



GREEK SOCCER COACHES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION OF YOUNG ATHLETES WITH DISABILITIES

Georgios Loulesⁱ,
Argyrios Christakis,
Charalampos Krommidas,
Dimitrios Kokaridas,
Evangelos Tzachristos

Department of Physical Education & Sport Science,
University of Thessaly,
Greece

Abstract:

The purpose of the present study was to examine possible differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards the inclusion of young athletes with disabilities due to gender, age group, coaching experience, coaching diploma, and educational background. Thus, 285 Greek soccer coaches (248 males, 37 females), aged 21 to 74 years old (Mage: 41.89 ± 10.16 years) voluntarily participated in the present study. The Greek version of Teacher Integration Attitudes Questionnaire (TIAQ; Sideridis & Chandler, 1997) was delivered to them online. The results showed that more than half of the soccer coaches reported that they do not have the knowledge or that it is not applicable to cope with the instructional needs of children with disabilities such as orthopedic disabilities (62.8%), multiple disabilities (59.4%), and intellectual disability (61.1%). In contrast, more than half of the soccer coaches reported that they have the knowledge to cope with the instructional needs of children with disabilities such as behavioral disorders (67.4%), and learning difficulties (77.2%). No significant differences ($p > .05$) emerged on soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion sub-scales (skills, benefits, acceptance, support) due to gender, age group, coaching experience, coaching diploma, and educational background. It is recommended to soccer coaches, especially those who train young people with disabilities, to expand their knowledge in the field of adapted physical education in order to feel more confident and qualified to train their young athletes.

Keywords: soccer, coach, attitudes, inclusion, athletes, disability

ⁱ Correspondence: email geoloules@gmail.com

1. Introduction

According to the World Health Organization, approximately one billion people in the world suffer from some form of disability, whereas the inclusion of people with disabilities in daily social activities is one of the main goals (WHO, 2011) for children and adolescents in the coming years. The term “*inclusion*” endorses the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) emphasizes the right of all children to benefit from education and refers to education provision to individuals with disabilities within the context of a typical classroom without discrimination (Sherrill, 2004). In addition, inclusion as a term has also been discussed in various settings including employment and work, community and cultural life, recreation, leisure and sports (UN, 2011).

According to Sherrill (2004), the benefits of inclusion into a typical class mainly concern the improvement of sociability and the development of self-confidence in those individuals with disabilities. Nowadays, inclusion term has been widespread in sport settings, yet, participation in typical sport activities is not yet fully deployed, despite substantial efforts. Individuals with disabilities still find it difficult to be physically active, due to the disability itself in addition to the lack of accessibility, available resources, social support and policy framework (Bossink et al., 2017).

To our knowledge, there are several studies in Physical Education settings (PE), that have already examined the views of teachers or PE teachers concerning the inclusion of young students with disabilities in typical classes (e.g., Ambatzidou et al., 2012; Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Bariffe & Pittas, 2021; Doulkeridou et al., 2011; Papadopoulou et al., 2004; Rizzo et al., 1994; Sideridis & Chandler, 1997; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014; Vaporidi et al., 2005). The vast majority of these studies noted that teachers or PE teachers had positive attitudes towards teaching children and adolescents with disabilities and special educational needs in typical classes (e.g., Bariffe & Pittas, 2021; Doulkeridou et al., 2011; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014; Vaporidi et al., 2005). Especially, those teachers who had been actively involved in teaching students with disability had significantly more positive attitudes than their colleagues with little or no such experience (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007).

Al-Zyoudi (2006, p. 55) also proposed that “*teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion are strongly influenced by the nature and severity of the disabling condition presented to them, the length of teaching experience, and training*”. A number of studies have examined possible differences on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion due to personal parameters such as gender, age, teaching experience etc. (e.g., Doulkeridou et al., 2011; Papadopoulou et al., 2004; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014). For example, Tsakiridou and Polyzopoulou (2014) found significant differences on teachers’ attitudes towards inclusion due to gender, age, teaching subject, prior training in the field of special education, level of education (pre-school, primary, secondary), and their educational background. Regarding gender differences, the results seem to be ambiguous. Some studies have found significant differences on attitudes towards inclusion between male and female

teachers (Papadopoulou et al., 2004; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014), while some others not (Doulkeridou et al., 2011).

