



## CORRELATION BETWEEN TEACHERS' ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS ABOUT INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND JOB SATISFACTION AND BURNOUT

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### Abstract:

Teachers have been identified as a high-risk group for developing burnout syndrome, particularly those working with SEND pupils, as the responsibilities and emotional demands of the job are particularly increased. The study explored the possible association between teachers' attitudes, perceptions and concerns about the inclusion of SEND pupils and perceived levels of burnout and job satisfaction. In addition, the study examined whether there were factors that predicted teachers' burnout and job satisfaction. The sample of the present study consisted of 163 teachers and for the purposes of the study (a) the Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale Revised (SACIE-R), (b) the Brayfield-Rothe General Index of Job Satisfaction and (c) the Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey (MBI-ES) were used. The results revealed that Greek teachers generally maintain a positive attitude towards the inclusion of SEND students. The highest levels of positive attitudes and lowest levels of concern were found in teachers with specialized studies in Special Education. A significant positive correlation was observed between positive attitudes towards inclusion and job satisfaction, suggesting that teachers who view inclusion in a positive way tend to be more satisfied with their jobs. In addition, teachers who exhibit more worries and negative attitudes tend to experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion, which may lead to burnout. Linear regression analysis identified negative emotions and concerns towards inclusion as significant predictors of emotional exhaustion. Further linear regression analysis identified positive emotions and positive attitudes towards inclusion as significant predictors of personal achievement. Finally, inclusion attitudes appeared to be a significant predictor of depersonalization.

**Keywords:** inclusive education, teachers' attitudes, job satisfaction, teachers' burnout

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## 1. Introduction

Teachers have been identified as a high-risk group for the development of burnout syndrome. In particular, those working with SEND pupils are more likely to experience occupational stress and burnout than their counterparts working in general education classrooms, as the responsibilities and emotional demands of the job are particularly heightened (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019; Brunsting, *et al.*, 2014; Capri & Guler, 2018; Garcia-Arroyo *et al.*, 2019; Jovanović *et al.*, 2019; Yulianti, *et al.*, 2018). Burnout is a key factor in teacher attrition and a dominant predictor of teacher withdrawal from the profession (Brunsting *et al.*, 2014; Brunsting *et al.*, 2014; Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Shen *et al.*, 2015; Williams & Dikes, 2015). The study explored the possible correlation between teachers' attitudes, perceptions and concerns about the inclusion of SEND pupils and perceived levels of burnout and job satisfaction. In addition, it examined whether teachers' demographic and professional profiles influence their attitudes to inclusion, job satisfaction and burnout. Finally, the study investigated whether there are factors that predict teachers' burnout and job satisfaction.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Teachers' Attitudes and Perceptions towards Inclusive Education

Teachers' attitudes and perceptions are key to the successful implementation of inclusive education, as their positive attitudes can enhance the favourable disposition and acceptance of SEND pupils, reducing discrimination and social exclusion (De Boer *et al.*, 2011; Forlin *et al.*, 2011; Mouchritsa *et al.*, 2022). However, teachers' attitudes are shown to be ambiguous (Prisiazniuk, Makoelle, & Zangieva, 2024), as a number of studies reflect positive attitudes towards inclusive education (Garrad *et al.*, 2019; O'Toole & Burke, 2013; Romero-Contreras *et al.*, 2013), other studies show neutral or moderate levels of acceptance (De Boer *et al.*, 2011; Rekaa *et al.*, 2019), while in some other studies negative attitudes and perceptions emerge (Doulkeridou *et al.*, 2011; Jerlinder *et al.*, 2010; Shah *et al.*, 2016; Wong & Chick, 2015). It seems that teachers do not feel prepared or confident enough and find inclusion extremely problematic, if not impossible (Hersman & Hodge, 2010). There is little empirical evidence linking attitudes towards inclusion education with burnout. However, teachers with positive attitudes are more likely to experience job satisfaction and personal fulfilment (Pearson *et al.*, 2015; Vieira *et al.*, 2024), while negative perceptions of inclusive education are likely to result in emotional exhaustion and burnout (Aloe *et al.*, 2014; Kelly & Barnes-Holmes, 2013; Squillaci & Hofmann, 2021; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021) as teachers feel they are taking on additional responsibilities and increased workload.

