

**Teachers' and Students' Attitudes Toward
Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):
Educational, Social, Emotional and Behavioral
Aspects with Respect to Religiosity**

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Abstract

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is considered to be one of the common disorders among students at different ages (Heiman, 2009; Kirsch, Doerfler & Truong, 2015; Avisar, 2010). The aim of this study was to examine the connection between religiosity to ADHD- from two main aspects: Differences in attitudes of teachers and students (secular, religious and ultra-orthodox) concerning the performance of a student with ADHD at school, and the perception of students' religious behavior.

Differences between the attitudes of people of different religious levels towards the individual with special needs are known in the research literature. Globman and Lifshitz (2004) reported that the attitudes of teachers in the ultra-orthodox sector towards integrating physically handicapped students were positive. On the other hand, their attitudes towards integration of students with emotional disturbances were negative. Leyzer and Romi (2008) found that students in secular and religious teacher training perceived the existence of more advantages in integration than students in ultra-orthodox teacher training colleges. In addition, teachers and students in orthodox institutions expressed considerably more concern about discipline and behavioral problems in an integrative class than religious and secular teachers and student teachers. Regarding training, both secular and religious students expressed more concern about the lack of adequate training of integration teachers, compared to their ultra-orthodox counterparts. It was also found that the secular students had the most positive attitudes toward integration, followed by religious students, whereas the ultra-orthodox preferred a special education class for students with special needs and opposed their integration into regular classes.

Questionnaires were distributed to 600 subjects: 150 of them teachers in junior high school - 50 teachers of each of the levels of religiousness (secular, religious and ultra-orthodox), and to - 450 students (with various levels of religiousness and disorders as listed below). Each teacher evaluated three of his students: 1. An ordinary student - normally developed (and without ADHD) 2. A student diagnosed with ADHD and treated medically 3. A student diagnosed with ADHD and not treated medically. The research tools included: 1. An assessment questionnaire concerning the student's performance in school (educational, social, emotional and behavioral), based on a questionnaire first

constructed by Arta (1999) and adapted to the particular needs of the present study; and also based on a student behavior assessment questionnaire (Weisbord, 2007). 2. A perception of religious behavior questionnaire, which was built for the purpose of this research, and was responded to by subjects belonging to the religious and ultra-orthodox sectors. Also, the students assessed themselves at the same time the teachers assessed them. In order to examine mediating variables among the teachers, they also responded to three additional questionnaires: a questionnaire that examined the cognitive degree of closedness of the teacher (Israeli, 2002); a questionnaire which assessed attitudes towards the integration of student with ADHD in a regular class (Antonak & Larrivee, 1995); and a demographic questionnaire.

An analysis of the findings reveals significant differences in the teacher's assessment of performance at school in relation to the type of student, his religious level, and partially the interaction between them. The source of the differences in the interaction between the religious and ultra-orthodox student was emotional and behavioral. ADHD students' self-assessment was lower compared to their non-ADHD peers only in the behavioral and learning aspects but not in the social and emotional ones. In addition, it was found that the teachers' assessment of the students was lower than the students' self-assessment on most of the indicators. Religious behavior, according to the religious and ultra-orthodox teachers, significantly differed among non-ADHD students, medicated and non-medicated ADHD students, respectively in descending order. The students themselves also confirmed these findings. It was found that cognitive closure, positions that oppose integration, and background variables among the teachers further explain learning assessment of students' performance. A predictive reciprocal relationship was found between cognitive closure and opposition to integration, as well as to the level of religiosity. Differences were found between closure and attitudes between the religious and the ultra-orthodox teachers.

The main innovative idea resulting from this study is proof of the link between ADHD and religiosity from two points of view:

1. Religious and ultra-orthodox teachers were more opposed than the secular teachers to the integration of pupils diagnosed with ADHD in a regular classroom, each for his own reasons. This position probably has an influence on teacher-student attitudes in class.

2. A student who has been diagnosed as having ADHD behave less religiously than a normal student, among both religious and ultra-orthodox students. Also, medicated ADHD students behave at higher religious standards than untreated ones.

The discussion suggests the possibility that the decline in religious behavior is part of the characteristics of the disorder or alternatively is the result of social rejection from the religious world. The results of this study have implications for major issues in religious education, such as abandonment of religion and youth at risk.