priče.

U pripremi nacrtu istraživanja posebna je pažnja usmjerena na osmišljavanje metode intervjua koja će omogućiti djetetu koje ima teškoće sa samoregulacijom pažnje i ponašanja da se usmjeri na razgovor. Metode koje se koriste za facilitaciju intervjua djetetu moraju biti zanimljive, pristupačne, neugrožavajuće i privlačne, što je posebice važno za dijete s ADHD-om, kako bi se podigla razina uzbuđenja te spriječila dosada i distraktibilnost. Einarsdóttir (2007) sažima preporuke različitih autora koji se bave istraživanjima s djecom i koji preporučuju uključenost djeteta u neku aktivnost za vrijeme razgovora ili korištenje konkretnih artefakata kao poticaja na razgovor. S obzirom na to da je igra djetetova prirodna okupacija, u ovom je istraživanju u svrhu prilagodbe istraživačke metode djetetu, stvaranja sigurnog i djetetu poznatog konteksta te s ciljem facilitacije intervjua izabrana tehnika posuđena iz terapije igrom pod nazivom *Igra svijeta* (Lowenfeldt, 1950; Alaine Polcz, prema Pavlović i Petó, 2012). Ova je metoda djetetu omogućila konstrukciju vlastite percepcije svijeta u ograničenom prostoru za igru (pladanj dimenzija 75x52 cm) koristeći standardizirani set od 332 minijature figure koje predstavljaju ljude, biljke, životinje, zgrade, namještaj, vozila te umanjene verzije drugih objekata iz stvarnog svijeta. Nakon konstruk-

## METHODOLOGY

Considering of the aforementioned objectives and the lack of previous research on this topic, a qualitative research methodology was deemed appropriate for the present study. To delve deeper into the life experience of boys with ADHD, a semi-structured phenomenological interview was applied. Smith and Osborn (2008) highlighted that participants in a phenomenological interview are considered to be *experiential experts* on the discussion topic, and, as such, it is necessary to enable and allow them to tell their own story.

During the process of developing the research design, special attention was given to devising an interview method that would allow a child who has difficulty with self-regulating attention and behavior to focus on the conversation. It was important to ensure that the methods used to facilitate the interview with the child were interesting, accessible, non-threatening, and attractive; this is especially important for a child with ADHD in order to raise their arousal level and prevent boredom and distractibility. Einarsdóttir (2007) summarized the recommendations of various scientists who engaged in research with children, and suggested involving the child in an activity during the interview or using specific artifacts as conversation facilitators. The present study used play, a child's natural occupation, to adapt the research method to the child and create a safe and child-friendly context; we used a technique borrowed from play therapy called the *World Technique* in order to facilitate the interview process (Lowenfeldt, 1950; Alaine Polcz, according to Pavlović and Petó, 2012). This method allows the child to construct his or her own perception of the "World" in a limited play space (a tray measuring 75x52 cm) using a standardized set of 332 miniatures representing people, plants, animals, buildings, furniture, vehicles, and scaled-down versions of other real-world objects. After construction, the researcher engages the child in a conversation about his life experiences while making references to the presentation of his "World". In the present study, this technique was not used for projective-interpretative purposes, but rather as a means of communication, and, more specifically, as a tool for facilitating conversation with the child, to help the child focus his/her (often distracted) attention more easily on the conversation, and to offer concrete materials that the child could independently manipulate, construct, and modify.

cije istraživačica je uključila dijete u razgovor o njegovim iskustvima, referirajući se na prikaz djetetova svijeta. U ovom se istraživanju navedena tehnika nije koristila u projektivno-interpretativne svrhe, već kao metoda komunikacije, odnosno facilitator razgovora s djetetom, kako bi se djetetova (često raspršena) pažnja lakše usmjerila na temu razgovora te ponudio konkretan materijal koji dijete može samostalno konstruirati i modificirati.

### Sudionici istraživanja

U istraživanje je uključen namjeran uzorak sudionika, 14 dječaka s ADHD-om kronološke dobi od 8 do 11 godina. Zahvaćeno je razdoblje osnovnoškolske dobi pretpuberteta kako bi se isključio ili barem umanjio utjecaj puberteta na ponašanje djeteta. Dijagnozu ADHD-a postavio je liječnik psihijatar ili klinički psiholog, a roditelji posjeduju dokument koji to dokazuje. Dijete je uključeno u redovan sustav obrazovanja s individualiziranim pristupom. Većina dječaka (njih desetoro) ide u 3. i 4. razred osnovne škole, te po dvoje u 2. i 5. razred. Sedmero dječaka ima pomoćnika u nastavi, a još dvoje je u vrijeme prikupljanja podataka bilo u postupku ostvarivanja tog prava. Nijedan dječak nije dobivao farmakološku terapiju za reguliranje simptoma ADHD-a. Uvidom u obiteljsku strukturu bilježi se da je u tri obitelji dijete jedinac, u sedam je obitelji dvoje djece, dok je u četiri obitelji troje i više djece. U većini obitelji prisutna su dva roditelja (ne nužno biološka), samo je jedan roditeljski par razveden.

### Postupak provedbe istraživanja

Prije formalnog početka istraživanja provedeno je pilot-istraživanje s ciljem jasnog definiranja protokola i pripreme pribora za provedbu intervjua. Djeci se pristupilo preko osnovnih škola te roditelja. Školama je izravno upućen poziv na sudjelovanje u istraživanju putem elektronske pošte na službene adrese osnovnih škola u Gradu Zagrebu, a odazvalo se ukupno 10 škola iz različitih i međusobno udaljenih dijelova grada. Ravnatelji/stručni suradnici su detaljno pismeno i usmeno informirani o svrsi i postupku istraživanja. Stručni su suradnici (psiholog, logoped, pedagog ili socijalni pedagog) nakon pristanka kontaktirali roditelje čija su djeca zadovoljavala kriterije uključivanja u uzorak. Detalji i

### Participants

We included a purposeful sample of participants in this study: 14 boys with ADHD, ranging in age from 8 to 11 years. The elementary school period prior to puberty was considered to exclude or at least reduce the influence of puberty on the child's behaviour. We included only participants who had been diagnosed with ADHD by a psychiatrist or a clinical psychologist, and this diagnosis had to be further supported by official documentation. The children included in this study attended schools that followed regular mainstream education systems with an individualised approach. Most of the boys ( $n = 10$ ) were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grades of primary school (8-9 years), while the others ( $n = 4$ ) were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> (two 7-year-olds) and the 5<sup>th</sup> (two 10-year-olds) grades. At the time of the study, seven of the boys had teaching assistants and another two were in the process of obtaining official recognition of the right to have access to teaching assistants. None of the participants had received any pharmacological therapy to regulate ADHD symptoms. In three families, the participating child was the only child, while seven boys came from families with two children, and four from families with three or more children. In most cases, the participants lived in two-parent (not necessarily biological) households; in one case, the participant's parents were divorced.

### Research implementation procedure

Prior to the formal start of our research study, a pilot study was conducted with the aim of clearly defining the protocol and preparing the equipment necessary for the interviews. Children were approached to participate through elementary schools and their parents. Schools were directly invited to participate in the study via an e-mail sent to the official addresses of all primary schools in the City of Zagreb. In total, 10 schools from different parts of the city responded. School principals and/or counselling staff were informed in detail (in writing and verbally) about the purpose and procedure of the study. After receiving consent from the school, the counselling staff (psychologist, speech language pathologist, pedagogue, or social pedagogue) contacted the parents of children who met the criteria for inclusion. The details of the study and the dates for interviews with the participants were discussed and decided with the parents, the child, and the school. The entire



termini organizacije intervjua s dječacima su dogovarani u koordinaciji s roditeljima, djetetom i školom. Cjelokupni postupak istraživanja proveden je u skladu s preporukama Cridland i suradnika (2015).

U svakoj je obitelji proveden jedan intervju s roditeljem/ima te tri intervjua s djetetom. Intervjui s roditeljima neće biti prikazani u ovom radu. Prvi intervju s djetetom imao je osnovnu svrhu međusobnog upoznavanja sudionika i istraživačice, uspostavljanja odnosa povjerenja te poticanja djeteta na istraživanje prostora i pribora Igre svijeta. U iduća dva susreta s djetetom se uz pomoć navedene metode razgovaralo o svakodnevicu djeteta, obitelji i školi. Dijete se potaknulo na slaganje svijeta u kojem prikazuje svoju školu, viđenje škole, smješta sebe u taj kontekst, što sve u školi radi, socijalno okružje u školi, međusobne odnose, izazove s kojim se susreće. Iako je svaki susret zabilježen videokamerom te popraćen bilješkama, što je rezultiralo obilnom istraživačkom građom, u ovom radu glavni fokus u obradi podataka biti će na verbalnim podacima dobivenim od djeteta.

Podaci su prikupljeni od sredine veljače do kraja prosinca 2018. godine. Zbog tehničkih osobitosti (priprema Igre svijeta, smanjenje broja distraktora) intervjui s djetetom provedeni su u zasebnoj prostoriji s manjim brojem distraktora, najčešće u prostoru (uredu) stručnog suradnika ili u praznoj učionici. Vrijeme potrebno za pripremu prostora i materijala bilo je 40 minuta, dok su djetetovo slaganje svijeta te razgovor trajali od 25 do 48 minuta. Rezultat intervjua s djecom jesu 143 stranice prijepisa.

Istraživanje je provedeno u skladu s načelima Etičkog kodeksa u istraživanju s djecom (Vijeće za djecu Vlade Republike Hrvatske, 2003). Prije započinjanja prikupljanja podataka dobivena je *Suglasnost za provedbu istraživanja* nadležnog etičkog povjerenstva fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu. Nakon informiranja o samom istraživanju roditelj je dao pismeni pristanak na sudjelovanje djeteta, no nije dao pristanak **umjesto** djeteta. S obzirom na to da je djetetu potrebno objasniti svrhu istraživanja i njegovu ulogu u istraživanju na način koji dijete može razumjeti,<sup>3</sup> odnosno koji će potaknuti razumijevanje (Phelan i Kinsella, 2013),

3 "Djetetu starijem od 7 godina, a koje nije navršilo 14 godina, mora biti objašnjena svrha i način provođenja istraživanja u skladu s njegovom zrelošću" (Etički kodeks istraživanja s djecom, točka 3.5.).

research process was conducted in accordance with the recommendations stated in Cridland et al. (2015).

In total, this study included three interviews with each participating child and one interview with the child's parent(s). Parent interviews will not be presented in this paper. The purpose of the first interview with the child was to allow the child and the researcher to get to know one another, to establish a relationship of trust, and to encourage the child to explore the play space and the *World Technique* accessories. In the next two meetings, the researcher discussed everyday life with the child, including family and school life, using the previously mentioned method. Here the child was encouraged to construct his "World": to present his school and his perceptions of school, to place himself in that context and to present what he does at school, to present the social environment in school, as well as the interpersonal relationships he observes and the challenges he faces. Although each encounter was recorded with a video camera and supporting researcher notes, the focus of this paper will be to present the verbal responses of the child.

Data were collected between mid-February and the end of December in 2018. Due to technical peculiarities of the methods employed to conduct interviews (preparing the *World Technique*, reducing distractors), interviews with children were conducted in a separate room with a small number of distractors, most often in the office of a counselling staff member or in an empty classroom. The time required to prepare the room and materials was 40 minutes, while the child's construction of the "World" and conversation with the researcher lasted between 25 and 48 minutes. Altogether, the interviews with the children produced 143 pages of written transcripts.

This study was conducted in accordance with the Code of Ethics in Research involving children (Council for Children of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, 2003). Before collecting data, we obtained approval from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Law at the University of Zagreb. After being informed about the research objectives, each parent gave their written participation consent, but did not give assent on behalf of the child. Since the purpose and the child's role in the study needed to be explained in a way that encouraged the child's understanding (Phelan and Kinsella, 2013), a 3-picture comic strip was used to present information

korištena je forma stripa od tri sličice. Ujedno je djetetovu pristanku pristupljeno kao procesu, a ne jednokratnom događaju te je stabilnost djetetova izbora provjerena u svakoj fazi istraživanja. Sudionicima nije bila skrivena prava svrha istraživanja ni u jednoj fazi istraživanja.

### **Vjerodostojnost i dosljednost te saturacija podataka**

Pitanje vjerodostojnosti posebno je važno za ovo istraživanje jer su kriterijski članovi istraživanja (sudionici) osnovnoškolski dječaci s ADHD-om koji se susreću s teškoćom regulacije svoje pažnje i misli, a u istraživanjima se bilježi sklonost pristranosti i teškoće pri razlikovanju mašte i stvarnosti (Barkley, 2015; Volz-Sidiropoulou i sur., 2016). U radu su dosljedno poštovana tri obilježja vjerodostojnosti i dosljednosti (Ajduković, 2014: 358). S obzirom na korištenje multimetodčnosti prilikom prikupljanja podataka zadovoljen je metodološki princip triangulacije podataka, što je dodatno doprinijelo vjerodostojnosti. Unutarnja dosljednost postignuta je potkrepljivanjem svih rezultata podacima (citatima) što čitatelju omogućuje da sam preispita ponuđene interpretacije istraživača (Smith i Osborn, 2008). Princip zasićenja podataka korištenjem metode *saturacijske rešetke* (Brod i sur., 2009) koji je uvjetovao broj sudionika u uzorku primijenjen je samo na roditeljske intervjue zbog heterogenosti intervjua s djecom.

### **Obrada podataka: Interpretativna fenomenološka analiza**

U skladu s ciljem i metodologijom istraživanja podaci su obrađeni primjenom interpretativne fenomenološke analize koja je u ovom radu primijenjena postupkom koji su opisali Smith i Osborn (2008), Lindseth i Norberg (2004) te Smith, Flowers i Larkin (2012). U skladu s time na temelju doslovnih transkripata i naivnog iščitavanja upisane su (1) inicijalne zabilješke (označavanje zanimljivih dijelova teksta, inicijalnih sažetaka, zapažanja, preliminarnih poveznica i interpretacija), zatim (2) kodiranje svakog pojedinog intervjua (transkripta), (3) razvijanje nadolazećih tema – prva verzija, (4) tematska strukturalna analiza: klasteri – grupiranje kodova u smislene skupine (traženje poveznica

about the study to all children. The child's assent was considered a process rather than a one-time event, and the stability of the child's decision to participate was checked at each stage of the research process. The real purpose of this study was not concealed from the participants at any stage of the research.