Despite the large number of studies in the field of education assessing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion, a review of the recent literature revealed a small number of researches regarding youth sports that has examined coaches' attitudes on the integration of children with disabilities in sports clubs (e.g., Beyer et al., 2008; Block & Malloy, 1998; Carrera, 2021; Conatser, 2008; Conatser et al., 2000; Hammond, 2022; Hammond et al., 2014, 2020), with the majority of them focusing on swimming coaches' attitudes towards inclusion. More specifically, Conatser et al. (2000), examining aquatic instructors' attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities, found that they were more favorable towards teaching aquatics to students with mild disabilities than those with severe disabilities. Similarly, Hammond (2022) found that Australian swimming coaches were generally undecided towards individuals with disabilities, but they also stated that they had the will and the ability to train disabled swimmers. A few years earlier, Beyer et al. (2008), having a sample of coaches from different team sports, found that coaches with previous experience working with athletes with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) exhibited more positive attitudes and were most likely to know a child with ADHD due to parental communication. Recently, Carrera (2021) stated that coaches, who are certified in special education, are helpful in the coaching of students with disabilities. In contrast, Block and Malloy (1998) found that coaches were undecided about the inclusion of players with disabilities and rule modifications in a regular softball league.

Regarding soccer, as far as we know, there is only one study that has assessed soccer coaches' attitudes toward the inclusion of young athletes with disabilities (Beyer et al., 2008), but this study had also included coaches from other team sports. Furthermore, there is no study in youth soccer that has explored possible differences in attitudes towards inclusion due to coaches' personal parameters such as gender, age, coaching experience, type of coaching diploma etc. Additionally, there is no other study in Greece that has examined this particular research topic in youth soccer. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to examine possible differences on Greek soccer coaches' attitudes towards the inclusion of young athletes with disabilities due to gender, age group, coaching experience, coaching diploma, and educational background.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Participants

Participants were 285 Greek soccer coaches (248 males, 37 females), aged 21 to 74 years old (*M*_{age}: 41.89 ± 10.16 years) that voluntarily participated in the present study. Based on a median analysis, 148 were ≤ 42 years old, while 136 were ≥ 43 years old (plus one missing case). Their coaching experience was ranged from one to 33 years. Also, based on a median analysis, 143 had less than ten years of experience, while 142 had more than 11 years of coaching experience. As for their coaching diploma, 116 reported that they have a Sport Science degree, while 168 mentioned that they have an UEFA degree (plus

one missing case). Regarding their education, 87 had finished high school, 150 had a bachelor degree, while 48 had a Master or a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree.

2.2 Instruments

2.2.1 Demographics

Soccer coaches responded to several items assessing their gender (male, female), date of birth, age, years of coaching experience, type of coaching diploma (Sport Science degree, UEFA Pro, A, B, C), and educational background (high school, bachelor, Master or PhD degree).

2.2.2 Attitudes towards the inclusion of youth athletes with disability

An adapted version of the Teacher Integration Attitudes Questionnaire (TIAQ; Sideridis & Chandler, 1997) was used to assess soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion of young athletes with disability. This questionnaire consists of 12 items and four sub-scales measuring coaches' skills (e.g., *"I can cope with the instructional needs of children with disabilities"*), benefits (e.g., *"Typical children will benefit from the integration of children with disabilities"*), acceptance (e.g., *"I like having children with disabilities in my soccer team"*), and support (e.g., *"I have adequate instructional materials for coaching children with disabilities"*). Participants responses were given on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (Disagree) to 4 (Agree). They also had the choice to select the response "Not applicable" (0) in each item. Responses on item 8 ("I feel that children with disabilities encounter considerable humiliation from their typical co-athletes in the soccer team") were revised. TIAQ is considered a valid and reliable instrument for assessing attitudes towards the inclusion of you athletes with disability (e.g., Sideridis & Chandler, 1997) and it has already been used in Greek language (e.g., Papadopoulou et al., 2004; Vaporidi et al., 2005).

2.3 Procedure

The study was approved by the Bioethics Committee of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, University of Thessaly, Greece (Date: 09/06/2021; Ref. Number: 1801). Soccer coaches' invitation and recruitment were conducted through personal e-mail. Then, participants gave their consent and completed their demographics and the Greek version (Papadopoulou et al., 2004; Vaporidi et al., 2005) of TIAQ (Sideridis & Chandler, 1997) through an online survey tool in approximately 15 minutes.

