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Percepciones de los directores de Educación Secundarias sobre la implementación de los protocolos de educación inclusiva en Grecia

Perceptions of the directors of secondary education about the Implementation of the protocols of inclusive education in Greece

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TÍTULO DE LA TESIS:

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INFORME RAZONADO DE LAS/LOS DIRECTORAS/ES DE LA TESIS
(se hará mención a la evolución y desarrollo de la tesis, así como a trabajos y publicaciones derivados de la misma)

La tesis doctoral que se presenta tiene como finalidad el análisis de la percepción y el conocimiento de los directores de los centros de Educación Secundaria, en Grecia, sobre los protocolos políticas para la educación inclusión y su relación con las actitudes hacia la educación inclusiva, teniendo en cuenta características demográficas relevantes con el fin de facilitar la toma de decisiones.

Se ha realizado un trabajo minucioso y sistemático de indagación de la literatura sobre el tema objeto de estudio, estableciendo las bases de la legislación, medidas y protocolos para la educación inclusiva en la Educación Secundaria en el sistema educativo griego y las competencias que deben poseer los directores de los centros de Educación Especial.

Con respecto a la metodología utilizada se ha fundamentado con evidencias teóricas, así como la rigurosidad en la construcción de los instrumentos que, tras su aplicación, se han obtenido datos relevantes que han permitido el logro de los objetivos de investigación: determinar el conocimiento y la comprensión que tienen los directores de unidades de educación secundaria sobre los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva que deben implementar en sus escuelas; explorar las percepciones de los directores de escuela, independientemente del nivel en el que trabajen, respecto al concepto de inclusión; Analizar las características demográficas (como el género y la edad) que pueden estar relacionadas con el conocimiento de los directores sobre los protocolos y las políticas de educación inclusiva, las actitudes y las percepciones hacia la educación inclusiva, así como analizar la posible relación entre el conocimiento de protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva y las actitudes y percepciones de los directivos hacia la educación inclusiva.

El conjunto de resultados derivados del estudio han facilitado el trazado de un perfil de las competencias que poseen los directores de estos centros para la gestión de la inclusión en sus

El estudio cuenta con una primera publicación, como avance de los hallazgos encontrados, en la Revista Etic@net. (Poseedora del Sello de Calidad FECYT, indexada en Emerging Sources Citation Index -Web of Sciences- de Thomson Reuters; índice de Impacto MIAR-Matriz de Información para el Análisis de Revistas de 7.8 en 2021).

Por todo ello, se autoriza la presentación de la tesis doctoral.

Córdoba, a 12 de abril de 2024

Las/los directoras/es

Fdo.:Eloísa T. Reche Urbano y Begoña E. Sampedro Requena

Resumen

El estudio analiza el papel fundamental de los directores escolares en la transición hacia la educación inclusiva dentro de las escuelas secundarias griegas. Un cambio impulsado por las directivas de la UE respecto a la integración de estudiantes que experimentan necesidades educativas especiales (NEE). Esboza la intersección de la política educativa griega con la práctica y aborda desafíos y estrategias para apoyar un cuerpo educativo inclusivo, contribuyendo a la discusión sobre liderazgo educativo e implementación de políticas. Al tratar la brecha entre las políticas de educación inclusiva y su implementación, este estudio se centrará en cómo el conocimiento y las opiniones de los directores escolares afectan la implementación de la política. El estudio evalúa la preparación de los líderes escolares para la integración de estudiantes con NEE en aulas regulares y postula que el liderazgo informado y proactivo es cardinal para el éxito.

La muestra estuvo compuesta por 420 directores escolares dentro de la región de Ática y la región de Macedonia Central en Grecia. Se realizó un análisis descriptivo y correlacional que tenía como objetivo examinar la relación entre el conocimiento de los directores sobre las políticas de educación inclusiva y sus actitudes hacia la implementación de la inclusión.

La investigación ha mostrado que existe una brecha de conocimiento significativa por parte de los directores respecto a la educación inclusiva, impactando en sus actitudes con respecto a su implementación y eficacia. Esta brecha en el conocimiento y la capacitación se ve aún más afectada por factores demográficos como el género y la edad, que influyen significativamente en el conocimiento y las actitudes de los directores hacia la educación inclusiva. Los directores más jóvenes y las directoras mostraron un mayor conocimiento y actitudes más progresistas hacia la inclusión, indicando la influencia de las características demográficas en la implementación de prácticas inclusivas. También, se observa que los directores con mejor conocimiento sobre las políticas de inclusividad muestran actitudes más positivas con respecto a sus implementaciones, y el liderazgo informado en este aspecto es valioso. La conciencia, apreciación y comprensión de los directores son cruciales para fomentar un ambiente educativo inclusivo.