### **Trustworthiness, consistency, and data saturation**

The issue of trustworthiness is of particular importance in this study given that the criterion members (participants) were elementary school boys with ADHD who encounter difficulty regulating their attention and thoughts. Previous research has demonstrated a tendency towards bias and difficulties distinguishing imagination and reality among these children (Barkley, 2015; Volz-Sidiropoulou et al., 2016). This study consistently followed the three features of trustworthiness and consistency (Ajduković, 2014: 358). First, given the use of multiple methods in data collection, the methodological principle of data triangulation was met, which further contributed to the credibility of the findings. Second, internal consistency was achieved by substantiating all results with data (citations), thus allowing the reader to reconsider the offered interpretations of the researcher (Smith and Osborn, 2008). Finally, the principle of data saturation using the saturation grid method (Brod et al., 2009), which determined the number of participants in the sample, was applied only to parent interviews after considering the heterogeneity observed in the interviews with the children.

### **Data processing: Interpretative phenomenological analysis**

In accordance with the aim and methodology used in this study, data were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA was applied according to the procedure described by Smith and Osborn (2008), Lindseth and Norberg (2004), and Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2012). More specifically, with respect to verbatim transcripts and naive reading (and re-reading), the following steps were applied: (1) writing initial notes (marking interesting parts of the text, initial summaries, observations, preliminary links, and interpretations); (2) coding of each individual interview (transcript); (3) developing emerging themes - first version; (4) conducting thematic structural analyses: in clusters - organizing codes

među nadolazećim temama kroz sve transkripte), (5) kreiranje glavnih (nadređenih) tema, sažimanje i promišljanje o nadređenima temama i podtemama u odnosu na istraživačko pitanje i kontekst istraživanja – za svaki pojedini transkript i za sve transkripte u cjelini, ponovno čitanje cijelog teksta s naivnim razumijevanjem (imajući teme na umu), (6) redukcija i odabir nadređenih tema te (7) interpretativna analiza: interpretacija kroz kritičko promišljanje i povezivanje s relevantnom literaturom. Faza organizacije transkripta u skladu s pripadajućim kodovima, povezivanje kodova, kreiranje nadolazećih (inicijalnih) i nadređenih (glavnih) tema provedena je uz pomoć računalnog programa za obradu kvalitativnih podataka Quirkos v2.1.

## REZULTATI I RASPRAVA

U inicijalnoj analizi podataka dobivenih od djece kreirana su 62 koda s ukupnim brojem od 195 citata. Kodovi su organizirani u dvije glavne (nadređene) teme: (1) Izazovi školovanja s ADHD-om i (2) Podrška u školi: važnost uvažavanja, senzibiliziranosti i odnosa. U Tablici 1 prikazane su navedene glavne teme te šest podtema koje će u nastavku teksta biti razrađene i interpretirane. Uvidom u teme ovog istraživanja koje proizlaze iz intervjua s dječacima te komparativnim pristupom uočavaju se sličnosti s temama drugih istraživanja, primjerice naglasak na izazovima vezanim uz školovanje (Wiener i Daniels, 2016; Flack 2018), očekivanja drugih i odnosi s drugima (Singh, 2011; Wiener i Daniels, 2016) te izvori podrške (Kendall i sur., 2003; Walker-Noack i sur., 2013).

U prikazu rezultata posebna je pozornost usmjerena zaštiti identiteta sudionika. Svi su identificirajući podaci uklonjeni iz citata i rasprave, a u kodove sudionika dodana je samo kronološka dob

into meaningful groups (searching for connections between themes identified through all transcripts); (5) creating main themes, summarizing, and reflecting upon themes and sub-themes in relation to the research questions and the context of the study – this was done for each individual transcript and for all transcripts as a whole, after re-reading the entire text with naive understanding (keeping the themes in mind); (6) selecting themes for further analysis; and (7) interpretative analysis: interpretation through critical reflection and linking with relevant literature. These transcripts were organised in phases based on the corresponding codes, linking codes, as well as emerging (initial) and main themes; this was carried using Quirkos 2.1, a software used for processing qualitative data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the initial analysis of the data obtained from the interviews with children, 62 codes were created with a total of 195 citations. The codes were organised into two main (superordinate) themes: (1) Challenges of schooling with ADHD, and (2) Support in school: the importance of recognition, sensitivity, and relationships. Table 1 lists the main themes and subthemes that will be further elaborated and interpreted. A comparison of the themes arising in this study and the themes from previous research reveals a number of similarities. For example, the emphasis on challenges in school (Wiener and Daniels, 2016; Flack 2018), expectations of others and relationships with others (Singh, 2011; Wiener and Daniels, 2016), and sources of support (Kendall et al., 2003; Walker-Noack et al., 2013).

In the presentation of the results, special attention was paid to protect the identity of the participants. All data related to the identity of the child was removed from the citation and discussion, and

**Tablica 1.** Glavne (nadređene) teme i podteme o doživljenom iskustvu svakodnevnog života djeteta s ADHD-om vezane uz školovanje / **Table 1.** Main themes and subthemes related to the everyday school experiences of children with ADHD

Main theme	Subthemes
<b>1. Challenges of schooling with ADHD</b>	Perception of school: “A school that does (not?) inspire for the future”
	“It’s hard for me at school”: Symptoms of ADHD in the school context
	Challenges of homework: “Well, no one likes to do homework”
<b>2. Support at school: the importance of recognition, sensitivity, and relationships</b>	School troubles: “No one believes me”
	Teacher support: “She forgives me a lot”
	Experience with a teaching assistant: “It means a lot to me”

djeteta (primjerice, D1/10 označava dječaka br. 1 koji ima 10 godina).

### Izazovi školovanja s ADHD-om

Općenit doživljaj škole dječaka s ADHD-om oblikuje se kroz njihove stavove temeljene na iskustvima s drugima, iskustvu školskih obveza i ugodnom ozračju školskog prostora. Pozitivnom stavu pridonosi pozitivan odnos s učiteljicom, struktura i jasna pravila, estetski dojam o prostoru škole (*nova, lijepa, sasvim pristojna*; D9/10), ali i povezivanje učenja sa zabavom. Zanimljiva je primjedba dječaka koji kaže da djeca u školi mogu mnogo toga naučiti, ali *ne smiju prepuno onog što oni žele* (D1/10), što ukazuje na doživljaj otuđenosti školskog sadržaja od stvarnog interesa djeteta. Ujedno upoznajemo vrijednosti koje dijete polaže na obrazovanje, zabavu, zdravlje i budućnost. Škola koja *inspirira budućnost* zvuči kao slogan za školu koja je djetetu smisljena. Dodatni smisao ovom dječaku daje ideja škole kao mjesta koje povezuje ljude (*spaja*). Osjećaj pripadnosti školskoj zajednici i njezine povezanosti može biti snažan motivator ili želja.

*Ali najvažnije je učiti nego da se zabavljaš. Zapravo učenje i zabavljanje je isto, to su dvije dobre stvari za školu i za djecu. Al zdravlje je najvažnije na svijetu. [...] Zapravo nije da odvajaju ljude jedne od drugih nego ih SPAJA [naglašava]. Spaja ljude, da i inspirira ih za njihovu budućnost.* (D1/10)

S druge strane dječaci uključeni u ovo istraživanje znatno češće govore o svojem doživljaju škole kao glavnog područja životnih izazova, a njihove teškoće iz spektra ADHD-a upravo u tom kontekstu najviše dolaze do izražaja, što prepoznaju i mnogi drugi autori (npr. Loe i Feldman, 2007; DuPaul i Langberg, 2015; Barkley, 2015; DuPaul i Stoner, 2016; Koller-Trbović, Mirosavljević i Ratkajec Gašević, 2019). Dječaci redovito doživljavaju školu kao sinonim za sve opterećujuće aktivnosti povezane s obrazovanjem (*... što mi je teško raditi? Ne znam... to je to. Škola., D4/9; Glupa škola. Mislim, realno, tko voli školu?, D4/9*). Jedan dječak opisuje svoj boravak u učionici: *Pa evo, recimo, ja sjedim i gubim dane* (D5/10), opisujući školu kao

only the chronological age of the child was added to the initial participant codes (for example, D1/10 denotes boy number 1 who is 10 years old).

### THEME: Challenges of schooling with ADHD

For the boys, general perceptions of school were shaped through their attitudes based on experiences with others and school obligations, as well as the perceived agreeableness of the school space. A positive attitude was facilitated through a positive relationship with a teacher, structure and clear rules, an aesthetic impression of the school space (*"new, beautiful, very respectable"*; D9/10), and also by connecting learning with fun. In an interesting remark, one boy said that *"children in school can learn a lot, but not enough of what they want"* (D1/10), suggesting an experienced alienation of the school content from the child's real interests. At the same time, we recognized the values that children place on education, entertainment, health, and the future. For example, one boy offered what might be a school slogan that made sense to him: *"A school that inspires for the future"* (D1/10). The notion of school as a place that connects people also gave additional meaning to this boy, where a sense of belonging and connection to the school community was perhaps a strong motivator or wish.

*"But the most important thing is to learn, then to have fun. In fact, learning and having fun are the same, they are two good things for school and for children. But health is the most important thing in the world. (...) In fact, (school) is not here to separate people from each other; but to CONNECT them. It connects people, yes, and inspires them for their future."* (D1/10)

However, the boys participating in this study were much more likely to talk about their school experience as a major area of challenge and a place where difficulties arising from the spectrum of ADHD symptoms were most pronounced; this finding is consistent with previous studies on this subject (e.g., Loe and Feldman, 2007; DuPaul and Langberg, 2014; Barkley, 2015; DuPaul and Stoner, 2016; Koller-Trbović et al., 2019). The boys regularly perceived school as being synonymous to burdensome activities associated with education (*"... what is hard for me to do? I don't know... that's it. School."*, D4/9; *"Stupid school. I mean, really, who likes school?"*, D4/9). One boy described his involvement in the classroom and in school as a point-

besmislen i uzaludan posao, gubitak vremena koje bi mogao smislenije iskoristiti.

Iako je **hiperaktivnost** istaknuti simptom ADHD-a, dječaci ga ne spominju često, kao da je to dio njihova nesvjesnog ponašanja. Prepoznaju ga kroz svoju nezaustavljivu potrebu za kretanjem (*Kad (mi) noge jednostavno krenu, a ja ih ne zaustavim, D7/9*) što im otežava dugo i mirno sjedenje za vrijeme školskog sata (slično spominju i Rowlands, 2016 te Miller, 2017). Dječak D7/9 primjećuje da su njegove teškoće u regulaciji potrebe za kretanjem povezane s nemogućnošću održavanja pozornosti na školskom satu:

A reci mi, ima li nešto što ti je teško raditi?

*Pa da. Sjediti na satu 45 minuta i biti miran.*

A zašto je to teško?

*Zato što ja nemam toliko koncentracije. Jer sam zaigran. Onda se znam glupirati na satu. (D7/9)*

Dječaci uočavaju da je njihovo ponašanje izvan njihove kontrole, dio njihova sustava (D1/10) i da to ne čine namjerno (D2/8). Nakon nekog vremena provedenog u školi dječaku iz sljedećeg citata postaje teško pratiti nastavu. Uz mnogo pretjerivanja u ovoj priči ipak se stječe dojam kako cijelu situaciju iz svoje perspektive dječak vidi iznimno napornom i samim pretjerivanjem naglašava koliko mu je teško izdržati školski dan.

*Znači mene boli glava kada jedan učitelj ili učiteljica pričaju tri sata. Isuse, glava me počne boliti, ne znam, padnem u nesvijest od tog [očajnim glasom]. (D1/10)*

Idući nam dječak nudi kratak uvid u misaoni proces koji se događa u njegovoj glavi dok sjedi u razredu za vrijeme školskog sata koji mu nije dovoljno zanimljiv. Kako ne uspijeva ostati dovoljno pobuđen da bi usmjerio pažnju na nastavu, on odluta u svoj željeni svijet mašte u kojem konstruira i stvara sebi zanimljive sadržaje.

A kakva je tvoja škola?

*Dosadno je. Jako dosadno.*

Što bi ti onda radio?

*Radije bih se igrao s legićima ili stvarao nešto.*

less and futile job, a waste of time that he could otherwise be using in a more meaningful way: “*Well, let’s say, I’m sitting here and wasting my days*” (D5/10/10).

Although **hyperactivity** is a prominent symptom of ADHD, it was not mentioned often by the boys in this study, as if it was part of their subconscious behaviour. In the instances where hyperactivity was recognized, it was mostly through their unstoppable need to move (“*When (my) legs just start moving, and I don’t stop them*”, D7/9), a feature that made it difficult for them to sit for long and quietly during school hours; these results are consistent with Rowlands (2016) and Miller (2017). One boy reported that his difficulty in regulating his need to move is related to his inability to maintain attention during school:

*“And tell me, is there anything hard for you to do in school?”*

*Well yes. Sitting through the whole class for 45 minutes and being calm.*

*And why is it difficult?*

*Because I don’t have that much focus. Because I’m playful. Then I fool around in class.” (D7/9)*

The boys recognized that their behaviour was out of their control, “*part of their system*” (D1/10) and that they were “*not doing it on purpose*” (D2/8). After spending some time in school, one boy explained how it felt for him to follow the lessons. Despite the exaggeration present in his story, one still gets the impression that the entire situation is extremely difficult for him. Perhaps only through exaggeration can he adequately emphasise how difficult it is for him to endure the school day.

*“So, I get a headache when a teacher talks for three hours. Jesus, my head starts to ache and, I don’t know, I faint because of that (in a desperate voice).” (D1/10)*

Another boy offered a brief insight into his thought process as he sits in class during a school lesson that he does not find interesting. Unable to stay interested enough to focus on the lesson, his thoughts wander into his desired imaginary world where he constructs and creates personally interesting content.

*“And what is your school like?”*

*It’s boring. Very boring.*

*What would you do then?*

A o čemu razmišljaš kad ti je tako dosadno u školi?

*Ništa. Ne slušam ništa.*

Nego o čemu razmišljaš?