2.4 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted with the IBM SPSS Statistics software version 26. Initially, descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and percentage), reliability analysis with Cronbach's alpha (Cronbach, 1951) and correlations were calculated. Then, separate independent samples t-tests were calculated to examine possible differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion sub-scales (skills, benefits, acceptance, support) due to gender (male, female), age group (≤ 42 years old, ≥ 43 years old), coaching experience (≤ 10 years, ≥ 11 years), and coaching diploma (Sport Science degree, UEFA). Finally, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to test possible differences on soccer

coaches' attitudes towards inclusion sub-scales due to their educational background (high school, bachelor degree, and Master or PhD degree). The *p*-value was set at .05.

3. Results

3.1 Descriptive statistics, reliability index and correlation analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, median, and percentage), Cronbach's alpha reliability index, and correlation analysis of the soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion sub-scales are presented in Tables 1. Sub-scales reliabilities were ranged from .81 to .83 except from the acceptance scale which was very low ($\alpha = .28$). Despite this low internal consistency of the acceptance scale, we decided to keep it for further statistical analyses as previous studies have shown acceptable reliability scores (e.g., Sideridis & Chandler, 1997; Vaporidi et al., 2005).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation), Cronbach's alpha reliability index, and correlation analysis of the soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion sub-scales

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	1	2	3	4
1. Skills	2.69	.86	.83	1			
2. Benefits	2.97	1.09	.82	.54**	1		
3. Acceptance	2.58	.72	.28	.50**	.47**	1	
4. Support	1.68	1.02	.81	.22**	-.04	.17**	1

Notes: *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation; α = Cronbach's alpha reliability index; ** *p* < .01.

3.2 Participants' responses and percentage (%) based on the Skills sub-scale

Based on their responses on the skills sub-scale, results showed that more than half of the soccer coaches reported that they do not have the knowledge or that it is not applicable to cope with the instructional needs of children with disabilities such as orthopedic disabilities ($N = 179$; 62.8%), multiple disabilities ($N = 169$; 59.4%) and intellectual disability ($N = 174$; 61.1%). In contrast, more than half of the soccer coaches reported that they have the knowledge to cope with the instructional needs of children with disabilities such as behavioral disorders ($N = 192$; 67.4%), and learning difficulties ($N = 220$; 77.2%).

Table 2: Participants' number and percentage (%) based on their responses on Skills sub-scale

I feel that I have the knowledge to cope with the instructional needs of children with disabilities:	Agree N (%)	Somewhat Agree N (%)	Somewhat Disagree N (%)	Disagree N (%)	N/A N (%)
1. Orthopedic disabilities	37 (13%)	69 (24.2%)	90 (31.6%)	56 (19.6%)	33 (11.6%)
2. Multiple disabilities	28 (9.8%)	88 (30.9%)	82 (28.8%)	64 (22.5%)	23 (8.1%)
3. Intellectual disability	44 (15.4%)	67 (23.5%)	86 (30.2%)	60 (21.1%)	28 (9.8%)
4. Behavioral disorders	86 (30.2%)	106 (37.2%)	56 (19.6%)	28 (9.8%)	9 (3.2%)
5. Learning difficulties	119 (41.8%)	101 (35.4%)	39 (13.7%)	13 (4.6%)	13 (4.6%)

Notes: N = Number of participants; N/A = Not Applicable.

3.3 Gender differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion

Separate independent samples t-tests revealed no significant differences on skills ($t_{283} = .158, p = .874$), benefits ($t_{283} = -.318, p = .751$), acceptance ($t_{283} = .237, p = .813$), and support ($t_{283} = -1.125, p = .262$) between soccer coaches' gender (males versus females). Table 3 presents means and standard deviations of soccer coaches on attitudes towards inclusion based on their age group.

Table 3: Means and standard deviations of soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion based on their gender

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD
Skills	Male	248	2.69	.85
	Female	37	2.67	.88
Benefits	Male	248	2.97	1.12
	Female	37	3.03	.89
Acceptance	Male	248	2.59	.73
	Female	37	2.56	.68
Support	Male	248	1.65	1.03
	Female	37	1.86	.92

Notes: N = Number of participants; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

3.4 Age group differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion

Separate independent samples t-tests revealed no significant differences on skills ($t_{282} = 1.523, p = .129$), benefits ($t_{282} = 1.190, p = .235$), acceptance ($t_{282} = 1.703, p = .090$), and support ($t_{282} = 1.432, p = .153$) between soccer coaches aged less than 42 years old and those aged over 43 years old. Table 4 presents means and standard deviations of soccer coaches on attitudes towards inclusion based on their age group.