### 2.2 Teachers' Professional Burnout

Burnout is a prolonged, cumulative response of the human psyche to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors arising from work (Emery & Vandenberg, 2010; Maslach,

Jackson & Schwab, 1996; Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 2001). It is characterized by three components: (a) emotional exhaustion, (b) depersonalization, and (c) reduced sense of accomplishment (Maslach *et al.*, 1996). Emotional exhaustion refers to a state of mental fatigue due to chronic stress, where the teacher experiences a lack of energy and an inability to work. Ongoing emotional exhaustion leads to depersonalization, which refers to a loss of interest in students and an indifferent, insensitive, detached and/or cynical attitude towards them. Finally, a sense of low personal achievement is a situation where teachers feel unable to fulfil their tasks, experience a feeling of low professional functioning and feel that there is no point in continuing their efforts. Individuals are driven to low self-esteem, adopt a negative critical attitude towards their personal performance and consider their achievements to be inadequate (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). The three components interact to create an increasing emotional burden and psychological withdrawal, which is negatively related to work commitment (Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018; Maslach *et al.*, 2001) and self-efficacy (Boujut *et al.*, 2017; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Yulianti *et al.*, 2018). Specifically, the lower the teachers perceive their effectiveness, the higher levels of emotional exhaustion they experience. Furthermore, burnout is negatively correlated with teachers' job satisfaction (Capri & Guler, 2018; Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Platsidou & Agaliotis, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Yulianti *et al.*, 2018).

Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion appear to influence teachers' burnout levels (Jovanović *et al.*, 2019; Kelly & Barnes-Holmes, 2013; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021; Stringari *et al.*, 2019). For instance, the type and severity of disability of SEND pupils indicates different levels of job stress and burnout. Platsidou and Agaliotis (2008) report that those working with pupils who have emotional and behavioural disorders experience high levels of work-related stress. Zarafshan *et al.* (2013), studying the burnout levels of teachers working with students with different types of disabilities, found higher levels of burnout for those working with students on the autism spectrum compared to counterparts working with students with other disabilities, such as sensory disabilities. Burnout affects and negatively impacts students' academic achievement (Ansley *et al.*, 2016; Herman *et al.*, 2018; Shen *et al.*, 2015).

### **2.3 Teachers' Job Satisfaction**

Job satisfaction is described as a pleasant and positive emotional state of a person resulting from job evaluation. It is referred to as a feeling of fulfilling the job according to their duty (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). Job satisfaction is a dominant factor in achieving organizational goals, as a job-satisfied individual uses their full capacity to complete tasks and tasks and exhibits high productivity (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). Job satisfaction is influenced by a variety of factors, such as school climate, collaboration, school support, workload, access to resources, and strong interpersonal relationships with students (Andrews & Brown, 2015; Bettini *et al.*, 2017; Brunsting *et al.*, 2014).

Job satisfaction significantly influences teachers' commitment to investing time and energy to effectively support SEND students (Antonioniou *et al.*, 2024; D'Amico *et al.*,

2020; Chan *et al.*, 2020; Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018; Robinson *et al.*, 2019; Viel-Ruma *et al.*, 2010). Consequently, a strong positive association between job satisfaction and self-efficacy is observed (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Yulianti *et al.*, 2018). In the demanding conditions of special education, job satisfaction helps teachers cope with increased emotional load and reduce burnout levels (D'Amico *et al.*, 2020; Capri & Guler, 2018; Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018; Platsidou, 2010; Robinson *et al.*, 2019).