*Šta bi mogao doma raditi. (D10/11)*

Čini se da je **osjećaj dosade ili dosađivanja** u školi jedan od dominantnijih jer su djeca taj pojam koristila 16 puta kako bi opisala svoje iskustvo škole. Iskustvo dosađivanja u školi spominju Wiener i Daniels (2016) te Hallowell i Ratey (2011) koji u knjizi *Driven to distraction* navode da djeca (i odrasli) s ADHD-om imaju sklonost osjećaju dosađivanja ili drugima često izgledaju kao da se dosađuju, što oni onda tumače manjkom interesa, iako se u podlozi tog stanja zapravo nalazi nemogućnost održavanja pozornosti na sadržaju ili situaciji u kojoj se trenutno nalaze. Dječaci spominju kako im je teško **koncentrirati se** (D4/9, D7/9, D14/9) na satu matematike, kad se trebaju usredotočiti na čitanje, za vrijeme pisanja testa. Manjak koncentracije povezuju sa zaigranošću (D7/9), umorom i padom motivacije (*pogotovo kad mi se nešto ne da*; D4/9) i distraktabilnošću (*ne mogu se skoncentrirati kad se svi zabavljaju, a ja trebam čitati*; D14/9). U britanskom istraživanju koje je provela agencija ADDISS (Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service, 2006), čak 77% djece s ADHD-om izjavilo je da im je u školi najteže što se ne mogu koncentrirati, a 63% nije u stanju završiti svoj školski uradak. S obzirom na to da djeca s ADHD-om imaju objektivne teškoće pri održavanju pozornosti na zadacima koji im ne nude neposrednu povratnu informaciju (nagradu) upravo zbog neuropsiholoških čimbenika koji objašnjavaju individualne razlike u neurološkim dopaminskim putevima nagrađivanja (Volkow i sur., 2011), za ovu je djecu važno stvoriti školsko okruženje u kojem će njihov angažman biti potaknut unutarnjim mehanizmima motivacije.

**Pisanje** također predstavlja područje izazova (*Evo ja ne volim pisat, umoran sam od tog svega*; D13/9). Dječaci navode da im teškoću predstavlja: prepisivanje s ploče, pisanje bilješki, pisanje dikta i pisanje domaće zadaće. Različito objašnjavaju zašto je pisanje teško. Jedan dječak kaže da ga zbog *pretjeranog pisanja zaboli ruka* (teškoće pri ustrajnosti u održavanju napora) te opisuje kako

*I would rather play with Lego or create something.*

*And what do you think about when you're so bored at school?*

*Nothing. I'm not listening to anything.*

*What are you thinking about?*

*What could I be doing at home?" (D10/11)*

**Feeling bored** at school seems to be one of the most dominant experiences, where the children used some version of the term "bored" at least 16 times in the transcripts to describe their school experience. The experience of boredom at school was also mentioned by Wiener and Daniels (2016) and Hallowell and Ratey (2011), who reported that children (and adults) with ADHD tend to feel bored or often seem bored. This is interpreted as a lack of interest, when, in fact, it is the inability to maintain attention to the content or the situation in which they find themselves. The boys mentioned how difficult it was for them to "focus" (D4/9, D7/9, D14/9) during math class, when they read, and while completing a test. This lack of attention is associated with playfulness (D7/9), fatigue and reduced motivation ("especially when I can't do something"; D4/9), and distractibility ("I can't be focused when everyone is having fun and I need to read"; D14/9). In a British study conducted by the Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service (ADDISS, 2006), almost 77% of children with ADHD stated that the hardest thing about school was not being able to focus, while 63% reported that it was the inability to finish their schoolwork. Given that children with ADHD have objective difficulties in maintaining attention on tasks that do not offer immediate feedback (reward) because of the neuropsychological factors that explain individual differences in neurological dopamine reward pathways (Volkow et al., 2011), it is important that the school environment is created in a way that drives their engagement via internal mechanisms of motivation.

**Writing** is also an area of challenge ("I just don't like to write, I'm tired of it all"; D13/9). The boys reported several difficulties related to writing, including copying from the board, writing notes, writing by dictation, and written homework assignments. They had different explanations for why writing is difficult. One boy reported that his hand hurts due to excessive writing (difficulty with perseverance) and described how executive functions (working memory) had a limited capacity, and can

izvršne funkcije (radno pamćenje) imaju ograničen kapacitet i mogu se “potrošiti”: *Puno pišem, razmišljam i tu svu tu snagu i energiju potrošim* (D13/9). Ovaj dječak nadalje objašnjava kako ga teškoće s pisanjem dovode u neugodnu situaciju s učiteljicom koja vjeruje da on namjerno ne želi pisati (iako on *zapravo hoće, ali ne može*) te mu stoga piše opomenu u informativku. On opisuje svoj trud i želju da sve odradi na vrijeme, no dogodi se da to uspije tek kad je opomena već napisana. Dječak prepoznaje da bi mu pomogao odmor između zadataka i vjerojatno nešto više vremena kako bi uspio završiti zadatak, međutim ne nailazi na razumijevanje i poticaj.

*Pa da, (teško mi je) jako puno pisat. Puno pišem i umori mi se ruka. A to mi je jako velik problem u školi jer učiteljica misli da ja neću pisat, a zapravo hoću, samo ne mogu. Pa mi napiše opomenu. Danas mi je bilo teško... Ono mi je sve bilo jako lagano i zato sam jako brzo pisao i zato su mi se jako brzo ruke umorile. Kad mi je ona napisala slovo zadnje na opomeni, kad je stavila uskličnik, ja sam riješio.*

Treba li ti ponekad malo odmora između tih zadataka?

*Pa da, to bi jako pomoglo.* (D13/9)

Istraživanja potvrđuju da djeca s ADHD-om imaju teškoće s pisanjem (rukopisom i brzinom pisanja) te pismenim izražavanjem povezanim s organizacijom sadržaja i posvećenosti detaljima u tekstu (Racine i sur., 2008; Molitor i sur., 2016). Posljednji navode da su teškoće u pismenom izražavanju i čitanju u sličnoj mjeri zastupljene u ove djece (17%–24%) te su značajno povezane sa školskim ocjenama i procjenom roditelja o izvedbi koja je znatno ispod djetetovih intelektualnih mogućnosti.

Da **čitanje** može predstavljati područje školskog izazova, potvrđuju i pojedini dječaci u ovom istraživanju. Iz njihovih se opisa čini da im je tijekom čitanja najteže održavanje pozornosti, posebice ukoliko je mnogo teksta (ograničenja u radnom pamćenju, čitanje s razumijevanjem) ili ako se od djeteta traži da čita u buci ili prostoru s više distraktora. Uz navedeno dječaci posebno naglašavaju teškoće s vođenjem bilješki iz lektire. To zahtijeva znatan napor koji uključuje istovremeni

therefore ‘run out’: *“I write a lot, I think and I spend all that strength and energy”* (D13/9). This boy further explained how his difficulties with writing put him in an awkward situation with the teacher, who believed that he deliberately did not want to write (although he *“actually wants to, but cannot”*), and as a result, wrote him a note to take home to his parents.

He described his efforts and desire to do everything on time, but that he only succeeds once the teacher’s note has already been written. While this boy recognized that a break between tasks and extended time would likely help him complete the task, he did not experience understanding or encouragement from the teacher.

*“Well, yes (it’s hard for me) to write a lot. We write a lot and my hand gets tired. And that’s a really big problem for me at school because the teacher thinks I don’t want to write, and I actually want to, I just can’t. So, she writes a note home. It was hard for me today - it was all very easy for me and that’s why I wrote very fast and that’s why my hand got tired very quickly. When she wrote me the last note home, when she put the last exclamation mark, I was done.*

*Do you sometimes need a little rest between those tasks?*

*Well yes, that would help a lot.”* (D13/9)

Previous research has confirmed that children with ADHD have difficulties associated with writing (handwriting and writing speed) and written expression related to content organization and attention to detail in the text (Racine et al., 2008; Molitor et al., 2016). Molitor et al. (2016) further stated that difficulties in written expression and reading are equally common among these children (17-24%) and are significantly related to school grades and the parents’ assessment of their child’s performance, which are both significantly below the child’s intellectual capacities.

Challenges with **reading** in school were also confirmed by the participants in this study. From their descriptions, the boys found it very difficult to maintain attention while reading, especially if there was a lot of text (limitations in working memory and reading comprehension), if the child was asked to read in a noisy environment, or a room with multiple distractors. In addition, the boys particularly emphasised difficulties while taking notes and reading mandatory literature. This requires considerable effort that

angažman čitalačkog razumijevanja, dosjećanja i radnog pamćenja te organizaciju teksta i samo pisanje rukom. *Dosadno* u ovom citatu vjerojatno je ponovno sinonim za napor.

*Morao sam pročitati neki dan pet lektira. Svaka ima 4–5 strana. To mi je bilo dosadno. I još sam sve to morao zapisati. I to zapisivanje je bilo dosadno.* (D6/9)

Navedene školske izazove primjećuju i sudionici istraživanja Wiener i Daniels (2016) te Kendall i suradnici (2003) koji su u svom istraživanju s djecom s ADHD-om izdvojili zasebnu temu *Svakodnevnne teškoće vezane uz ADHD* koje posebice primjećuju u obrazovnom području života djeteta. Pritom navode *sporije* učenje, dosadu te osjećaj trajne distraktibilnosti i zbunjenosti uputama koje dobivaju, što se javlja i u sljedećem opisu izvedbe matematičkih zadataka.

**Računanje** većini dječaka predstavlja znatan izazov. Neki o matematici govore sa strahom (D9/10) ili se osjećaju *glupo* (D3/8) i *zbunjeno* (D9/10). Osim što im je teško koncentrirati se, čini se da govore o teškoćama s **radnim pamćenjem** (kad moraju istovremeno baratati s više brojeva) te o omaškama zbog kojih previde i pogrešno izračunaju zadatak: *Ali ne volim računati. Kad moram na ploči ustati i kad je plus, a ja ga ne vidim* (D7/9).

Kako se osjećaš tada, kad trebaš rješavati matematiku?

*Jako, jako zbunjeno.* (D9/10)

Sustavna analiza 30 radova o povezanosti ADHD-a i izvedbe u matematičkim zadacima koju su proveli Tosto i suradnici (2015) ukazuje na negativnu korelaciju izraženosti simptoma ADHD-a (posebice regulacije pažnje) i matematičkih sposobnosti, koju potvrđuju i značajne genetske korelacije u istraživanjima s blizancima. Uspješnost u matematičkoj izvedbi povezana je i s izvršnim funkcijama, posebno radnim pamćenjem te inhibicijom impulzivne reakcije (Bull & Scerif, 2001; Cragg i sur., 2017). Neurološka nezrelost izvršnih funkcija i posljedične teškoće u svakodnevnom životu djece i odraslih s ADHD-om dobro su dokumentirane u literaturi (npr. Ptacek i sur., 2019; Rubia, 2018; Toplak i sur., 2017; Barkley, 2015; Schreiber i sur., 2014). Narušenost i/li nezrelost **izvršnih funkcija** prepoznaje se u naraciji dje-

involves the simultaneous engagement of the reader's comprehension, recollection, and working memory, as well as organisation of the text and writing itself. In the following quote, "*boring*" is probably again synonymous with tiring or strenuous work.

*"I had to read five novels the other day. Each has 4-5 pages. That bored me. And I still had to write it all down. And that writing was boring."* (D6/9)

These challenges were reported by participants in research conducted by Wiener and Daniels (2016) and Kendall et al. (2003), who identified a specific theme exploring the '*Everyday difficulties related to ADHD*'. In doing so, they reported experiences including slower learning, boredom, and a feeling of permanent distractibility and confusion with received instructions; these challenges were also reported by the boys in this study in relation to mathematical performance.

**Completing mathematical calculations** is a considerable challenge for most of these boys, and they spoke about it with "*fear*" (D9/10) or in relation to feeling "*stupid*" (D3/8) and "*confused*" (D9/10). Apart from the fact that it was difficult for them to focus, they also talked about difficulties with **working memory** (when they had to process several numbers at the same time) and about mistakes they made because they overlooked something and miscalculated the task:

*"But I don't like to count. When I have to come to the board and when it's a plus sign and I don't see it"* (D7/9).

"How do you feel then, when you need to complete a math problem?

*Very, very confused."* (D9/10)

A systematic analysis of 30 papers examining the relationship between ADHD and performance in mathematical tasks conducted by Tosto and colleagues (2015) indicated a negative correlation between the severity of ADHD symptoms (especially attention regulation) and mathematical abilities; this finding was also confirmed in studies with twins via significant correlations related to genetic traits. Success in mathematical performance is also associated with executive functions, particularly working memory and the inhibition of an impulsive response (Bull and Scerif, 2001; Cragg et al., 2017). Neurological immaturity of **executive functions** and the consequent difficulties in the daily lives of children and adults with ADHD are well



čaka tijekom intervjua kroz teškoće u organizaciji misli, teškoće u sekvencioniranju ali i aktivnosti, organizaciji predmeta i vremena, ali neustrajnom ulaganju napora i odustajanju od dovršavanja zadatka. Ujedno, teškoće s izvršnim funkcijama pri rješavanju matematičkih zadataka dovode i do narušavanja **slike o sebi**. Dječak u sljedećem primjeru govori za sebe da nije dovoljno pametan da bi riješio zadatak. Trudi se, ali opetovano ne uspijeva, što dovodi do frustracije i želje za odustajanjem. Ta frustracija čuje se u njegovu glasu, ali i neverbalnoj komunikaciji, pri čemu se on udara rukom po glavi kako bi se kaznio za neuspjeh.

Što misliš zašto je to računanje tako teško?

*Ne znam. Dok ti zbrojiš 1 plus 2 plus 3 ... pa - Glupan! [za sebe] Opet sam zaboravio! Glupan! Opet, opet, opet ... [udara se po glavi] i onda mi pukne na živce i neću više. Idem doma! Neću više! A moram... (D3/8)*

Više je roditelja u intervjuiima govorilo o teškoćama njihova djeteta pri svladavanju tablice množenja. No samo je jedan dječak to i priznao, ali na način kao da odaje tajnu za koju ne želi da je itko sazna. Osjeća da je to socijalno sramotno (*užasno*) jer on već pohađa 4. razred, a tablicu množenja još nije svladao. Kako bi si olakšao, pribjegava računanju kalkulatorom. Ovdje kao da promišlja što je važnije – točan izračun ili ulaganje značajnog truda uz upitnu točnost rezultata.

