



ΔΗΜΟΚΡΙΤΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΘΡΑΚΗΣ
ΣΧΟΛΗ ΚΛΑΣΙΚΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΣΤΙΚΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ
ΤΜΗΜΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗΣ ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΑΣ
σε συνεργασία με το
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ΣΤΑΔΙΟΔΡΟΜΙΑ ΥΨΗΛΑ ΛΕΙΤΟΥΡΓΙΚΑ ΑΤΟΜΩΝ ΣΤΟ ΦΑΣΜΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΥΤΙΣΜΟΥ

**HIGH FUNCTIONING AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (HF-ASD) PERSONS'
PROFESSIONAL CAREER**

ΜΕΤΑΠΤΥΧΙΑΚΗ ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ

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Abstract

The present work investigates the issue of the professional career of the HF-ASD adult persons. It more precisely examines the barriers which are encountered by the specific population in the labour market(s) across the globe as well as the strategic ways which provide them with solutions to face and overcome these barriers - and, maybe, further to generalize the newly attained behavior of theirs. The literature review revealed a plethora of - internal and external - career-related obstacles as well as a number of already effectively applied coping strategies within the frame of work support programmes in many continents. The global economy is more than ever now called for action in order to exploit the hidden treasure, the HF-ASD adult individuals, and to maximize the potential of the existing and the future labour force as a whole and the productivity of the labour market.

Περίληψη

Η παρούσα εργασία διερευνά το θέμα της επαγγελματικής σταδιοδρομίας των ενήλικων ατόμων με διάγνωση στο φάσμα του αυτισμού υψηλής λειτουργικότητας. Ακριβέστερα η εν λόγω εργασία εξετάζει τα εμπόδια τα οποία απαντώνται πριν ή κατά την διάρκεια του εργασιακού βίου του συγκεκριμένου πληθυσμού σε παγκόσμιο επίπεδο καθώς και τις στρατηγικές 'οδούς' οι οποίες τους παρέχουν λύσεις, ώστε να αντιμετωπίζουν και να ξεπερνούν τα εμπόδια αυτά - και, ενδεχομένως, περαιτέρω να γενικεύουν την όποια νεοαποκτηθείσα συμπεριφορά τους. Η βιβλιογραφική ανασκόπηση ξετύλιξε και παρουσίασε μια πληθώρα - εσωτερικών και εξωτερικών - εμποδίων σχετιζόμενων με την επαγγελματική σταδιοδρομία αλλά και έναν αριθμό τέτοιων στρατηγικών, οι οποίες έχουν ήδη εφαρμοσθεί αποτελεσματικά στο πλαίσιο των προγραμμάτων υποστήριξης της εργασίας/της απασχόλησης σε πολλές ηπείρους. Η παγκόσμια οικονομία καλείται τη σημερινή εποχή περισσότερο από κάθε άλλη στο παρελθόν να δράσει με σκοπό να αξιοποιήσει τον κρυμμένο θησαυρό, δηλαδή τα άτομα με διάγνωση στο φάσμα του αυτισμού υψηλής λειτουργικότητας τα οποία έχουν πια ενηλικιωθεί, και να μεγιστοποιήσει το δυναμικό του υπάρχοντος και του μελλοντικού εργατικού δυναμικού ως συνόλου καθώς και την παραγωγικότητα στην αγορά εργασίας.

Keyword(s) : ASD, HF-ASD/HFA, barrier, obstacle, occupation, profession, professional career, coping strategy

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(i). HF-ASD persons

[a]. As it is stated in Walker (2012) "... it was useful having someone [teaching the course] with Asperger's because they had personal experience they could draw on..." (p. 4).

[b]. As it is stated in Walker (2012) :

I think it's always going to be quite hard to ask for adaptations because you don't want other people to be thinking you're strange, or being too demanding. But I think if you can help them understand that small changes could help you, then that's good. (p. 4)

[c]. As it is stated by Wittig Karl, an electronic engineer, who is in retirement now (as cited in autism speaks, 2024) :

At 44 years old, I would not have been an easy diagnosis except for the fact that as a child, my mother had kept a diary of my development. And there was evidence of all these autistic traits, like how I lined up my toys in a row starting at age 2.5 or how I would persevere on my special interests. There could be very little doubt then. After over 10 years of suspecting, I had finally nailed it.

[d]. As it is stated in Baldwin et al. (2014) 'Working with adults on the spectrum is terrific. For once I feel valued and am helping to make a difference.' (p. 2448).

[e]. As it is stated in Baldwin et al. (2014) 'Being able to express myself through my strengths.' (p. 2448).

[f]. As it is stated in Baldwin et al. (2014) 'I feel like I am achieving something and am stimulated so I am not depressed.' (p. 2448).

(ii). Professionals providing support to the HF-ASD persons

[i]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'the person with Asperger's might be very direct and the person who's receiving can't receive that direct language.' (p. 8).

[ii]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'to differentiate what's okay to talk to a peer about but not okay to your assistant manager and know that difference' (p. 9).

[iii]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) :

they've been struggling all of their lives trying to understand why they're not functioning... whether it's social whether it's in employment whether it's just managing anxiety or whatever like all the people that they know... they kind of grow up thinking there's something wrong with me (pp. 9–10)

[iv]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'noise and people, you know, printers and all of that, which even just light alone can really affect people.' (p. 10).

[v]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'the majority of our clients, I do believe, have been bullied at some stage.' (p. 10).

[vi]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) :

he had said to me I walked down Patrick Street and I feel like I'm being boxed when it's busy... But if you're hypersensitive to something, a brush to somebody on the street or somebody knocks, you can actually feel like you're being physically hit. (p. 10)

[vii]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) :

there's a huge amount of our clients who are so capable and would be ideal for work and socializing and everything like that. Sometimes people outside that just don't understand them and kind of may not make the effort to understand them (p. 11)

[viii]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'There's not many reasonable adjustments being made for people, especially in interviews' (p. 11).

[vix]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) '... he had very, very difficult experiences because the nurse would come and just pull the arm or, you know, to take it, just not explain the process before it was going to happen.' (p. 11).

[x]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'there are so many positives in our clients! And I learn something from my clients every day because they're great they really are.' (p. 12).

[xi]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'we can't openly take everybody who was diagnosed after 18 because we didn't get funding for them. And I know that sounds awful and it's wrong because it is.' (p. 12).

[xii]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'I know it's considered a disability but there's an awful lot of ability within these people and I think for employers to focus on their abilities and using their perfectionism as a strength' (p. 13).

[xiii]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'really get to know the person... rather than getting to know what the disability is' (p. 13).

[xiv]. As stated in O' Connor (2021) 'you know this should be part of someone's training. This should be part of it' (p. 13).