### 3. Material and Methods

#### 3.1 Sample

The sample consisted of 163 Greek teachers who are working in primary and secondary education. Out of 163, 132 (80.98%) were female, and 31 (19.02%) were male. In terms of gender, 66 (40.49%) were 22-30 years old, 54 (33.13%) were 31-40 years, 29 (17.79%) were 41-50 years, and 14 (8.59%) were over 51 years old. Regarding the educational level, 107 (65.64%) of the participants held a Master's degree, 55 (33.74%) held a Bachelor's degree, and 1 (0.61%) held a PhD. In terms of the teaching experience, 93 (57.06%) had 0-5 years of service, 37 (22.70%) had 6-10 teaching experience, 17 (10.43%) had 11-20 years, and 16 (9.82%) had more than 21 years. Regarding the level of work education, 115 of them (70.55%) were in primary education, while 48 (29.45%) were in secondary education. In terms of specialized studies in special education and/or training, 110 (67.48%) had specific studies in Special Education, while 53 (32.52%) did not.

#### 3.2 Research Tools

In order to investigate teachers' attitudes and concerns about inclusive education, the Sentiments, Attitudes, and Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale Revised (SACIE-R) (Forlin *et al.*, 2011) was used. The reliability of the factors of the SACIE-R was tested with the internal consistency index Cronbach's Alpha, where values greater than or equal to 0.7 are acceptable (Taber, 2018). The results showed adequate reliability indicators on all factors of the SACIE-R (i) "Sentiments" ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ), (ii) "Attitudes" ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ), and (iii) "Concerns" ( $\alpha = 0.77$ ).

For the investigation of job satisfaction, the Greek adapted version (Kafetsios & Zampetakis, 2008) of the Brayfield-Rothe General Index of Job Satisfaction was used. The confirmatory factor analysis revealed two factors with strong reliability: (i) "presence of job satisfaction" ( $\alpha = 0.90$ ) and (ii) "absence of job satisfaction" ( $\alpha = 0.89$ ). Finally, for the measurement of burnout, the adapted Greek version by Kokkinos (2006) of the Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey (MBI-ES) (Maslach, Jackson & Schwab, 1996) was used. The results of the reliability analysis showed strong reliability in the factor "personal accomplishment" ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ), reliability in the factor "emotional exhaustion" ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ), and adequacy in the factor "depersonalization" ( $\alpha = 0.79$ ) (Taber, 2018).

### 3.3 Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed using the statistical program IBM SPSS 29. Descriptive statistics, such as percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize demographic data and responses related to inclusive education, job satisfaction, and burnout. Due to the absence of normality in the data distribution, non-parametric tests were applied to assess correlations and differences between groups. Specifically, the Spearman correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between teachers' attitudes, perceptions and concerns towards inclusion and levels of job satisfaction and burnout, with values ranging from -1 (strong negative correlation) to +1 (strong positive correlation). For comparisons between demographic groups, the Mann-Whitney test was used to assess differences between two independent groups (e.g., gender, education level), while the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied for comparisons between three or more independent groups (e.g., age groups, teaching experience). In cases of statistically significant differences, multiple Bonferroni comparisons were performed to identify groups that differed. Finally, multiple linear regression models were used to investigate the predictive value of pro-inclusion attitudes on job satisfaction and burnout, taking into account demographic and occupational characteristics. Each model was tested for multilinearity through the VIF coefficient, with values below 3 being considered acceptable (Field, 2017).

## 4. Results

### 4.1 Mean (M) and Standard Deviations (SD) Factors of Sentiments, Attitudes, Concerns about Inclusive Education (SACIE-R), Brayfield-Rothe General Index of Job Satisfaction and Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey (MBI-ES)

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the factors on the Sentiments, Attitudes and Concerns about Inclusive Education questionnaire. Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion were moderate to high ( $M = 2.84$ ,  $S.D = 0.59$ ), concerns about the success of inclusion were moderate ( $M = 2.52$ ,  $S.D = 0.61$ ), and negative feelings toward inclusion were low ( $M = 2.21$ ,  $S.D = 0.60$ ). On the Brayfield-Rothe General Index of Job Satisfaction questionnaire, participants reported moderate to high levels of job satisfaction ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $S.D = 0.79$ ) and low levels of lack of satisfaction ( $M = 2.10$ ,  $S.D = 0.79$ ). Regarding burnout, low levels of emotional exhaustion (65.03% of the participants) ( $M = 2.09$ ,  $S.D = 1.27$ ) and depersonalization (60.12% of the participants) ( $M = 1.12$ ,  $S.D = 1.24$ ) were observed, while levels of personal accomplishment were high (66.88% of the participants) ( $M = 4.65$ ,  $S.D = 1.26$ ).