El estudio destaca la necesidad de una mayor capacitación y desarrollo de competencias de los directores escolares para la promoción de la educación inclusiva en Grecia. Se requieren reformas de políticas, desarrollo profesional dirigido e investigaciones adicionales para preparar a los líderes escolares para la transición de la educación en entornos diversos y multiculturales.

Abstract

The study analyzes the pivotal role of school directors in the transition towards inclusive education within Greek secondary schools. A shift propelled by EU directives regarding students' integration who experience special educational needs (SEN). It outlines the intersection of the Greek educational policy with practice and address challenges and strategies for supporting an inclusive educational body, contributing to the discussion on educational leadership and policy implementation. Dealing with the gap between inclusive education policies and their implementation, this study will focus on how knowledge and views of school directors affect policy implementation. The study assesses the readiness of school leaders towards the integration of SEN students in mainstream classrooms and postulates the informed and proactive leadership which is cardinal to success.

The sample was comprised of 420 school directors within the region of Attica and the region of Central Macedonia in Greece. A descriptive and correlational analysis was performed that aimed to examine the relationship between directors' knowledge of the inclusive education policies and their attitudes towards implementation of inclusion.

The research has shown that there is a significant knowledge gap on the part of the directors regarding inclusive education, impacting on their attitudes with regard to its implementation and efficacy. This gap in knowledge and training is further affected by demographic factors such as gender and age, which significantly influence principals' knowledge and attitudes towards inclusive education. Younger and female principals showed greater knowledge and more progressive attitudes towards inclusion, indicating demographic characteristics' influence on the implementation of inclusive practices. Also, it is observed that directors with better knowledge on the inclusivity policies display more positive attitudes with regard to its implementations, and knowledgeable leadership in this regard is valuable. Directors' awareness, appreciation, and understanding are crucial for fostering an inclusive educational environment.

The study highlights the necessity for further training and development of competencies of school directors for the promotion of inclusive education in Greece. Policy reforms, targeted professional development and further research are required to prepare school leaders for the transition of education in diverse and multicultural settings.

«Τὸ δὲ ζητεῖν πανταχοῦ τὸ χρήσιμον ἥκιστα ἁρμόττει τοῖς μεγαλοψύχοις καὶ τοῖς ἐλευθερίοις».

Ἀριστοτέλους (Πολιτικά Θ΄1338b)

"Seeking utility everywhere is hardly suitable for magnanimous and free people".

Aristotle's (Politics VIII 1338b)

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INTRODUCTION

The journey towards inclusive education in Greece's secondary education system uncovers a complex path of advancements and challenges. The pursuit of inclusion in education reflects broader societal goals for equity, ensuring every student, regardless of abilities or disabilities, is included. This approach not only helps students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) by integrating them into typical school settings but also improves every student's learning experience by promoting diversity and understanding (Zoniou-Sideri & Vlachou, 2006). Promoting inclusive education requires adapting legislation, school curricula and practices to international standards in order to ensure equal educational opportunities for all. Achieving inclusion requires significant effort, providing support and training for teachers, and addressing systemic barriers. Greece has made legislative progress but faces challenges in implementing these changes effectively (Ainscow, 2005; Λαχανά & Ευσταθίου, 2015; Ζώνιου-Σιδερή, 2004a).

Legislation, such as Law 1143/1981 and its successors, has gradually shifted towards inclusion by providing support services and inclusive practices in mainstream schools. Despite all these legislative efforts, practical challenges remain, such as segregation and a lack of genuine inclusion (Στασινός, 2016, 2016; Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs announcements; Law 3699/2008 adjustments). Special Education in Greece offers a complex range of support for children with disabilities or SEN, aiming not just to address learning challenges but also to prepare students for future achievements (Χρηστίδου & Χρηστίδου, 2018). School directors play a crucial role in this process, requiring administrative, pedagogical, and interpersonal skills to implement inclusive policies effectively.

Directors of Special Education Units and mainstream schools with Integration Classes must possess a set of skills and knowledge to enable the promotion of an inclusive environment, supporting the participation of all students in educational and social activities. Thus, the role of school principals is considered vital in promoting inclusive education, in order to lead to the change of school culture and educational practices (UNESCO, 2020; Eisenman et al., 2015).