Table 4: Means and standard deviations of soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion based on their age group

Variables	Age group	N	M	SD
Skills	≤ 42 years	148	2.76	.83
	≥ 43 years	136	2.61	.88
Benefits	≤ 42 years	148	3.04	1.00
	≥ 43 years	136	2.89	1.18
Acceptance	≤ 42 years	148	2.65	.70
	≥ 43 years	136	2.51	.74
Support	≤ 42 years	148	1.76	.99
	≥ 43 years	136	1.59	1.05

Notes: N = Number of participants; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

3.5 Differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion based on their coaching experience

Separate independent samples t-tests revealed no significant differences on skills ($t_{283} = .416, p = .678$), benefits ($t_{283} = 1.050, p = .316$), acceptance ($t_{283} = 1.708, p = .089$), and support ($t_{283} = 1.244, p = .214$) between soccer coaches with less than 10 years of experience and those with more than 11 years of coaching experience. Table 6 presents means and

standard deviations of soccer coaches on attitudes towards inclusion based on their coaching experience.

Table 6: Means and standard deviations of soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion based on their coaching experience

Variables	Coaching experience	N	M	SD
Skills	≤ 10 years	143	2.71	.84
	≥ 11 years	142	2.67	.87
Benefits	≤ 10 years	143	3.04	.97
	≥ 11 years	142	2.91	1.20
Acceptance	≤ 10 years	143	2.66	.74
	≥ 11 years	142	2.51	.70
Support	≤ 10 years	143	1.76	.98
	≥ 11 years	142	1.61	1.05

Notes: N = Number of participants; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

3.6 Differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion based on their coaching diploma

Separate independent samples t-tests revealed no significant differences on skills ($t_{282} = .436, p = .663$), benefits ($t_{282} = 1.590, p = .113$), acceptance ($t_{282} = -.091, p = .928$), and support ($t_{282} = 1.310, p = .191$) between soccer coaches sport science university degree and those with UEFA degree qualification. Table 7 presents means and standard deviations of soccer coaches on attitudes towards inclusion based on their coaching diploma.

Table 7: Means and standard deviations of soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion based on their coaching diploma

Variables	Coaching diploma	N	M	SD
Skills	Sport Science degree	116	2.72	.87
	UEFA	168	2.67	.85
Benefits	Sport Science degree	116	2.85	1.14
	UEFA	168	3.06	1.06
Acceptance	Sport Science degree	116	2.58	.67
	UEFA	168	2.59	.75
Support	Sport Science degree	116	1.78	.99
	UEFA	168	1.62	1.03

Notes: N = Number of participants; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

3.7 Differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion based on their educational background

Separate one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences on skills ($F_{2,282} = .206, p = .814$), benefits ($F_{2,282} = .264, p = .768$), acceptance ($F_{2,282} = .719, p = .488$), and support ($F_{2,282} = .912, p = .403$) between soccer coaches with a master or PhD degree, those with bachelor degree and those with high school degree. Table 8 presents means and standard deviations of soccer coaches on attitudes towards inclusion based on their educational background.

Table 8: Means and standard deviations of soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion based on their educational background

Variables	Educational background	N	M	SD
Skills	High school degree	87	2.71	.80
	Bachelor degree	150	2.66	.88
	Master of PhD degree	48	2.74	.89
Benefits	High school degree	87	3.01	1.12
	Bachelor degree	150	2.93	1.09
	Master of PhD degree	48	3.04	1.05
Acceptance	High school degree	87	2.66	.77
	Bachelor degree	150	2.54	.73
	Master of PhD degree	48	2.58	.59
Support	High school degree	87	1.77	1.09
	Bachelor degree	150	1.68	.99
	Master of PhD degree	48	1.53	.96

Notes: N = Number of participants; M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

4. Discussion

The present study tried to examine possible differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards the inclusion of young athletes with disabilities due to gender, age group, coaching experience, coaching diploma, and educational background. The findings revealed that more than half of the soccer coaches reported that they do not have the knowledge or that it is not applicable to cope with the instructional needs of children with disabilities such as orthopedic and multiple disabilities, as well as intellectual disability. In contrast, more than half of the soccer coaches reported that they have the knowledge to cope with the instructional needs of children with disabilities such as behavioral disorders and learning difficulties. These results are in line with previous studies suggesting that knowledge towards children with disabilities, training in adapted special education, and previous teaching experience with disabled pupils play a crucial role in teachers or coaches having a more positive attitude towards the inclusion of students or athletes with disabilities (e.g., Al-Zyoudi, 2006; Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Beyer et al., 2008).