**Table 1:** Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD) of Factors of Sentiments, Attitudes, Concerns about Inclusion Education (SACIE-R), the Brayfield-Rothe General Index of Job Satisfaction questionnaire and the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES)

Factors of SACIE-R	Range	M.	S.D
Negative Sentiments about Inclusive Education	1 - 4	2.21	0.60
Attitudes about Inclusive Education	1 - 4	2.84	0.59
Concerns about Inclusive Education	1 - 4	2.52	0.61
<b>Factors of Job Satisfaction</b>			
Presence of Job Satisfaction	1 - 5	3.49	0.79
Absence of Job Satisfaction	1 - 5	2.10	0.79
<b>Factors of Maslach Burnout Inventory - Educators Survey</b>			
Emotional Exhaustion	0 - 6	2.09	1.27
Depersonalization	0 - 6	1.12	1.24
Personal Accomplishment	0 - 6	4.65	1.26

#### 4.2 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis (Spearman's rho) showed a positive correlation between teachers' "negative sentiments about inclusion" with "emotional exhaustion" ( $\rho(163) = 0.251, p < 0.01$ ) and "depersonalization" ( $\rho(163) = 0.166, p < 0.05$ ) and negatively correlated with "personal accomplishment" ( $\rho(163) = -0.330, p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, "positive attitudes about inclusive education" was positively correlated with "personal accomplishment" ( $\rho(163) = 0.208, p < 0.01$ ), and negatively correlated with "absence of job satisfaction" ( $\rho(163) = -0.214, p < 0.01$ ) and "depersonalization" ( $\rho(163) = -0.228, p < 0.01$ ). Finally, "concerns about inclusive education" were positively correlated with "absence of job satisfaction" ( $\rho(163) = 0.188, p < 0.05$ ), "emotional exhaustion" ( $\rho(163) = 0.285, p < 0, 01$ ) and "depersonalization" ( $\rho(163) = 0.173, p < 0.05$ ) and negatively with "presence of job satisfaction" ( $\rho(163) = -0.235, p < 0.01$ ) and "personal accomplishment" ( $\rho(163) = -0.156, p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 2:** Spearman's rho Correlation of SACIE-R factors and Job Satisfaction and Burnout

Factors	Negative Sentiments	Attitudes towards Inclusive Education	Concerns about Inclusive Education
Presence of Job Satisfaction	-0.148	0.094	-.235**
Absence of Job Satisfaction	0.124	-.214**	.188*
Emotional Exhaustion	.251**	-0.043	.285**
Depersonalization	.166**	-.228**	.173*
Personal Accomplishment	-3.30**	.208**	-.156*

\*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05

#### 4.3 The Impact of Demographic and Professional Characteristics on the Factors of SACIE-R, Job Satisfaction and Burnout Syndrome

The results revealed that in the factor "Attitudes about Inclusive Education", the mean of women (M = 2.91) is statistically higher (U = 1437.000, p = 0.009) than that of men (M = 2.54). Regarding the effect of educational level on "Negative Emotions about Inclusive Education", the mean of degree holders (M = 2.37) is statistically greater (U = 2293.000, p

= 0.017) than that of MSc/PhD holders (M = 2.12). Regarding the level of education, it is found that in the factor "Attitudes about Inclusive Education", the mean of primary school teachers (M = 2.90) is statistically greater (U = 2128.000, p = 0.020) than that of those working in secondary education (M = 2.69).