*Matematiku glupu! Iskreno da vam kažem ovo je mala tajna... ma neću reći... to je sad užasno jer idem u 4. razred, a to se učilo u drugom razredu... Tablica množenja! Da, da to me još uvijek muči. Znam nešto malo. Mislim, mogu ja napraviti zadatak, ali kod kuće uzmem digitron. (D4/9)*

Sažeto gledajući, dječaci s ADHD-om prepoznaju svoje teškoće s regulacijom pažnje što im stvara poteškoće u praćenju i razumijevanju uputa (zbunjeni su, nije im jasno, nema im smisla ili ne razumiju) te ih posljedično ometa pri uspješnoj izvedbi školskih zadataka; čitanju, brojanju, računanju, pisanju i učenju gradiva. Istraživanja dokumentiraju teškoće u učenju kod 50% do čak 80% djece i adolescenata s ADHD-om (DuPaul i Stoner, 2014), a ove teškoće se najviše pripisuju sržnim osobinama poremećaja; teškoćama u regulaciji pažnje i izvršnim funkcijama, a znatno manje

documented (e.g., Ptacek et al., 2019; Rubia, 2018; Toplak et al., 2017; Barkley, 2015; Schreiber et al., 2014). The impairment and/or immaturity of executive functions was also observed in the narratives of these boys during our interviews: they reported difficulties in organizing thoughts, sequencing activities, organizing objects and time, as well as the lack of persistent investment of effort, and the desire to give up on a task. At the same time, difficulties with executive functions in solving mathematical problems lead to a distortion of **self-image**. The boy in the following example spoke about himself as someone who is not smart enough to solve the task. He mentioned that he tries, but fails repeatedly, which leads to frustration and a desire to give up. This frustration is heard in his voice, but also in non-verbal communication, where he hits himself on the head with his hand to punish himself for failing.

“Why do you think that doing maths is so difficult?”

*I don't know. When you add 1 plus 2 plus 3... and then - Stupid! [for himself] I forgot again! Idiot! Again, again, again... [hits his head] and then it gets on my nerves and I won't do it anymore. I'm going home! I won't do it anymore! But I have to...” (D3/8)*

In interviews with the parents, several parents also spoke about their child's difficulties in mastering multiplication tables. However, only one boy admitted this, doing so as if he was revealing a secret that he did not want anyone to know about. For him, not having mastered the multiplication tables in 4<sup>th</sup> grade (10 years) was socially embarrassing (“horrible”). To make it easier for himself, he resorted to doing math problems with a calculator. In this quote, he was weighing what was more important - an accurate calculation or an investment of significant effort with questionable accuracy.

*“Stupid math! To tell you honestly, this is a little secret... I won't tell... it's awful now because I'm in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade and it was taught in the second grade... Multiplication tables! Yes, yes, it still bothers me. I know a little bit. I mean I can do my homework, but I use a calculator at home.” (D4/9)*

In summary, boys with ADHD recognise the difficulties associated with attention regulation and understand that it can make it difficult for them to follow and understand instructions (they are confused, it is unclear, does not make sense, or they do not understand); this consequently interferes with the

nekim drugim komorbidnim stanjima (DuPaul i Langberg, 2015). Kad govore o obrazovnim teškoćama djece s ADHD-om, DuPaul i Langberg (2014: 313) posebno se osvrću na neuspjeh pri učenju gradiva, razvoju vještina ili školskoj izvedbi na razini koja bi bila primjerena djetetovoj dobi, intelektualnim sposobnostima te obiteljskom i školskom kontekstu.

Više dječaka u ovom istraživanju žalilo se na teškoće prilikom **pisanja pismenih testova** te primjećuju koliko su uspješniji pri usmenom u odnosu na pismeno ispitivanje znanja. Objasnjavajući zašto je pismeni ispit zahtjevan, govore da su to testovi s previše pitanja koja ih preplave te ih to umara i žele odustati (*ne da mi se*).

*Nemam pojma. Jednostavno ne mogu. Usmeno naučim za 5, a nisam ni učio, a iz ispita dobijem jedan (...) Ima previše tih pitanja i odgovora koje moraš zapamtiti i napisati na papiru. Boli me od toga glava i ne da mi se.* (D4/9)

Na sličan način sljedeći dječak želi učiteljici objasniti na koji mu način može olakšati *preveliki test* (smanjiti broj pitanja), što ukazuje na to da dijete prepoznaje koja bi mu prilagodba pomogla i frustriran je što učiteljica sama to ne uviđa. Međutim razlika je u moći i ulogama prevelika i on nema snage izboriti se za sebe.

*Iz prirode mi je teško kad (...) je ispit ovoliki veliki [naglašava širenjem ruku]. Dobiješ 25 zadataka. Ne stignem ja to riješiti. A nešto riješim, nešto znam, nešto ne znam, nešto preskočim. Ali u biti teško.*

Kako se osjećaš kad dobiješ tako veliki ispit? *Onda mi dođe da odem do učiteljice i kažem – dajte mi ispit izrežite po pola. Ali ja to ne kažem, nego pregrizem jezik i krenem pisati.* (D7/9)

Iako se žalio na više situacija u školi, dječak D4/9 zaključuje da njemu nije zapravo u školi teško (jer bi to pretpostavljalo da je sniženih kapaciteta?), već da je njegov školski uspjeh vezan uz manjak motivacije (*Lijen sam i ne da mi se*). Je li atribuiranje svojeg (ne)uspjeha lijenosti (čimbeniku nad kojom bi trebao imati kontrolu) ovom dječaku prihvatljivije nego stvarnim teškoćama (nad kojima nema kontrolu)? Ili je lijenost kao obilježje usvojeno iz poruka koje pristižu iz okoline, a koje dječak doživljava kao istinite? *Lijenost* kao etiketa čini se

successful completion of school assignments including reading, counting, doing math assignments, writing, and learning. Previous studies have reported that learning difficulties can occur in 50-80% of children and adolescents with ADHD (DuPaul and Stoner, 2014), and these difficulties are attributed mainly to the core features of the disorder, such as difficulties in attention regulation and executive functions, and not to other comorbid conditions (DuPaul and Langberg, 2014). In their discussion about the educational challenges of children with ADHD, DuPaul and Langberg (2014: 313) referred specifically to the failure of children to learn school curriculum, develop skills, or perform at a level appropriate to the child's age, intellectual abilities, and family and school contexts.

Most of the boys in this study reported difficulties in **writing tests** and noted that they were much more successful when their knowledge was tested orally rather than in a written test. When explaining the reasons for which written tests were demanding, they reported that tests had too many questions that overwhelmed them and tired them out until they wanted to give up (*"I don't feel like it"*).

*"I have no idea (why is difficult). I just can't. I get the best grade in the oral exam, and I didn't even study, and I fail in the written exam (...) There are too many of these questions and answers that you have to remember and write on paper. My head hurts and I don't feel like it."* (D4/9)

Similarly, another boy talked about his wish to explain to the teacher how she might make a test that is *"too large"* more manageable for him (by reducing the number of questions), indicating that the child recognized the modifications that would help him and is frustrated that the teacher was unable to realise it on her own. However, the difference in power and roles is too great and he does not have the strength to advocate for himself.

*"In biology class, it is difficult for me when (...) the exam is so big (he emphasizes it with wide hands). You get 25 questions. I can't handle it. And I solve something, I know something, I don't know something, I skip something. But essentially it is difficult.*

*How do you feel when you get such a big exam?*

*Then it occurs to me to go to the teacher and say - cut the exam in half for me! But I don't say that, I bite my tongue and start writing."* (D7/9)

kao prečica ili jednostavnije objašnjenje izazova pri organizaciji ponašanja i usmjeravanju pažnje, posebice ako uzmemo u obzir da dječaci u pravilu ne znaju da za njihov način funkcioniranja postoji razlog u obliku neurorazvojnog poremećaja. Svoju izjavu ovaj dječak završava konstatacijom bespomoćnosti, pri čemu on nema moć išta promijeniti, odnosno zaključuje da je školu najbolje izbjeći, čak i po cijenu bolesti.

*Ma nije meni teško, nego sam lijen i onda ne znam i onda... previše... boli me glava od te škole. Jednostavno mi se ne da ići u školu. Da sam barem više bolestan... (D4/9)*

Millerovo istraživanje (2017) ukazuje da su tijekom djetinjstva i adolescencije sudionici bili izloženi ponavljanim negativnim porukama koje su odražavale nerazumijevanje njihovih teškoća uzrokovanih ADHD-om. Kako opisuje ovaj autor, ta su iskustva imala štetan utjecaj na njihov razvoj pojma o sebi i, općenito, na psihosocijalno funkcioniranje, što je dodatno pojačalo teret nošenja s njihovom neurorazličitošću. Od dječaka se čuje internalizacija socijalnih poruka koje koriste za vlastiti opis koji ukazuje na djetetovu osobinu (on je jednostavno takav, *lijen*), odnosno koje smještaju djetetovo ponašanje u domenu voljne kontrole. Drugim riječima, shvaćanje da bi dječak **mogao kontrolirati svoje ponašanje samo kad bi to htio** ukazuje na nepoznavanje bioloških mehanizama ADHD-a onih koji šalju takve poruke djetetu. Wiener i Daniels (2016) i Miller (2017) naglašavaju internalizaciju osjećaja srama i bespomoćnosti zbog poruka iz okoline koje su im sugerirale da se oni namjerno ponašaju tako, da je to njihovo voljno ponašanje te zbog očekivanja da ga mogu kontrolirati. Miller opisuje kako su se stalnom izloženošću takvim porukama one postupno ugrađivale u njihovu sliku o sebi.

Čini se da dječaci primjećuju da su na neki način različiti od svojih vršnjaka, ali samo jedan dječak to naziva ADHD-om (D9/10), a svoje ponašanje povezuje s dijagnozom samo u kontekstu školovanja. Dječak D9/10 navodi da mu se zadaci u testovima zaokružuju (treba riješiti samo označene zadatke u pismenoj provjeri znanja) zato što ima ADHD (što je vjerojatno dio individualizacije). Jednako tako opisuje kako je pod satom zaigran (iako ne zna objasniti razlog), ali smatra da je to

Another boy (D4/9) complained about several situations at school, but concluded that it was not difficult for him at school (perhaps because this would indicate that he had reduced capacity); he mentioned that his school success was related to a lack of motivation (*“I’m lazy and I don’t feel like it”*). Is attributing his failure to laziness (a factor that he should have control over) more acceptable to this boy than attributing failure to real difficulties (that he has no control)? Or, has laziness been absorbed and subsequently perceived to be true from the messages he has received from his social environment? Laziness as a label seems like a shortcut or simpler explanation to the challenges experienced in organising behaviour and directing attention, especially given that these boys generally do not know that there is an underlying neurodevelopmental reason for the manner in which they function. This boy ended his narration with a statement of helplessness, expressing that he had no power to change anything and that it was perhaps best to avoid school, even at the cost of illness.

*“It’s not hard for me. I’m lazy and then I don’t know and then it is ...too much... my head hurts because of that school. I just don’t feel like going to school. If only I were sicker...” (D4/9)*

Miller (2017) indicated that, during childhood and adolescence, participants were exposed to repeated negative messages that reflected a misunderstanding of the difficulties they experienced as a result of ADHD. He went on to describe that these experiences had a detrimental effect on their development of a self-concept and general psychosocial functioning, which further increased the burden of coping with their neurodiversity. The boys in the present study also spoke of the internalization of social messages used to describe them, which points to the child’s trait (*“he is simply like that – lazy”*) or place the child’s behaviour in the domain of voluntary control. The suggestion that a child *“could control his behaviour only if he wanted to”* indicates a lack of awareness of the biological mechanisms of ADHD on the part of those who send such messages to the child. Wiener and Daniels (2016) and Miller (2017) described the internalization of feelings of shame and helplessness among children with ADHD as a result of messages from the environment suggesting that their behaviour was intentional and that they should be able to control it. Miller (2017) further described how, through con-

razlog za dobivanje *programa za ADHD* (vjerojatno naziv za IOOP). Kako bi naglasio koliko je zaigranost nepovoljna za njegovo školovanje on koristi sintagmu *maksimalni problemi*, koju je vjerojatno čuo od odraslih.

A kako je kad si u školi?

*Pa problemi su maksimalni.*

Kakvi problemi?

*Igram se pod satom. Ne znam zašto. I zato smo dobili taj program za a-de-ha-de (naglašava svaki slog). (D9/10)*

Neki dječaci uviđaju da se razlikuju od druge djece upravo po tomu što moraju uložiti više napora od druge djece kako bi se usredotočili na gradivo i uspješno ga svladali. U sljedećem citatu dječak se uspoređuje s vršnjakom u razredu kojemu je za svladavanje školskog gradiva dovoljno uložiti tek neznatan napor, dok je njemu to *jako teško*. Ovaj dječak uspoređuje i opterećenja djece i odraslih, smatrajući da je učenje najteži zadatak, odnosno da je djeci teže učiti negoli odraslima ići na posao.

*Mislim, posao, mislim da je lakši od učenja.*

Misliš da je učenje teže?

*Da mislim. Nekima kao mom prijatelju [ime-nuje dječaka] ovako ide... [bez problema, pucketa prstima]*

A kako tebi ide?

*A moram si nekako pomoći. Da to napravim.*

Kako si pomogneš?

*A računam...*

Je li ti teško?

*To je jako teško. (D3/8)*

Postavlja se pitanje što takav manjak informiranosti o vlastitoj neurorazličitosti znači za razumijevanje sebe i svojeg ponašanja kod ovih dječaka. Svjedočenja odraslih osoba kojima je ADHD dijagnosticiranih tek u odrasloj dobi govore o različitim psihološkim reakcijama na konačno objašnjenje razloga vlastitog ponašanja tijekom djetinjstva i kasnije; od žalovanja, tuge i ljutnje do olakšanja, prilagodbe i prihvaćanja (Young i sur., 2008).

Školske ocjene dječaci u ovom istraživanju ne doživljavaju kao poseban poticaj. Opisuju i svoja

stant exposure to such messages, children with ADHD gradually build these notions into their self-image.

The boys in this study seemed to notice that they are different from their peers in some way, but only one boy labelled these differences as ADHD (D9/10) in a statement relating his behaviour in the school context to his diagnosis. Here, the boy (D9/10) stated that he needed to solve only selected tasks in a test because he has ADHD (probably as part of an individualised program). He also described how he typically plays during class (although he can't explain the reason) and that he thinks that playfulness is one of the reasons for getting him into an ADHD program (likely his label for the IEP). To emphasise how unfavourable this playfulness was at school, he used the phrase "*maximal problems*", an expression perhaps heard from adults.

"And what about when you're in school?"

*Well, the problems are maximal.*

What problems?

*I play during class. I don't know why. And that's why we got that program for A-D-H-D (emphasizes each syllable)." (D9/10)*

Some boys recognised that they differed from other children in the amount of effort they had to exert in order to focus in class and successfully master tasks. In the following quote, the boy compared himself to a peer who was able to master the school curriculum with very little effort, and said that such a task was very difficult for him. This boy also compared the workload of children and adults, and expressed the belief that studying was the most difficult task and that it is much harder for children to learn than for adults to go to work.

