

Abstract

This bachelor thesis focuses on the subjectively perceived impact of diagnosis on the experience of mental illness, with a specific focus on the mixed anxiety and depressive disorder. The aim is to explore whether and how diagnosed individuals experience changes in symptom perception, self-concept, and other psychosocial aspects of mental illness. The theoretical part of the thesis consists of describing the historical development and definition of the diagnosis of the given mental disorder, stages and factors of the diagnostic process, and changes in self after the diagnosis of mental illness. The empirical part of the thesis describes a qualitative study conducted through semi-structured interviews with 5 participants diagnosed with mixed anxiety and depressive disorder, which were subsequently interpreted and analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology. The research aimed to understand the subjectively perceived impact of a mixed anxiety and depressive disorder diagnosis on the experience of mental illness. The analysis results indicate that participants did not perceive experienced symptoms as manifestations of mental illness before the diagnosis. They attempted to manage these unnamed symptoms through various coping mechanisms. After the diagnosis, symptoms were concretized by their naming through diagnosis. With a better understanding and knowledge of experienced symptoms, participants could better distinguish them from normal experiences and predict their course. The certainty arising from these knowledge in most cases was sufficient to replace and improve coping mechanisms used before the diagnosis. In addition to coping replacement, the diagnosis had a positive effect on legitimizing experiences of mental illness and feelings of relief from guilt.