In addition, regarding the effect of specialized studies in Special Education, it emerges that the average of teachers who have completed specialized studies in Special Education is statistically lower than the average of those who have not done such studies in the factors "Negative emotions about Inclusive Education" (M *without studies* = 2.40 vs M *with studies* = 2.12, U = 2078.000, p = 0.003) and "Concerns about Inclusive Education" (M *without studies* = 2.77 vs M *with studies* = 2.40, U = 1841.000, p < 0.001) and higher in the factor "Attitudes about inclusive education" (M *without studies* = 2.64 vs M *with studies* = 2.93, U = 2036.000, p = 0.002). The findings suggest that specialized studies in special education and training appear to be associated with lower levels of negative emotions and concerns while reinforcing a more positive attitude towards inclusion.

Moreover, regarding the impact of demographic and professional characteristics on the factors of job satisfaction, statistically significant differences of means with respect to age were observed in the factor "Absence Job Satisfaction" (H(2) = 6.272, p = 0.043), where the mean of teachers over 51 years old (M = 1.69) is statistically lower than those who are 31-50 years old (M = 2.21, p = 0.015). Finally, no impact of demographic and professional characteristics on the factors of job burnout was observed.

#### 4.4 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

##### 4.4.1 Absence of Job Satisfaction

Linear regression analysis (Table 3) identified "Attitudes about Inclusive Education" (beta = -0.183, t = -2.422, p = 0.017, 37% impact), "Concerns about Inclusive Education" (beta = 0.167, t = -2.202, p = 0.029, 32% impact) and age over 51 years (beta = -0.163, t = -2.154, p = 0.033, 31% impact) as significant predictors of "Absence of Job Satisfaction".

**Table 3:** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis  
with the dependent variable, "Absence of Job Satisfaction"

Independent Variables	B	Beta	T	p-value	VIF
Constant	2.291	-	5.855	<0.001	-
Attitudes about Inclusive Education	-0.246	-0.183	-2.422	0.017	1.001
Concerns about Inclusive Education	0.217	0.167	2.202	0.029	1.002
>51 years old	-0.458	-0.163	-2.154	0.033	1.001

F (3,159) = 5.170, p = 0.002, R<sup>2</sup> = 8.9%

#### 4.3 The impact of demographic and professional characteristics on the factors of SACIE-R, Job Satisfaction and Burnout Syndrome

The results revealed that in the factor "Attitudes about Inclusive Education", the mean of women (M = 2.91) is statistically higher (U = 1437.000, p = 0.009) than that of men (M = 2.54). Regarding the effect of educational level on "Negative Emotions about Inclusive Education", the mean of degree holders (M = 2.37) is statistically greater (U = 2293.000, p

= 0.017) than that of MSc/PhD holders ( $M = 2.12$ ). Regarding the level of education, it is found that in the factor "Attitudes about Inclusive Education", the mean of primary school teachers ( $M = 2.90$ ) is statistically greater ( $U = 2128.000$ ,  $p = 0.020$ ) than that of those working in secondary education ( $M = 2.69$ ).

In addition, regarding the effect of specialized studies in Special Education, it emerges that the average of teachers who have completed specialized studies in Special Education is statistically lower than the average of those who have not done such studies in the factors "Negative emotions about Inclusive Education" ( $M_{without\ studies} = 2.40$  vs  $M_{with\ studies} = 2.12$ ,  $U = 2078.000$ ,  $p=0.003$ ) and "Concerns about Inclusive Education" ( $M_{without\ studies} = 2.77$  vs  $M_{with\ studies} = 2.40$ ,  $U = 1841.000$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) and higher in the factor "Attitudes about inclusive education" ( $M_{without\ studies} = 2.64$  vs  $M_{with\ studies} = 2.93$ ,  $U = 2036.000$ ,  $p=0.002$ ).