*"I mean, work, I think it's easier than learning.*

Do you think learning is harder?

*Yes, I think so. Some people, like my friend (naming a boy), does it like this... (with no problem, snapping fingers)*

And how are you doing?

*I have to help myself somehow. To do it.*

How do you help yourself?

*I count...*

Is it hard for you?

*That is very difficult." (D3/8)*

promišljanja o ocjenjivanju koja su pod utjecajem socijalnih normi (*najbolje je* [imati prosjek ocjena] 5.0), ali i (vjerojatno) roditeljskih savjeta (važnije je znanje od ocjena).

*Ali ipak je važnija škola nego ocjene. Dobro je da prođeš s 5 isto, ali bolje je da učiš nego da prođeš s 5. Da nešto naučiš. Jer netko te može prevariti u matematici.* (D3/8)

Ipak, progovaraju i o osjećaju nepravde prilikom ocjenjivanja, pri čemu ocjenu doživljavaju kao kaznu za teškoće s kojima se suočavaju (*kad nešto ne mogu napraviti*) i koje su izvan njihove kontrole. Jedan dječak (D10/11) se požalio na sustav ocjenjivanja u situacijama kad se ne uvažavaju njegove slabe strane (rukopis), što mu snižava ocjenu (*Pa da se ne gleda rukopis i da se ne gledaju pravopisne greške*; D10/11). Drugi dječak (D2/8) govori kako mu za neorganiziranost i zaboravljanje pribora za školski rad (koji pripadaju u domenu izvršnih funkcija) također može biti dodijeljena kazna u obliku negativne ocjene: *... onda sam dobio jedan. Jer nisam donio sve stvari. Trebali smo donijeti ljepilo i škare, a ja sam samo jedno od tog donio.* (D2/8)

Na pitanje *Ima li nešto što zaista ne vole ili im je teško raditi* vezano uz školu, svi dječaci jednoglasno ustvrđuju: **pisati domaću zadaću**. Dječaci govore: *Želio bih da je nema* (D7/9); *To mi je najgore* (D11/11); *Dosadna je* (D5/10); *To mi se ne da. Ne volim pisati zadaću* (D6/9); *To me ne zanima* (D7/9); *Zadaća mi je teška* (D9/10); *Počne mi biti muka* (D5/10). Pokušavajući saznati kako objašnjavaju zašto im je teška, bilo je potrebno postaviti više pitanja jer dječaci često nisu znali kako objasniti to iskustvo (*Jer... ne znam... ima stvari koje (zamišljen)... D1/10; Teško je to objasniti... D14/9*). Jednom dječaku se čini nemogućim da bi ikome ta aktivnost bila privlačna i u konačnici opisuje svoj osjećaj kao *užasnu* prisilu koju unatoč trudu teško svladava (*Pa nitko ne voli pisati zadaću. Jesi ti voljela? (...)* *Užasan (osjećaj). Moraš, moraš, a ja se trudim...* D3/8). Drugi dječak koji opisuje svoj osjećaj za vrijeme pisanja zadaće koristi dramatične izraze ili geste (D5/10), dojma je da je vrijeme potrošeno na pisanje domaće zadaće *izgubljeno*, odnosno da bi za to vrijeme mogao raditi bilo što drugo:

One question that comes up often concerns the extent to which such a lack of information about one's own neurodiversity can influence their understanding of self and their behaviour. The testimonies of adults diagnosed with ADHD in adulthood show a variety of psychological reactions to finally having an explanation for their behaviour during childhood and later on: from grief, sadness, and anger to relief, adjustment, and acceptance (Young et al., 2008).

In the present study, school grades were not perceived by the boys as a special incentive. Their opinions on grading also appeared to be influenced by social norms (*“it is best to [have a grade point average] of 5.0”*), but perhaps also by parental advice (knowledge is more important than grades):

*“But still, school is more important than grades. It is good to pass with 5 (highest grade), but it is better to learn than to pass with 5. To learn something. Because someone can fool you in math.”* (D3/8)

However, they also expressed the feeling of injustice during school performance evaluations, where their grades were perceived as a punishment for the difficulties they experienced (*“when I can't do it”*) and were beyond their control. One boy (D10/11) complained about the grading system in situations where his weaknesses (handwriting) were not considered, leading to lower grades (he proposed *“that the handwriting is not looked at and spelling mistakes are not looked at”*; D10/11). Another boy (D2/8) said that he might also be punished for disorganization and forgetting school supplies (executive functions domain) in the form of a failing grade (*“Then I got failing grade. Because I didn't bring all the things. We were supposed to bring glue and scissors, and I only brought one of those”*; D2/8).

When asked if there was something they really do not like or find difficult to do related to school, all the boys unanimously stated: **homework**. In their words, *“I wish it was gone”* (D7/9); *“that's the worst”* (D11/11); *“It's boring”* (D5/10/10); *“I don't like it. I don't like to write homework”* (D6/9); *“I'm not into it”* (D7/9); *“my homework is difficult”* (D9/10); *“I start to feel sick”* (D5/10). In order to better understand why the boys thought that homework was so difficult for them, it was necessary to ask more questions because they often did not know how to explain this experience (*“Because... I don't know... there are things that... (lost in thoughts)”*,

Daj mi malo ispričaj o toj zadaći...

*Dosadno je. Tratim svoje vrijeme, dok za to vrijeme mogu raditi bilo šta. To je izgubljeno vrijeme.*

A kako se osjećaš dok pišeš zadaću?

*Želio bi da umrem.*

Kako to?

*Ne znam. Da ne moram više pisati. To jest, odmah kad vidim zadaću počne mi biti muka. (D5/10)*

Istraživači potvrđuju teškoće s pisanjem domaće zadaće djece s ADHD-om (npr. Langberg i sur., 2010; Langberg i sur., 2016). Kao dominantne razloge teškoća u izvršavanju te obveze Smith sa suradnicima (2019) navodi teškoće s regulacijom pažnje te manjak motiviranosti za pisanje zadaće. Wiener i Daniels (2016) citiraju izjave svojih sudionika o *besmislenosti* zadaće te koliko *mrze* pisanje domaće zadaće. Ujedno spominju koliko je pisanje domaće zadaće učenicima naporno (*U školi si šest sati i onda ti daju domaću zadaću za koju ti je potrebno još šest sati.*; Wiener i Daniels, 2016: 571), stoga odrade dio domaće zadaće, postanu preumorni i odustaju. Slično spominju i Ahlström i Wentz (2014) kad njihovi sudionici, adolescenti s ADHD-om opisuju naporan dan u školi koji se nastavlja kod kuće pisanjem domaće zadaće, što dovodi do osjećaja umora, frustracije i krivnje jer ne uspijevaju odraditi sve zadatke te u konačnici doživljaju stresa.

I drugi se dječaci žale što su im zbog zadaće uskraćene druge (željene) aktivnosti, posebice igra (najteže je *rješavati zadatke dok se djeca lijepo vani igraju* D3/8; ... *nemam vremena za igru, ni ništa. Nego se moram dosađivati sa zadaćom*; D8/10). Ono što zadaću čini *uvijek najtežom* je, prema objašnjenju jednog dječaka, to što je *zadaća svaki dan* (D10/11). Dodatno ih obeshrabruje količina zadataka/zadaće: *Puno toga. Previše.* (D3/8, D5/10, D6/9, D8/10), kao i frustriranost zbog nerazumijevanja ili zahtjevnosti zadatka. U slučaju da ustraju i ne odustanu, smatraju to posebnim postignućem.

*Razmišljam da ću što prije to napraviti (zadaću). Ali kad vidim da je previše – odustajem. Ali danas nisam odustao [ponosno]. (D3/8)*

A što je teško s tom zadaćom?

*D1/10; "It is difficult to explain", D14/9).* For one boy, it seemed impossible for anyone to enjoy homework and ultimately described his feelings as a "horrible" compulsion that, despite his efforts, was hard to overcome. (*"Well, no one likes to do homework. Did you like it? ... Horrible (feeling.) You must do it, you must, and I try..."* D3/8). Another boy who described his feelings while doing homework uses dramatic expressions or gestures (D5/10), and described the time spent doing homework as "wasted" or time in which he could do something (anything) else instead:

"Tell me more about that homework..."

*It is boring. I waste my time, while I could do anything during that time. It's a waste of time.*

And how do you feel while doing homework?

*I would like to die.*

How's that?

*I don't know. That I don't have to do it anymore. That is, as soon as I see the homework, I start to feel sick." (D5/10)*

Other researchers have confirmed that children with ADHD have difficulties completing homework (e.g., Langberg et al., 2010; Langberg et al., 2016). Smith et al. (2019) stated that difficulties with attention regulation and a lack of motivation to write assignments were the dominant reasons for difficulties in fulfilling this obligation, while Wiener and Daniels (2016) cited statements from their participants about the "futility" of homework and how much they "hated" doing homework. Consistent with our results, they described how difficult it was for the students with ADHD to do homework (*"You are in school for six hours and then they give you homework for which you need another six hours"*; Wiener and Daniels, 2016: 571), often with the end result that they do part of the homework, become too tired and give up. Similarly, Ahlström and Wentz (2014) reported that adolescents with ADHD described a busy school day that continued at home when doing homework, leading to feelings of fatigue, frustration, and guilt because they failed to complete all tasks and, ultimately, experienced stress.

The boys in the present study also complained that they were deprived of all other (desired) activities due to homework, especially play (*"The most difficult thing is to do homework while other children are playing"*, D3/8; *"I don't have time to play,*

*Pa ima teških zadataka, ne razumijem i kad idem gledat knjigu, udžbenik, još uvijek se zbunim i ne razumijem.* (D8/10)

Bilo je zanimljivo saznati o čemu djeca razmišljaju kad se suoče sa za njih prezahtjevnim zadatkom i kako opisuju to svoje iskustvo. Govore da u tim situacijama odlutaju mislima, razmišljaju o *ničemu* ili nečemu drugom, kako bi radije bili negdje drugdje, *samo ne* (razmišljaju) *o školi*. Ovaj manjak usmjerenosti na zadatak, sanjarenje ili uopće teškoće sa započinjanjem zadatka dječak D4/9 opisuje kao nešto što je izvan njegove kontrole (*Ne mogu se nagovoriti nikako*). Jednako tako objašnjava da mu ne bi pomoglo ni kad bi mu netko diktirao odgovore jer to zahtijeva dobru vještinu pisanja i znatan angažman radnog pamćenja (*Ali moraš se naučiti i brzo pisati kad ti netko diktira da zapamtiš to*, D4/9).

Dječaci se žale da se ni u dane vikenda ili praznika nemaju mogućnost odmoriti od školskih obveza, što ih zamara i frustrira. Jedan dječak to opisuje revoltiranim glasom iz kojeg se očitava osjećaj nepravde zbog uskraćivanja prava na odmor i igru, djetinjstvo.

*A zadaća je svaki dan. Nema dana kad ništa ne radim. To ne postoji.*

*I za vikend moram nešto raditi. I vikend i u tjednu moram nešto raditi. Za školu. [...]*

*Nisam ni za praznike smio (igrati se). Morao sam učiti. Za praznike!*

Kako si se onda osjećao?

*Ma grozno.* (D10/11)

Nabrajajući sve prethodne izazove, dječaci zaključuju da su *nakon škole umorni* (D4/9, D6/9, D13/9), a jedan od dječaka opisuje toliko izražen umor nakon škole da ima psihosomatsku reakciju (*povraća mu se*). Drugi dječak (D4/9) opisuje osjećaj stalnog pritiska koji prestaje tek kad započnu praznici.

*Pa jednostavno želio bi se malo odmoriti od te škole jer mi je dosta tog pritiska. Srećom je sad gotova škola pa se mogu opustiti ko normalan čovjek.* (D4/9)

Dječacima je postavljeno pitanje *postoji li ipak nešto što vole raditi u školi*. Odgovori su se veći-

*or anything. I have to be bored with homework”,* D8/10). According to one boy, what makes homework “*always the most difficult*” is the fact that it is an “*everyday*” obligation (D10/11). They were also further discouraged by the number of tasks/assignments: “*Lots of it. Too much.*” (D3/8, D5/10, D6/9, D8/10), as well as expressed frustration over incomprehension or feeling that the task was too demanding. On days where they managed to persist and not give up, they considered it a special achievement.

*“I think about doing it (homework) as soon as possible. But when I see that it is too much - I give up. But I didn't give up today (proudly)* (D3/8)

And what is difficult about homework?

*Well, there are difficult tasks, I don't understand it. And when I go to look in a book, a textbook, I still get confused and I don't understand.”* (D8/10)

It was interesting to discover what children think about when faced with a task that is too demanding and the manner in which they describe their experience. In these situations, they described how their thoughts wandered, how they thought about “*nothing*” or something else, they thought about how they would rather be somewhere else, or just did not think about school. This lack of focus, daydreaming or difficulty initiating the task to begin with was described by one boy (D4/9) as something beyond his control (“*I can't persuade myself in any way*”). At the same time, he explained how having the answers dictated to him would not help because it required good writing skills and considerable engagement of working memory (“*But you have to learn to write fast when someone dictates to you to remember it*”, D4/9).

The boys complained that, even on weekends or holidays, they did not have the opportunity to take a break from school obligations, which made them tired and frustrated. In an almost disgusted tone, one boy described this with a feeling of injustice due to the denial of the right to rest and play, the right to childhood.

*“And the homework is every day. There are no days when I don't do anything. That doesn't exist.*

*And I have to do something (for school) on the weekend too. I have to do something both on weekends and on school days. For school.(...)*

nom odnosili na vrijeme izvan nastave: igrati se (D1/10, D2/8; D3/8; D5/10; D6/9); igrati igrice (D1); ići na igralište (D1/10; D2/8); igrati košarku, nogomet (D1/10; D8/10); crtati (D3/8; D6/9; D9/10); jesti u školi (D5/10); izrađivati (čestitke, snjegović od papira, D14/9). No odgovor na to pitanje može biti i kratko *Ne*. (D6/9) ili: *Ne znam, ne pada mi na pamet* (sliježe ramenima i odmahuje glavom, D11/11). Omiljeni su školski predmeti oni koji odgovaraju afinitetima i jakim stranama dječaka. Primjerice dječak (D9/10) to opisuje kao školu u kojoj je zabavno (kad na vjeronauku *gledamo crtiće*), kad ima mogućnost kretanja (najdraži je *tjelesni jer trčimo, a ja imam ADHD*) i slikanje prema kojemu dijete ima sklonost i smisao (*likovni zato što sam jako dobar slikar i volim slikati stvari*). Dječak govori da se osjeća *ispunjeno* kad ima mogućnosti biti uključen u aktivnosti koje mu omogućuju ostvarivanje potreba za zabavom i odmorom, tjelesnom aktivacijom i postignućem.