Findings also revealed no significant differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion sub-scales (skills, benefits, acceptance, support) due to gender, age group, coaching experience, coaching diploma, and educational background. These results are not in line with the vast majority of previous studies in the field of education suggesting that teachers or PE teachers' attitudes towards inclusion are significantly affected by personal factors such as gender, age, teaching experience, and educational background (e.g., Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007; Papadopoulou et al., 2004; Tsakiridou & Polyzopoulou, 2014). A possible explanation might be the different self-report instruments used in these studies [e.g., "My thinking about inclusion" questionnaire (MTAI; Stoiber et al., 1998) versus TIAQ (Sideridis & Chandler, 1997) used in this study] or the different population targeted in each study (e.g., teachers or PE teachers assessed in previous studies versus soccer coaches as in this case).

Most importantly, as previously mentioned soccer coaches of this study expressed that they have the knowledge to cope with the instructional needs of athletes with mild disabilities (behavioral disorders and learning difficulties) compared to more severe ones, but seem to be equally favorable towards teaching soccer to all students with all forms of disability without exceptions. This finding is in contrast to Conatser et al. (2000) study, examining aquatic instructors' attitudes towards teaching students with disabilities, who found that swimming coaches were more favorable towards teaching aquatics to students with mild disabilities than those with severe disabilities. This is a promising result for soccer coaches, who, despite their lack of knowledge especially concerning more severe forms of disabilities (orthopedic, intellectual and multiple ones) appeared more willing to train and include all participants with disabilities in their sport. Their positive attitude toward inclusion is highlighted by the fact that the benefits factor did not relate to support. In other words, soccer coaches were willing to support young athletes with all kinds of disabilities no matter what the inclusion benefits would be. Thus, it can be said that the very positive attitudes of soccer coaches towards inclusion in general, led to the absence of statistically significant differences in their attitudes based on different demographic characteristics.

To our knowledge, this is the first study exploring possible differences on soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion due to personal parameters. A limitation of the present study was the use of self-report instruments and the cross-sectional design followed. Possibly, more research is needed to arrive at more secure conclusions regarding soccer coaches' attitudes towards inclusion. For example, future researchers might explore the above research hypothesis by using a qualitative approach (interview) or they might assess coaches' attitudes towards inclusion in other team sports. Future studies might also implement a short or long-term intervention program targeting to increase soccer coaches' knowledge towards adapted special education.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study might help researchers to gain a deeper understanding of soccer coaches' attitudes toward including young people with disabilities in their team. In addition, the results of the present study might help educators and policymakers to design and implement educational programs aimed at training coaches on issues related to the inclusion and management of young people with disabilities in their sports clubs. Finally, it is recommended to soccer coaches, especially those who train young people with disabilities, expand their knowledge in the field of adapted physical education in order to feel more confident and qualified to train their young athletes.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors of the present study declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors

Georgios Loules, Ph.D. candidate, is with the Dept. of Physical Education & Sport Science, University of Thessaly, Trikala, Greece, e-mail: geouloules@gmail.com

Argyrios Christakis, Undergraduate student, is with the Dept. of Physical Education & Sport Science, University of Thessaly, Trikala, Greece, e-mail: argyplatamon@gmail.com

Charalampos Krommidas, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, is with the Dept. of Physical Education & Sport Science, University of Thessaly, Trikala, Greece, e-mail: hkrom@pe.uth.gr

Dimitrios Kokaridas, Ph.D., Associate Professor, is with the Dept. of Physical Education & Sport Science, University of Thessaly, Trikala, Greece, e-mail: dkokar@pe.uth.gr

Evangelos Tzachristos, Postgraduate student, is with the Dept. of Physical Education & Sport Science, University of Thessaly, Trikala, Greece, e-mail: btzachrestos@gmail.com