Moreover, regarding the impact of demographic and professional characteristics on the factors of job satisfaction, statistically significant differences of means with respect to age were observed in the factor "Absence Job Satisfaction" ( $H(2) = 6.272$ ,  $p = 0.043$ ), where the mean of teachers over 51 years old ( $M = 1.69$ ) is statistically lower than those who are 31-50 years old ( $M = 2.21$ ,  $p = 0.015$ ). Finally, no impact of demographic and professional characteristics on the factors of job burnout was observed.

#### 4.4 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

##### 4.4.1 Absence of Job Satisfaction

Linear regression analysis (Table 4) identified "Attitudes about Inclusive Education" (beta = -0.183,  $t = -2.422$ ,  $p = 0.017$ , 37% impact), "Concerns about Inclusive Education" (beta = 0.167,  $t = -2.202$ ,  $p = 0.029$ , 32% impact) and age over 51 years (beta = -0.163,  $t = -2.154$ ,  $p=0.033$ , 31% impact) as significant predictors of "Absence of Job Satisfaction".

**Table 4:** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis  
with dependent variable, "Absence of Job Satisfaction"

Independent variables	B	Beta	T	p-value	VIF
Constant	2.291	-	5.855	<0.001	-
Attitudes about Inclusive Education	-0.246	-0.183	-2.422	0.017	1.001
Concerns about Inclusive Education	0.217	0.167	2.202	0.029	1.002
>51 years old	-0.458	-0.163	-2.154	0.033	1.001

$F(3,159) = 5.170$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ,  $R^2 = 8.9\%$

##### 4.4.2 Emotional Exhaustion

Linear regression analysis (Table 5) identified "Concerns about Inclusive Education" (beta = 0.238,  $t = 2.827$ ,  $p = 0.005$ , 67% effect) and "Negative emotions" (beta = 0.168,  $t = 1.996$ ,  $p = 0.048$ , 33% effect) as significant predictors of "Emotional exhaustion". Teachers with increased inclusion concerns and more negative emotions showed higher levels of emotional exhaustion.



**Table 5:** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis  
with the dependent variable, "Emotional Exhaustion"

Independent Variables	B	Beta	t	p-value	VIF
Constant	0.047	-	0.106	0.916	-
Concerns about Inclusive Education	0.500	0.238	2.827	<b>0.005</b>	1.295
Negative Emotions about Inclusive Education	0.355	0.168	1.996	<b>0.048</b>	1.295

F (2.160) = 11.246, p<0.001, R<sup>2</sup> = 12.3%

#### 4.4.3 Depersonalization

Linear regression analysis (Table 6) identified "Inclusion Attitude" as a significant predictor of "Depersonalization" (beta = -0.219, t = -2.856, p = 0.005).

**Table 6:** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis  
with the dependent variable, "Depersonalization"

Independent Variables	B	Beta	t	p-value	VIF
Constant	1.513	-	2.378	<b>0.019</b>	-
Negative emotions about Inclusive Education	0.240	0.117	1.336	0.184	1.309
Attitudes about Inclusive Education	-0.464	-0.219	-2.856	<b>0.005</b>	1.011
Concerns about Inclusive Education	0.157	0.077	0.880	0.380	1.303

F (3.159) = 4.197, p = 0.007, R<sup>2</sup> = 7.3%

#### 4.4.4 Personal Accomplishment

Linear regression analysis (Table 7) identified the "Negative Emotions about Inclusive Education" (beta = -0.364, t = -4.314, p<0.001, 80% impact) and the "Attitudes about Inclusive Education" (beta = 0.171, t = 2.309, p = 0.022, 20% impact) as significant predictors of "Personal accomplishment". Teachers with more positive feelings and attitudes about inclusion reported higher levels of personal achievement.