### Podrška u školi: važnost uvažavanja, senzibiliziranosti i odnosa

Osim teškoća s kojima se susreću tijekom školskog rada te pri svladavanju gradiva, dječaci spominju i *nevolje* u kojima se nađu boraveći u školi, kao i doživljaj njih samih kao izazivača nevolja. *Nevolja* je situacija koju dječak D2/8 ne zna objasniti niti se smije za nju pitati (*ne pitaj*), a nastaje kad se djeluje bez razmišljanja. Kad dječak kaže da *samo tako upadne* u nevolju i, kasnije, *ovako se događa meni svaki dan*, poručuje da mu se to redovito dešava, bez njegove namjere i kontrole.

Kako se upadne u nevolju?

*A ne znam kako se upadne. Samo tako upadnem. Jer ne razmišljam glavom.* (D2/8)

Ovaj opis impulzivnosti (djelovanje bez razmišljanja) dobro ilustrira manjak kontrole nad svojim ponašanjem. Sljedeći dječak opisuje sebe kao nekoga tko je *najgori* i uvijek čini nešto *nepri-mjereno u školi*. To čini na način kao da ponavlja optužbe koje sluša od drugih (koristeći riječ *kao*) te na kraju rezignirano zaključuje kako mu ionako nitko ne vjeruje. Opisujući takve situacije, dječaci teško verbaliziraju svoje osjećaje, no čuje se:

*I wasn't even allowed to (play) in the holidays. I had to study. In the holidays!*

*How did you feel then?*

*It was awful.*" (D10/11)

Enumerating all the previous challenges, the boys concluded that they were "*tired after school*" (D4/9, D6/9, D13/9). In one case, this fatigue was so pronounced that he had a psychosomatic reaction (vomiting). Another boy (D4/9) described a feeling of constant pressure that only stopped when the holidays began:

*"Well, I just want to take a little break from that school, because I'm tired of all that pressure. Luckily, the school year is almost over, so I can relax like a normal person."* (D4/9)

The boys were asked if there was anything they actually liked to do at school. Their answers mostly related to spending time outside of class: "*playing*" (D1/10, D2/8; D5/10); "*go to the playground*" (D1/10; D2/8); "*play basketball*" (D1/10, D8/10); "*draw*" (D3/8; D6/9; D9/10); "*play Catch and Freeze Tag*" (D3/8); "*eating at school*" (D5/10); "*card games*" (D5/10; D6/9); "*handicrafts (greeting cards, paper snowman)*" (D14/9). However, in many cases, the answer to this question was a short: "*No.*" (D6/9), or, "*I don't know, it doesn't occur to me*" (shrugs and shakes his head, D11/11). Favourite school subjects were those that matched the boys' affinities and strengths. For example, one boy (D9/10) described his favourite time at school: when it was fun ("*when we watched cartoons in religious education*"), when he can be physically active ("*my favourite is PE because we run, and I have ADHD*") and when he was "*painting*", an activity that is meaningful and interesting for this child ("*because I am a very good painter and I like to paint things*"). Furthermore, this boy described a feeling of "*fulfilment*" when he has the opportunity to be involved in activities that allow him to realise his need for enjoyment and rest, physical activation, and achievement.

### THEME: Support in school: the importance of recognition, sensitivity, and relationship s

In addition to the difficulties they encounter related to school work and mastering the curricula, the boys also described the "*troubles*" they found themselves in while at school, as well as the perception that they were "*troublemakers*". "*Trouble*"



grozno (D4/9), ljuto, tužno i nepravедno (D13/9, D2/8).

*Uvijek kao da ja nešto, kao da ja ovo, kao da ono, kao da ja sve. Ja sam kao najgori.*

Je li to istina?

Što?

Sve to što kažu da radiš?

*Ne. Ja to ne radim. Jest da mi nitko ne vjeruje... ali valjda ja znam šta ja... (radim). (D4/9)*

Ovdje je važno dotaknuti se doživljaja nepovjerenja u istinitost dječakovih izjava. Zbog ilustracije bit će prikazan tek jedan primjer, no čitajući transkripte u cijelosti, stječe se dojam da se dječaci često žale kako im drugi ne vjeruju i kako su često optuženi za nešto što smatraju da nisu skrivili.

*Ma čim nešto kažeš ili napraviš, oni te tuže učiteljici, upadneš u probleme. I to me toliko živcira. Ja ništa loše ne radim! I učiteljica mi onda normalno ništa ne vjeruje jer me uvijek optuže zbog nečeg. A ja to stvarno ne radim. Ali kužite, **zbog puno puta** mi učiteljica više ništa ne vjeruje. Kako će mi vjerovat?*

Kako se onda osjećaš kad ti tako nitko ne vjeruje?

*Pa grozno... (D4/9)*

Ovu ulogu “dežurnog krivca” spominju Grant (2009) i Ringer (2020) koristeći sintagmu: *meta za okrivljavanje* (engl. *target to blame*). Takvo etiketiranje dolazi iz različitih izvora; roditelja, nastavnika pa i druge djece koja su spremna odraslima prijaviti njihovo ponašanje. Doživljenu frustraciju naglašava osjećaj nepravедne okrivljenosti (*Ali meni nitko ne vjeruje!*). Drugim riječima, dječake se uopće ne pita za pojašnjenje ili njihov doživljaj situacije, a u takvim se situacijama osjećaju *tužno, nepravедno, grozno i ljuto*. Ova iskustva nisu izolirana, i drugi autori spominju slične izjave svojih sudionika, primjerice Grant (2009:46) citira dječaka koji govori: *ADHD je kad ti nitko ne vjeruje kad govoriš istinu. Svi će ionako biti protiv tebe iz nekog razloga.*

Istovremeno, dječaci u ovom istraživanju govore i o nedostatnoj podršci koja bi im omogućila uspješnije izvršavanje školskih obveza i

is a situation that one boy (D2/8) did not know how to explain, nor was it something that he wanted to talk about (“do not ask”) since such trouble usually occurred when he acted without thinking. In his words, the boy reported that he “gets into trouble just like that”, and later, that “this is what happens to me every day”, suggesting that this happened to him regularly without his intention or control.

“How do you get in trouble?”

*I don't know how it happens. I just get into trouble like that. Because I don't think with my head.” (D2/8)*

This description of impulsivity (acting without thinking) clearly illustrates the boy's lack of control over his behaviour. Another boy described himself as someone who was “the worst” and who always “does something inappropriate at school” by repeating the accusations he hears from others (adding the conditional words ‘as if’ ‘like’). In the end, he resignedly concluded that no one believed him anyway. When describing such situations, the boys found it difficult to verbalise their feelings, but we heard a number of negative emotions: “awful” (D4/9), “angry, sad and unfair” (D13/9, D2/8).

*“It is always as if I did something, as if I did this, as if I did that, as if I did everything. I'm, like, the worst.*

Is that true?

What?

Everything they say you are doing?

*No. I don't do that. But no one believes me... but I guess I know what I (do).” (D4/9)*

This citation raised an important issue evident in many of the statements made by the boys: **lack of trust** in the truthfulness of their statements. As an illustration, only one example is being presented, but when the transcripts are read in their entirety, it becomes evident that the boys often complain that others do not trust them and that they are often accused of wrongdoings that they do not think they did.

*“As soon as you say or do something, they report you to the teacher and you get into trouble. And that annoys me so much. I'm not doing anything wrong! And then the teacher usually doesn't believe me at all because they always accuse me of something. And I really don't do that. But you see,*

bolju uključenost u razrednu zajednicu. Na primjeru jednog od dječaka čuje se da učiteljica ne razumije kako on određene zadatke nije u stanju odraditi na način kao i ostala (neurotipična) djeca u razredu ili u skladu s njezinim očekivanjima (*Kad ja baš nešto ne mogu napraviti, a učiteljica se naljuti*; D13/9). Dječak je zbog toga nesretan jer nije u stanju (ni u poziciji moći) argumentirati svoju situaciju, a učiteljica se ljuti jer ima drukčije razumijevanje njegova ponašanja. Frustracija koju dječaci osjećaju prvenstveno se odnosi na nerazumijevanje i neuvažavanje njihovih specifičnosti od strane nastavnika. Miller (2017: 27, 32) spominje poruke koje su njegovi sudionici dobivali od svojih nastavnika (*Ne trudiš se dovoljno! Pametan si, ali si lijen.*). Navode da su zaista jako željeli biti uspješni u školi, no ovakve poruke su internalizirali, što im je u konačnici snižavalo motivaciju za školski uspjeh i narušavalo sliku o sebi.

U svim navedenim izazovima s kojima se dječaci suočavaju, a koji proizlaze iz dječakovih simptoma te reakcija okoline na simptomatska ponašanja, dječacima je potrebna snažna psihosocijalna podrška; uvažavanje kao osobe, senzibiliziranost na njihovu neurorazličitost i praktična podrška u svladavanju gradiva. Dječaci spominju da podrška najčešće dolazi od odraslih, **učiteljica i pomoćnica u nastavi** (asistentica)<sup>4</sup>, ukoliko dijete ima na raspolaganju takvu vrstu podrške. Važnost svakodnevne pomoći i podrške koju djeca i adolescenti s ADHD-om dobivaju od bliskih drugih ističe Ringer (2020) u svojoj metasintezi. Schei i suradnici (2016) izdvojili su zaštitne čimbenike koji mogu ublažiti emocionalne i ponašajne teškoće te povećati kvalitetu života adolescenata s ADHD-om, kao što su individualne kompetencije, obiteljska kohezija i socijalna podrška. Osim podrške vršnjaka za neurorazličitu djecu podrška kompetentnih odraslih posebno je značajna za osjećaj prihvaćenosti u školskoj sredini. Dječaci doživljavaju učiteljicu i pomoćnicu u nastavi (ukoliko ju imaju) kao najvažnije izvore podrške u školi. Iako se muče s praćenjem nastave i učenjem, dječacima koji

*because of the many times (it happened) the teacher doesn't trust me anymore. How can she trust me?*

How do you feel then, when no one believes you like that?

*Well, awful ...* (D4/9)

This role of the "on-duty culprit" is also mentioned by Grant (2009) and Ringer (2020) who use the phrase, "*target to blame*". Such labelling comes from a variety of sources: parents, teachers and even other children who are willing to report their actions to adults. The frustration experienced is accentuated by a sense of unfair accusations of guilt ("*But no one believes me!*"). In other words, the boys were rarely asked for their perspective of the situation, leaving them feeling "*sad, unfair, awful, and angry*". These experiences were not isolated incidents and are consistent with previous work. For example, Grant (2009: 46) cites a boy who says "*ADHD is when no one believes you when you tell the truth. Everyone will be against you anyway for some reason*".

At the same time, the boys in this study talked about a lack of support that would otherwise enable them to perform school obligations more successfully and be more successfully included in the class community. Using an example from one of the boys, it is evident that the teacher did not understand how he was not able to do certain tasks in the same way as other (neurotypical) children in the class or in accordance with her expectations ("*When I can't do something, and the teacher gets angry*"; D13/9). As a result, the boy was unhappy because he was unable (nor in a position of power) to advocate for himself in this situation and the teacher was angry because she had a different understanding of his behaviour. Indeed, the frustration that the boys feel is primarily related to the teachers' misunderstanding and disregard for their neurological diversities, a notion consistent with Miller (2017: 27,32), who described the messages his participants received from their teachers ("*You are not trying hard enough! You are smart, but lazy.*"). The participants in this study reported that they really wanted to be successful in school, but that they had internalized such messages, and ultimately weakened their motivation for school success.

In all of the previously mentioned challenges, which arose from their symptoms and the reaction of the environment to symptomatic behaviours, the boys needed strong psychosocial support: appreciation of

4 Svi dječaci svoje pomoćnike u nastavi nazivaju *asistentom* ili *asistenticom* pa će se oba pojma naizmjenice koristiti u tekstu, posebice ako se referira na dječakovu izjavu u kojoj koristi taj pojam.

su u nižim razredima razredne nastave važan je odnos s učiteljicom koja je *dobra, pomaže* kad im je teško, *brine se* i nagrađuje. Najviše cijene pomoć i podršku koju dobivaju tijekom nastave ili pisanja testova. Kad govori da mu učiteljica *puno oprašta*, ponovno potvrđuje da njegovo ponašanje često izlazi iz okvira socijalno prihvatljivog te svoje uvjerenje da ovisi o tuđem razumijevanju i oprost.

Kakva ti je učiteljica?

*Jako dobra. Jako mi puno oprašta. Jako se puno brine za mene... (D13/9)*

A kako bi bilo da ti ne pomaže?

*Iskočio bi kroz prozor. Bilo bi to teško. (D5/10)*

Djeca u nižim razredima uglavnom su orijentirana na učiteljicu razredne nastave, dok se dječaci u petom razredu (D10/11, D11/11) obraćaju za pomoć pojedinim predmetnim nastavnicima, ovisno o predmetu koji im je zahtjevniji: *Profesorica iz engleskog mi pokaže što trebam učiti i što će biti u testu. A iz hrvatskog da mi olakša testove (D11/11)*. Uz prethodno naveden primjer tek dvojica dječaka prepoznaju da se s njima primjenjuje individualizirani pristup, a samo jedan to povezuje s ADHD-om (npr. *Nama dvojici se zaokružuju zadaci zato što imamo ADHD; D9/10*). Dječaci spominju situacije u kojima učiteljica daje jasne, individualne upute ili dodatno objašnjava zadatak, priprema ih za testove ili *olakšava* testove, što su sve stavke individualiziranog obrazovnog plana. Ipak, najveću vrijednost polažu na njihov odnos koji se temelji na brižnosti, razumijevanju i senzibiliziranosti. Dječaci koji imaju topao i prihvaćajući odnos sa svojom učiteljicom, opisuju svoje iskustvo u školi ugodnijim i rjeđe spominju teškoće pri praćenju nastave i svladavanju gradiva. To ne začuđuje s obzirom na to da su i drugi autori zaključili da djeci s teškoćama učenja i ponašanja sviđaju nastavnici koji su razumjeli da djetetova nemogućnost potpunom udovoljavanju zahtjevima škole, kao što je održavanje pozornost u razredu, organizacija svojeg školskog pribora i ponašanja te završavanje zadataka, uglavnom nije bila namjerna (Elik i sur., 2010). Dodatno, ukoliko je učenikov stav i odnos s nastavnikom pozitivan te ukoliko učenik doživljava osobine i

themselves as a person, sensibility to their neurodiversity, and practical support in learning the curricula. In cases where support was available, the boys reported that such support came mostly from adults, teachers and teaching assistants. The importance of daily help and support that children and adolescents with ADHD receive from significant others is highlighted by Ringer (2020) in his meta-analysis. Similarly, Schei et al. (2016) identified a number of protective factors that can alleviate emotional and behavioural difficulties and increase the quality of life of adolescents with ADHD, such as individual competencies, family cohesion, and social support. Alongside peer support, competent adult support is especially important for achieving a sense of acceptance in the school environment for neurodiverse children. The boys in the present study perceived the teachers and teaching assistants (if they had one) as the most important sources of support in school. For boys in elementary school, although they struggled with staying focused in class and learning, their relationship with a teacher who is “*kind*”, “*helps*” when they are having a hard time, “*cares*” and “*rewards*” was very important. They valued the help and support they received during class or when completing tests. In the following quote, when this boy said that his teacher was forgiving, he reaffirmed that his behaviour often goes beyond that which is socially acceptable and that he depended on other people’s understanding and forgiveness.