References

- Al-Zyoudi, M. (2006). Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Jordanian schools. *International Journal of Special Education*, 21(2), 55-62.
- Ampatzidou, A., Kokaridas, D., Giannia, N., Paslamouska, M., Patsiaouras, A., & Latini, E. (2012). Perceptions of educators regarding level of knowledge in adapted physical education: a pilot study. *Interscientific Health Care*, 4(1), 25-33.
- Avramidis, E., & Kalyva, E. (2007). The influence of teaching experience and professional development on Greek teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 22(4), 367-389. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856250701649989>
- Bariffe, C., Pittas, E. (2021). Early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices about the inclusion of children with autism in Jamaica: An exploration study. *International Journal of Special Education*, 36(2), 66-77. <https://doi.org/10.52291/ijse.2021.36.19>
- Beyer, R., Flores, M. M., & Vargas-Tonsing, T. M. (2008). Coaches' attitudes towards youth sport participants with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 3(4), 555-563. <https://doi.org/10.1260/174795408787186422>
- Block, M. E., & Malloy, M. (1998). Attitudes on inclusion of a player with disabilities in a regular softball league. *Intellectual disability*, 36(2), 137-144.
- Bossink, L. W., van der Putten, A. A., & Vlaskamp, C. (2017). Understanding low levels of physical activity in people with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review to identify barriers and facilitators. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 68, 95-110.
- Carrera, J. A. (2021). *Coaches' and athletic directors' inclusion practices for high school student-athletes with disabilities*. Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies, 9928. Retrieved from <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/9928> (Accessed October 2022).
- Conatser, P. (2008). International perspective of aquatic instructors' attitudes toward teaching Swimming to children with disabilities. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, 2(3), 256-265.

- Conatser, P., Block, M., & Lepore, M. (2000). Aquatic instructors' attitudes toward teaching students with disabilities. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 17(2), 197-207. <https://doi.org/10.1123/apaq.17.2.197>
- Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16, 297-334. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02310555>
- Doulkeridou, A., Evaggelinou, C., Mouratidou, K., Koidou, E., Panagiotou, A., & Kudlacek, M. (2011). Attitudes of Greek Physical Education teachers towards inclusion of students with disabilities in Physical Education classes. *International Journal of Special Education*, 26(1), 1-11.
- Hammond, A. M. (2022). The relationship between disability and inclusion policy and sports coaches' perceptions of practice. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 14(3), 471-487. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940.2022.2074515>
- Hammond, A. M., Young, J. A., & Konjarski, L. (2014). Attitudes of Australian swimming coaches towards Inclusion of swimmers with an intellectual disability: An exploratory analysis. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 9(6), 1425-1436. <https://doi.org/10.1260/1747-9541.9.6.1425>
- Hammond, A. M., Penney, D., & Jeanes, R. (2020). Sport coaches as policy actors: An investigation of the interpretation and enactment of disability and inclusion policy in swimming in Victoria Australia. *Sport, Education and Society*, 25(5), 570-585. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2019.1628013>
- Papadopoulou, D., Kokaridas, D., Papanikolaou, Z., & Patsiaouras, A. (2004). Attitudes of Greek Physical Education teachers toward inclusion of students with disabilities. *International Journal of Special Education*, 19(2), 104-111.
- Rizzo, T., Davis, W., & Toussaint, R. (1994). Inclusion in regular classes: Breaking from traditional curricula. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 65(1), 24-26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07303084.1994.10606826>
- Sherrill, C. (2004). *Adapted physical activity, recreation and sport: Crossdisciplinary and lifespan (6th Ed)*. Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark.
- United Nations (UN). (2011). *Convention of the rights of the child*, New York, United Nations.
- United Nations (UN). (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. New York: United Nations.
- Sideridis, G., & Chandler, J. (1997). Assessment of teacher attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities: a confirmatory factor analysis. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, 14, 51-64. <https://doi.org/10.1123/apaq.14.1.51>
- Stoiber, K. C., Gettinger, M. & Goetz, D. (1998). Exploring factors influencing parents' and early childhood practitioners' beliefs about inclusion. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 13(1), 107-124. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0885-2006\(99\)80028-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0885-2006(99)80028-3)
- Tsakiridou, H., & Polyzopoulou, K. (2014). Greek teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with special educational needs. *American Journal of Educational Research*, 2(4,) 208-218. <https://doi.org/10.12691/education-2-4-6>

- Vaporidi, I., Kokaridas, D., & Krommidas, C. (2005). Attitudes of Physical Education teachers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in typical classes. *Inquiries in Sport & Physical Education*, 3(1), 40-47.
- World Health Organization (2011). *World Report on Disability*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564182> (Accessed October 2022).

Creative Commons licensing terms

Authors will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Physical Education and Sport Science shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflict of interests, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated on the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).