**Table 7:** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis  
with the dependent variable, "Personal Accomplishment"

Independent Variables	B	Beta	t	p-value	VIF
Constant	4.974	-	7.959	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	-
Negative emotions about Inclusive Education	-0.763	-0.364	-4.314	<b>&lt;0.001</b>	1.309
Attitudes about Inclusive Education	0.369	0.171	2.309	<b>0.022</b>	1.011
Concerns about Inclusive Education	0.126	0.061	0.719	0.473	1.303

F (3.159) = 8.248, p<0.001, R<sup>2</sup> = 13.5%

## 5. Discussion

This research explored the possible correlation between teachers' attitudes, perceptions and concerns about the inclusion of SEND pupils and perceived levels of burnout and job satisfaction. The findings showed that Greek teachers tend to adopt positive attitudes towards the inclusion of SEND pupils, while their concerns remain at moderate levels. In addition, participants reported high levels of job satisfaction and low levels of job exhaustion and depersonalization while sense of accomplishment was particularly high,

confirming similar findings of other studies in Greece (Galaterou & Antoniou, 2017; Platsidou & Agaliotis, 2008).

The results of the study also indicated that negative emotions and rejection beliefs regarding inclusion are positively correlated with teachers' burnout syndrome, which are in agreement with other research (Boujut *et al.*, 2017; Curchod-Ruedi *et al.*, 2013; Pearson *et al.*, 2015; Rohmer *et al.*, 2022; Savolainen *et al.*, 2022; Saloviita & Pakarinen, 2021; Sharma, 2018; Weissenfeld *et al.*, 2021). Training programs in academic institutions should incorporate courses aimed at facilitating inclusion so that teachers are prepared to manage the challenges of inclusion (Kasperski & Crispel, 2022; Sokal & Sharma, 2022). In addition, results showed that teachers with specialized studies in special education maintained more positive attitudes and fewer concerns about implementing inclusion, a finding that is in line with similar studies (Andritsou *et al.*, 2025; Gkouvousi *et al.*, 2024; Katsora *et al.*, 2022; Koutsovasili *et al.*, 2024; Voulgaraki *et al.*, 2023).

The results of the present study also showed that demographic factors and professional characteristics seem to influence teachers' occupational burnout. Younger teachers experience much higher levels of burnout than older counterparts, confirming related studies (Capri & Guler, 2017; Shaukat *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, levels of burnout decrease with increasing professional experience, as experienced teachers appear to demonstrate greater resilience (Capri & Guler, 2017). It is possible that limited teaching experience adds additional stress and insecurity to effective support for SEND students (Faskhodi & Siyyari, 2018). The effect of gender appears to be ambiguous. In this study, no statistically significant differences in burnout between males and females were detected. In some studies, female teachers experienced significantly lower levels of emotional exhaustion (Stringari *et al.*, 2019), while in other studies, women experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion and greater job satisfaction (Sari, 2004; Shaukat *et al.*, 2019).

The regression analysis of the study revealed positive attitudes towards inclusion as a significant predictor of job satisfaction and negative emotions as a predictor of emotional exhaustion. The results are in line with related research (Rohmer *et al.*, 2022; Shaukat *et al.*, 2019), showing that enhancing positive attitudes reduces the likelihood of burnout. Similarly, Capri and Guler (2018) reported that job satisfaction is associated with lower levels of burnout, which was also observed in the findings of the present study. There is a need to strengthen teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion through ongoing training and support. As suggested by Vieira *et al.* (2024), the provision of training programmes can enhance teachers' confidence and reduce burnout levels.

## 6. Conclusions, Implications

This study sought to highlight the importance of teachers' positive attitudes towards the inclusion of SEND pupils in reducing burnout and ensuring teachers' professional fulfilment. Teachers who maintain positive attitudes towards inclusion tend to experience greater professional satisfaction and well-being and feel less emotional

exhaustion. These findings suggest the need to incorporate inclusion-facilitating courses into academic curricula so that teacher candidates feel more prepared and confident to implement inclusive practices. The working environment of teachers needs to be improved and in-service training through seminars should aim to empower teachers against the emotional demands of special education. Mentoring programmes reduce teachers' stress and emotional burden, help support mental health and enhance long-term commitment to their profession. Future studies could adopt intertemporal and observational studies to gain deeper insight into the impact of teachers' attitudes, inclusion concerns on burnout and job satisfaction.

### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

### **About the Author(s)**

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