“What is your teacher like?

*Very kind. She lets many things go. She cares a lot about me... (D13/9)*

“And what would happen if she didn’t help you?

*I would jump out the window. It would be difficult.” (D5/10/10)*

Children in the lower grades were mostly oriented towards their primary school teacher, while the boys in the fifth grade (D10/11, D11/11) turned to individual subject teachers for help, depending on the subject that was more demanding for them: “*The English teacher shows me what I need to learn and what will be on the test. And the Croatian teacher makes my tests easier*” (D11/11). Altogether, only two boys recognised that an individualised approach was applied to them and only one associated this support with ADHD (e.g., “*the two of us only do selected tasks because we have ADHD*”; D9/10). The boys described situations in which the teacher gave clear,

stručnost nastavnika kvalitetnima, učenik će biti intrinzično motiviran za sudjelovanje u nastavi, a ta povezanost je dvosmjerna (Bratanić i Marišić, 2005). Dvorski i suradnici (2018) ističu socijalnu prihvaćenost kao značajan zaštitni čimbenik u postizanju pozitivnih obrazovnih ishoda adolescenata s ADHD-om (mjereno u školskim ocjenama koje su bile više za cijeli bod), posebice za one dominantno nepažljivog tipa. Mastoras i suradnici (2018) u svojem istraživanju s djecom s ADHD-om u dobi od 8 do 11 godina, potvrđuju značajnu povezanost između socijalne podrške i svih mjera samopoimanja (uključujući osjećaj vlastite vrijednosti, otpornost i specifičan doživljaj školske kompetentnosti i socijalne prihvaćenosti).

Sedmero dječaka imalo je u vrijeme prikupljanja podataka osiguranu podršku **pomoćnice u nastavi** (sve su ženskog spola). Dječaci posebno naglašavaju da im asistentica pomaže: *oko zadaće, u nevolji* (D2/8); *U rješavanju stvari. Ako nešto ja ne znam pa mi pomogne* (D9/10) i to mu *puno znači* (D1/10). U sljedećem primjeru dječak opisuje odnos sa svojim pomoćnicom u nastavi. Činjenica da ju naziva *moja asistentica* govori o njegovu razumijevanju kako je ona dodijeljena samo njemu. Osim što mu pomaže u školskim zadacima, dječak govori da se s njome najviše druži, odnosno da bi se želio *samo s njome* družiti. Može se pretpostaviti da ga ona upućuje na druženje s vršnjacima u razredu (kad kaže: *Ali ona se ne želi sa mnom više družiti*), međutim kako je njemu socijalizacija s vršnjacima teška, u njoj nalazi jedinu osobu u razredu koja mu je sklona, koja mu pomaže i s kojom se osjeća sigurno. Ova usmjerenost na jedinu osobu u razredu koja ga prihvaća, a pri tomu je i odrasla osoba, ilustrira izazove u razrednoj socijalizaciji za ovo dijete.

*Jako je dobra prema meni. Pomaže mi u nevolji.*

Koliko ti to znači?

*Puno. Puno mi to znači. (D2/8)*

U istraživačkim se bazama ne nailazi na istraživanja iskustava, stavova ili doživljaja učenika o **pomoćnicima u nastavi**. Istraživanja su rijetka i bave se uglavnom percepcijom nastavnika, roditelja ili samih pomoćnika (npr. Dasović, 2016; Romstein i Velki, 2017; Čurić, 2018; Jeđud, 2019).

individual instructions or further explained the task, prepared them for tests, or “*makes tests easier*”, all directives from an individualised educational plan. The most important aspect of their relationship with the teacher was the caring, understanding, and sensibility shown to the boys. Boys who had a warm and accepting relationship with their teacher described their experience at school as being more pleasant and did not talk a lot about difficulties in following classes and mastering curricula. This is not surprising given that previous studies have concluded that children with learning and behavioural difficulties prefer teachers who understand that a child’s inability to fully meet school requirements, such as maintaining attention in class, organising their school supplies and behaviours, and completing tasks, is generally not intentional (Elik et al., 2010). Additionally, if the attitudes of the student towards the relationship with the teacher is positive and if the student perceives the characteristics and expertise of the teacher to be of high quality, the student will be intrinsically motivated to participate in class, making it a two-way connection (Bratanić and Marišić, 2005). Dvorski and colleagues (2018) highlighted social acceptance as a significant protective factor in achieving positive educational outcomes among adolescents with ADHD (as measured by school grades that were higher by a full point), especially for those with predominantly inattentive type ADHD. In another study involving children with ADHD aged 8-11 years, Mastoras and colleagues (2018) reported a significant association between social support and self-perception (including self-esteem, resilience, as well as the specific experience of school competence and social acceptance).

In the present study, at the time of data collection, seven boys had the support of a teaching assistant. These boys emphasised the ways in which the assistant offered support: “*with the task, when I’m in trouble*” (D2/8); “*In dealing with things. If I don’t know something, she helps me*” (D9/10) and that this “*means a lot*” (D1/10). In the following example, the boy described his relationship with his teaching assistant: the fact that he called her “*my assistant*” reflects his understanding that she was assigned only to him. In addition to helping him with school assignments, the boy said that he socialised most often with her, that is, that he “*would only like to hang out with her*”. While it might be assumed that the assistant directs him to socialise with peers in

Pomoćnica u nastavi u pričama dječaka ima manje istaknutu ulogu od učiteljice; dječaci ne naglašavaju samoinicijativno taj oblik podrške te se stječe dojam da je ta pomoć suptilnija, nenametljiva (nevidljiva?) ili da ne žele isticati kako su oni jedini u razredu koji dobivaju dodatnu pomoć. Međutim na izravno pitanje da opišu svoj odnos s pomoćnicom, svi koji imaju to iskustvo govore u afirmativnim terminima (*dobra* (D1/10, D2/8, D3/8), *brizna* (D1/10), *izvršna* (D2/8)).

Dječaci koji imaju iskustvo suradnje s pomoćnicom u nastavi otvaraju pitanje dovoljnog broja sati stručne podrške koje imaju na raspolaganju te izmjenu pomoćnika iz godine u godinu, pri čemu tek uspostave odnos i onda odlaze. Nestabilnost i nedosljednost podrške stavlja ih u situaciju opetovane adaptacije koja im troši energiju namijenjenu obrazovnim opterećenjima. Sljedeći dječak govori o situaciji u kojoj se svake godine pomoćnici u nastavi mijenjaju. Dijete uspije uspostaviti odnos s pomoćnicom tijekom jedne školske godine i već iduće godine ponovno prolazi proces prilagodbe na novu osobu. Stoga ovaj dječak govori kako bi rado da mu se, kad već mora mijenjati pomoćnika, ponovno vrati pomoćnik kojeg već otprije poznaje (*On je već bio asistent prije, D3/8*). Jednako tako dječaci progovaraju i o tomu kako pomoćnica u nastavi nije prisutna na svakom satu koliko je njemu potrebno. Govori kako mu je važno da ga netko prati dok uči, odnosno da mu razjasni gradivo ili zadatak koje ne razumije (*Kad nešto ne znam uvijek mi objasni; D14/9*). Međutim više puta naglašava kako *ona ne dođe svaki put* kad je njemu potrebno. Pitanja dostupnosti i opsega podrške koju bi trebali pružati pomoćnici u nastavi izlaze iz okvira ovog teksta, no imajući u vidu buduća istraživanja, nužno je uvažiti iskustvo djece kao korisnika te usluge i voditi se njihovim potrebama, preusmjeravajući organizacijske, financijske, socijalno-političke i druge resurse u službu djece.

### Što bi dječaci s ADHD-om željeli promijeniti u svojoj školskoj svakodnevici

Dječaci su imali različite ideje o promjenama koje bi voljeli vidjeti u školi. Najviše se dječaka izjasnilo kako bi voljeli da se ukine doma-

the class (when he says, “*But she doesn’t want to hang out with me anymore*”), it seems that, as a result of the challenges he experiences in socialising with peers, the assistant is the only person who he considers as friendly and ready to help and with whom he feels safe. This focus on a single person, and an adult in particular, as a trusted person who accepts him illustrates this child’s difficulties in socialisation within the class.

“*She is very good to me. She helps me when I am in trouble.*”

How much does that mean to you?

*A lot. It means a lot to me.*” (D2/8)

Very few studies have examined the experiences of children, as well as their attitudes or perceptions of teaching assistants. Such research is rare and deals mainly with the perceptions of other teachers, parents, or the assistants themselves (e.g., Dasović, 2016; Romstein and Velki, 2017; Ćurić, 2018; Jeđud, 2019). In the boys’ narratives, the teaching assistant has a less prominent role than the teacher; the boys do not initiate or emphasise this form of support and one gets the impression that this form of support is more subtle and unobtrusive (invisible?), or that they do not want to emphasise that they are the only ones in the class who receive additional help. However, when asked directly to describe their relationship with an assistant, children who have had such an experience speak in affirmative terms (“*kind*” (D1/10, D2/8, D3/8), “*caring*” (D1/10), “*excellent*” (D2/8)).

Those receiving assistance also raise questions about the number of hours of professional support they receive and being assigned to new assistants every year. The instability and inconsistency of support places them in a situation of repeated adaptation that consumes energy, otherwise intended for educational workloads. Another boy talked about the annual replacement of teaching assistants where, after managing to establish a relationship with an assistant over the school year, he had to repeat this process and adjust to another new person the following year. This boy expressed a wish that he would like to be assigned to his former assistant for the next few years, because he already knew him (“*He was already an assistant before*”, D3/8). The boys also talked about how the teaching assistant was not present in every class in which they needed support. One boy reported that it was important that someone supported him

ća zadaća: *Da ne moram pisati zadaću* (D6/9); *Zadaće. Da se ne pišu* (D10/11); *Da se općenito manje piše u školi* (D11/11) ili da škola kao takva uopće na postoj, nestane, *sruši se* (D5/10, D10/11). Osim "nestanka škole" više je dječaka poželjelo da ne moraju više učiti, *da sve znaju na svijetu* (D7/9), da postoji *kaciga koja se stavi na glavu* i ulije znanje ili *vila* (D5/10) koja bi čarolijom ili čarobnim štapićem (D9/10) učinila da sve znaju ili da riješi školske zadatke umjesto njih. Ove želje ukazuju na veliku opterećenost školom i želju da se taj teret smanji nekom (čudesnom) silom izvan njih samih (čarolijom, ali i odlukom učiteljice: *Da nam učiteljica dopusti da više ne idemo u školu.*; D3/8), što bi jednim potezom, bez posebnog truda s njihove strane učinilo školu nepotrebnom ili barem manje napornom. Učiteljica se ovdje svrstava u rang moćnih bića koja mogu odlučiti da djeca ne idu u školu (jednako kao što to mogu vile svojom čarolijom).

*Da nemamo zadaće, da nemamo knjige i da stalno idemo na izlete. Ili da se jednostavno škola uruši i više ne postoji. Ili da staviš nekakvu kacigu, naučiš sve što trebaš u tri sekunde i gotov si. I da ti ostane u pamćenju zauvijek.* (D5/10)

Sljedeći dječak kroz svoje želje ukazuje i na druga područja koja mu predstavljaju teškoću i koja bi volio čarolijom promijeniti, kao što su: orijentiranost u vremenu (mentalni sat), kako prešutjeti kad je potrebno (ili kako ne davati impulzivne, nepromišljene odgovore, prepoznati u kojoj socijalnoj situaciji je bolje zadržati misao za sebe) ili bolje razumjeti matematičke zadatke.

*Što bi još u školi promijenio?*

*Da je nema (škole)... da sam pametan. Da sve znam na svijetu. Da bez sata na ruci točno znam koliko je sati. Da kad me netko nešto pita da mu ja kažem – da to je istina. Ili da mu prešutim. Mislim znam ja puno toga, ali nešto i ne znam. Na primjer decimale. To ne razumijem.* (D7/9)

Bolje socijalne odnose i ugodniju školsku klimu poželio je i sljedeći dječak koji bi volio da škola postane ugodnije i pravednije mjesto.

*Želio bi da svi budu sretni, da učimo da nikom ne bude ništa teško. Da sve u školi šta nije baš*

while he learns, i.e., to clarify content or a task that he does not understand ("*When I don't know something, she always explains it to me*"; D14/9). However, he repeatedly emphasised that she was not available to him every time he needed her. While issues of availability and the extent of support that teaching assistants should provide go beyond the scope of this manuscript, the experience of children as users of this service should certainly be considered in the future and be used to guide its' implementation and redirect organisational, financial, socio-political, and other resources to better serve the needs of these children.

### **What would boys with ADHD like to change in their school life?**

The boys had different ideas about the changes they would like to see at school. A few ideas that were most consistently declared were that they would like homework to be abolished: "*that I don't have to do homework*" (D6/9), "*Homework. Not to do it.*" (D10/11), to "*write less*" in school in general (D11/11) or even that the school as such does not exist at all, "*disappears, collapses*" (D5/10/10, D10/11). Apart from the "*school disappearing*", several boys wished that they no longer had to study, that they "*knew everything in the world*" (D7/9), that "*there was a helmet that could be put on his head that poured knowledge*" (D5/10/10) or "*a fairy who would use magic or a magic wand*" (D9/10) so that they knew everything or would solve school assignments for them. These desires indicate the significant burden of school and a wish to reduce this burden by some (miraculous) force beyond themselves (in some cases using magic, but also in others via the teacher's decision: "*Yes, for the teacher to allow us not to go to school anymore*"; D3/8). In all cases, these solutions would, without any effort on the boys' part, make school unnecessary or at least less strenuous. In this example, the teacher was positioned as a powerful being who can decide whether children should go to school or not (just as fairies might do it by using magic).

*"(I wish) that we didn't have homework, that we didn't have books and that we went on school trips all the time. Or that the school simply collapses and no longer exists. Or that you can put on some kind of helmet, learn everything you need in three seconds and you're done. And that it stays in your memory forever."* (D5/10/10)

*dobro, lijepo, pravedno – da sve to maknem i stavim da sve to bude obrnuto – da bude lijepo, dobro i pravedno. To bi mi bilo jako lijepo.* (D13/9)

Osim nastavnog rasterećenja, dječaci priželjkuju poboljšanje uvjeta u okolini koji im otežavaju uključivanje u različite aktivnosti, kao što je održavanje pozornosti na školskom satu. Prvenstveno im smetaju različiti distraktori, kao što je buka djece ili *vikanje* učiteljice u razredu, kad je svega *previše, natrpano*, ali i mikroklimatski uvjeti u učionici (*prevruće, nema zraka*). Dječaci predlažu i promjene u prostoru učenja te u načinu poučavanja koje bi po njihovom mišljenju dovele do ugodnijeg iskustva školovanja: više terenske nastave (D10/11), učenje kroz igru i zabavu (D11/11), kasniji početak nastave (D12/9), korištenje tehnologije (D10/11) i ugodniji školski prostor (D12/9, D14/9). Nešto stariji školarci s ADHD-om u istraživanju Wiener i Daniels (2016) na sličan način nabrajaju ideje koje bi po njihovom mišljenju olakšali školovanje, primjerice: smanjenje distrakcija u učionici (buka, vizualni distraktori), manji razredni odjeli, jasno naznačene i istaknute važne upute, njima primjerenije metode poučavanja (aktivno, praktično, zabavno, uključujuće, više prilike za raspravu), više vizualnih pomagala i tehnologije, učenje kroz igru, korištenje edukativnih videomaterijala i terenske nastave.

Obuhvatno gledajući, dječaci priželjkuju svijet koji bi bio više po njihovoj mjeri; više naklonjen njihovim interesima, potrebama i načinu funkcioniranja, pravedniji i uključiv, a manje naporan, kontrolirajući i ugrožavajući. Iz ovih rezultata saznajemo da je škola važna za osjećaj dobrobiti ovih dječaka, u njoj traže prihvaćenost te učenje koje im je manje naporno, ali koje hrani njihovu znatiželju i tako potiče na sudjelovanje.

### Ograničenja istraživanja

Ograničenja ovog istraživanja ogledaju se u samoselekciji sudionika po principu dobrovoljnosti sudjelovanja, što proizlazi iz odabrane kvalitativne istraživačke metodologije te kriterija za odabir sudionika. Iako ne možemo govoriti o generalizaciji podataka za populaciju (što ova metoda ni ne nudi), zbog broja uključenih sudionika, principa

Another boy identified other areas that were difficult for him and that he would like to magically change, such as time orientation (mental clock), how to remain silent when necessary (or how not to give impulsive, reckless answers, recognise in which social situations it is better to keep one's thoughts to oneself), or to better understand mathematical tasks.

“What else would you change at school?”

*That there is no (school)... that I am smart. To know everything in the world. That without a watch on my hand I know exactly what time it is. Yes, and when someone asks me something, I tell him - and that it is true. Or I keep quiet about it. I mean, I know a lot, but I don't know some things. For example, decimals. I don't understand them.*” (D7/9)

Better social relationships and a more pleasant school climate were also desired by another boy who would like school to become a more pleasant and socially just place.

*“I would like everyone to be happy, that learning or anything is not difficult for anyone. That everything in school that is not very good, nice, fair - to remove it all, and put it all in reverse - to be nice, good and fair. That would be very nice to me.”* (D13/9)

In addition to relief from learning, the boys expressed a wish to improve the conditions in the environment that made it difficult for them to engage in various activities, such as maintaining attention in school. They mentioned that they were primarily bothered by various distractors, such as the noise that other children made or the teacher “*raising her voice*” in the classroom, when there was “*too much of everything*”, when it was “*too crowded*”, and the microclimatic conditions in the classroom (“*too hot, no air*”). The boys also suggested changes to the classroom design and teaching methods that, in their opinion, would lead to a more pleasant school experience: “*more field trips*” (D10/11), “*learning through play and fun*” (D11/11), “*starting classes later*” (D12/9), “*use of technology*” (D10/11), and a “*more comfortable school space*” (D12/9, D14/9). Wiener and Daniels (2016) showed that children with ADHD who were slightly older than those in the present study identified similar ideas that they believed would facilitate a better school experience, for example, reduction of classroom distractions (noise, visual distractors), smaller classrooms, clearly indicated and

saturacije i bogatstva prikupljenih informacija ipak su dobiveni relevantni podaci.

Tijekom istraživanja postavilo se pitanje komorbiditeta. Iako je ADHD kao osnovna dijagnoza bio kriterij odabira sudionika, u pojedinim razgovorima s roditeljima i kroz susrete s djecom javljale su se teme pridodanih razvojnih izazova s kojim se dijete suočava. Uglavnom je bila riječ o nedijagnosticiranim komorbiditetima ili su roditelji tek izražavali sumnju u dodatne teškoće. Primjerice, moguće je da su pojedini dječaci uz ADHD imali i: disleksiju, diskalkuliju, blaže smetnje senzoričke integracije, tikove, neka ponašanja iz spektra autizma i darovitost.

Fenomenološki, idiografski pristup traži značenja te osobne interpretacije doživljenih iskustava. Djeca zbog svojih razvojnih karakteristika, a zatim i osobitosti njihove neurorazličitosti ponekad nisu bila u stanju za takav vid introspekcije. Stoga valja imati na umu razvojne osobine djeteta uključenog u istraživanje te prilagoditi pristup i očekivanja u skladu s djetetovim najboljim mogućnostima. U konačnici većina susreta s djecom događala se u njihovim školama, stoga je opravdano postaviti pitanje koliko je kontekst u kojem su se nalazili sputavao dječake u slobodnoj komunikaciji svojeg mišljenja.

## ZAKLJUČAK

U skladu s ciljevima istraživanja, kroz prikaz razgovora s četrnaestero osnovnoškolskih dječaka s ADHD-om prikazano je doživljeno iskustvo svakodnevnog života vezanog uz njihovo školovanje. Istraživanje je pokazalo da se dječaci suočavaju s različitim izazovima tijekom školovanja te da to područje njihova života značajno oblikuje njihova životna iskustva i doživljaje. Teškoće dječaka koje proizlaze iz ADHD-a najviše dolaze do izražaja u aktivnostima koje od njih zahtijevaju dobru organiziranost, ustrajnost, fleksibilnost pažnje i radno pamćenje, što je najizraženije u aktivnostima vezanim uz školovanje. U školskim aktivnostima dječaci se suočavaju s teškoćama u praćenju i razumijevanju uputa, čitanju, brojanju, računanju, pisanju i učenju, ali i s organizacijom svojih aktivnosti i brigom za svoje stvari (npr. zaboravljanje školskog pribora). Pisanje doma-

highlighted important instructions, more appropriate teaching methods (active, practical, fun, and inclusive methods with more opportunities for discussion), more visual aids and technologies, learning through play, use of educational videos, and field trips.

Overall, the boys wished for a world that is more adapted to them, more tailored to their interests, needs and ways of functioning, that is fair and more inclusive, and less strenuous, controlling, and threatening. Based on these results, we have learnt that school is important for the well-being of these boys provided that they are accepted by their peers and teachers and learning is made less strenuous, since a positive school experience can feed their curiosity and then encourage participation.

## Research limitations

The limitations of this research are reflected in the self-selection of participants according to the principle of voluntary participation, as a result of the qualitative research methodology and the criteria used for selecting the participants. Although generalisation of the data to a larger population cannot be considered (nor is it possible using this method), the number of participants involved, the principle of saturation, and the wealth of information collected did enable the collection of relevant data.

The effects of comorbidities were brought into question during this study. Although ADHD as a basic diagnosis was a criterion for selecting participants, the added developmental challenges faced by the children emerged in some conversations with parents and through meetings with the children. In most cases, these were undiagnosed comorbidities or instances in which parents were expressing their suspicion of additional difficulties. For example, it is possible that some of the boys experience dyslexia, dyscalculia, mild sensory integration disorders, tics, behaviours from the autism spectrum, and giftedness, in addition to ADHD.

The phenomenological, idiographic approach explores the meaning of narrated experiences through personal interpretations. Sometimes, the participants in this study were unable to perform this type of introspection due to their developmental characteristics and the peculiarities of their neurodiversity. Therefore, the developmental character-



ćih zadaća predstavlja im poseban izazov i svi dječaci ističu želju ukidanja te obveze. Dječaci imaju iskustvo slabijeg uspjeha u školskim aktivnostima u odnosu na vršnjake te usvajaju vjerovanje da su nedovoljno kognitivno sposobni. Imaju osjećaj manjka kontrole nad svojim ponašanjem, govore da se tako ne ponašaju *namjerno*, a pritom se osjećaju zbunjeno, smeteno, nedoraslo zadatku, zabrinuto, dezorijentirano, *ugroženo* te frustrirano jer smatraju da im nitko ne vjeruje. Na konotativnoj razini otkriva se njihova nezrelost, naivnost, ranjivost i preplavljenost koje proizlaze iz osjećaja manjka kontrole nad svojim životom, svojim postupcima i reakcijama okoline. U tim situacijama oni ne nalaze snagu za aktivno suočavanje s tim izazovima, žele odustati, nestati, izbjеći napornu svakodnevnicu.

Dječaci prepoznaju podršku koju u školi dobivaju od učiteljice i pomoćnice u nastavi. U kontekstu te pomoći najvažniji im je topao i podržavajući odnos i prihvaćanje, a tek na sljedećem mjestu praktična pomoć pri svladavanju gradiva ili obveza. U smislu participativnosti djece u oblikovanju obrazovnih politika i usluga i ovo istraživanje potvrđuje da djeca prepoznaju i razumiju svoje potrebe te znaju jasno identificirati područja potrebne podrške. Primjerice dječaci sami prepoznaju i opisuju različite oblike podrške koji bi njima pomogli u lakšem i uspješnijem svladavanju obrazovnih zahtjeva kao što su: individualna pomoć druge odrasle osobe, smanjivanje količine zadataka u pismenom testu znanja, jasne upute za rad te uklanjanje ili smanjivanje distraktora iz okoline.

Zaključno, etiketiranje od strane odraslih uz internalizaciju tih poruka te nesrazmjer između djetetovih potencijala i školske uspješnosti narušavaju djetetovo samopoimanje te osjećaj samopouzdanja. Važno je istaknuti da dječaci u ovom istraživanju ne znaju da je ADHD razlog njihove neurorazličitosti, što otvara pitanje razumijevanja vlastitog ponašanja, identiteta i samozastupanja temeljenog na informiranosti. Rezultati ovog istraživanja upozoravaju da su djeca s ADHD-om u posebnoj psihosocijalnoj riziku te da se njihova iskustva moraju uvažiti kako bi imali jednake šanse za ostvarenje školskog uspjeha, ali i razvojno primjeren osobni i socijalni razvoj.

istics of the children involved in such studies must be kept in mind, and the approach and expectations should be adjusted in accordance with the child's abilities. Finally, since most interviews with the children took place in their schools, it is reasonable to pose the question as to the degree to which the context in which they found themselves constrained the boys in communicating their opinions freely.

## CONCLUSION

Consistent with the objectives of this study, we presented the everyday school experiences of 14 elementary school-aged boys with ADHD. Our findings show that these boys face different challenges in school and that this area of their lives significantly shapes all their other life experiences and perceptions. The difficulties associated with ADHD are most pronounced in activities that require good organisation skills, perseverance, flexible attention, and working memory; unfortunately, these are all competencies required for school activities. In school, these boys faced challenges in following and understanding instructions, reading, counting, arithmetic, writing, and learning, but also in organisation and taking care of their belongings (i.e., forgetting school supplies). Doing homework was a special challenge and the boys emphasised the desire to abolish this obligation. They experienced less success with school-related activities than their peers, and adopt the belief that they were not cognitively capable of achieving success at school. They lacked a sense of control over their behaviour, and reported that they did not behave in a certain way "*intentionally*", and at the same time felt confused, muddled, out of order, worried, disoriented, threatened, and frustrated because they think that no one trusts them. Their immaturity, naivety, vulnerability and sense of being overwhelmed were revealed as a result of a sense of a lack of control over their lives, their actions, and the reactions of the environment. In these situations, they were unable to find the strength to actively face these challenges, and wanted to give up, disappear, or avoid their strenuous everyday life.

The boys recognised the support they received at school from the teachers and teaching assistants. All things considered, the most important aspect of this support, from the boys' perspectives, was a

## **Zahvala**

Iskreno zahvaljujem svim sudionicima ovog istraživanja, dječacima i njihovim obiteljima na povjerenju te školama koje su pružile organizacijsku podršku provedbi ovog istraživanja i tako omogućile da se čuje glas djece s ADHD-om.

warm, encouraging attitude and acceptance from others. This was more important than practical help in managing the school curriculum or responsibilities. In terms of their participation in shaping educational policies and services, this study confirms that children recognise and understand their needs and know how to clearly identify areas of support that will improve their daily life. For example, the boys identified and describe different forms of support that would help them more readily and successfully master educational requirements, such as individual help from another adult, reducing the number of tasks in a written test, clear work instructions, and removing or reducing distractors from the school environment.

In conclusion, the negative labelling by adults, as well as the internalisation of these messages/labels can cause a discrepancy between the child's potential and school performance, thus impairing the child's self-perception and self-confidence. It is important to point out that the boys who participated in this study did not know that ADHD was the reason for their neurodiversity, which questions their understanding of their own behaviour, their identity, and their readiness for informed self-advocacy. The results of this study raise a serious concern that children with ADHD are at significant psycho-social risk and that their experiences must be considered in order to enable equal chances for school success, but also for developmentally appropriate personal and social development.

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