Although Greece has made significant progress towards achieving inclusive education through legislation and policy changes in recent decades, there are still challenges in its implementation. Effective leadership, teacher training, curriculum adaptation, an accepting environment and a collaborative approach are essential to creating a truly inclusive educational environment.

This study seeks to explore high school principals' beliefs and attitudes toward inclusion to enhance the implementation of inclusive education. In order to investigate the role of principals in the implementation of protocols in Greek secondary education, the present study was conducted and presented. It consists of two parts, the theoretical part, which includes two chapters (first and second) and the research part, which includes three chapters (third, fourth and fifth).

The first chapter concerns the legislation, measures, and protocols for Inclusive Education. This section examines the legal and procedural foundation of inclusive education in Greece, charting the development from early legislation to current practices. It highlights the conceptual shifts that have guided the inclusion of students with SEN into mainstream educational settings, supported by both national and international directives.

The second chapter concerns the skills and competences of directors of Special and General Education Units. It focuses to the pivotal role school principals leaders in implementing and promotion inclusive practices within special and general education settings. It outlines the diverse skill set required of directors, encompassing administrative duties, pedagogical leadership, and a deep understanding of inclusive education principles.

The third chapter is the methodology and research design. It outlines the methodological approach, including the research design, data collection methods and tools, analysis of questionnaire, data analysis strategies and the analytical framework was used to investigate the effectiveness of protocols and challenges of inclusive education in Greece. It sets the stage for a comprehensive analysis of how inclusive education is perceived and implemented by directors.

The fourth chapter consists of the results. The empirical findings of the statistical analysis of the data collected from the questionnaires are presented. It offers insights into the knowledge and perceptions of school directors regarding inclusive education protocols and policies. This section analyzes the impact of these perceptions on the implementation of inclusive practices within Greek secondary education.

Finally, the fifth chapter consists of the conclusion. It is drawn on the legislative background, empirical data, and theoretical discourse on inclusive education, this section synthesizes the study's findings. It reflects on the implications for policy, practice, and future research, highlighting the ongoing efforts and challenges in promoting inclusive education in Greece.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Legislation, measures and protocols for inclusive education at Secondary Education in the Greek educational system

This chapter presents an international and Greek literature review on inclusive education. The purpose is to give a quite comprehensive overview and explanation of definitions that have progressively been used and have relevant content, starting with mainstreaming, moving to integration, further to inclusive education and inclusion.

Additionally, the study will thoroughly explore recent trends in education policy, curricula, and procedures concerning inclusive education at Secondary Education level in Greece along with the problems that arose in this educational system.

1.1 Conceptual clarification of definitions

The emerging trend in Special Education from all European Union countries is the development of a policy for the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools (European Commission, 2002; Meijer, 2003). Inclusive education will describe all of those educational efforts tending to extend studentship relating to students with and without special educational needs in this same school context (Zigmond, 2003). The driving principle of inclusive education focuses on the expansion of the general school of education towards encompassing all children and caretakers particularly gears on the quality of inclusion of children (Vislie, 2003).

In fact, inclusive education aims to be supportive as well as a welcoming policy towards diversity among child without differentiating them due to their intellectual, linguistic, physical or emotional characters (Soúlis, 2008). Successful inclusive education doesn't take for its life the inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream schools and doesn't fight against it. For every particularity of the individual is one of the forms of human behavior (Dóikou-Avlídou, 2002). Prosperous inclusive education needs to solve specific problems and conditions designed allowing an adaptation rather than just formal educational benefits. Prosperous inclusive education also supposed to has access to the appropriate number and quality of educational support (human and technical) as well as adaptation of the educational programs of characteristic needs of each student. However, the role of all teachers involved as well as that of the supportive (assistants, sign language interpreters etc.) and administrative staff is of importance in all countries (European

Commission, 2000). The continual education and training of all the professionals involved and school principals seem to have greatly contributed towards the successful implementation of the programs for inclusion (European Commission, 2000).

The role of inclusive education and the perception of a less restricting environment conveying an encouragement to school integration and socialization of students with special educational needs, has been several countries' emphasis in Europe for decades. At least, in the Western world this tendency reflects two basic principles which lie in the basis of the inclusive education of children with special educational needs. The first based argument on the research data that both children who are with special educational needs as well as those without benefited from closer co-operation and co-existing. The second, more ethic and social in nature and dominant in most countries, is based on the principle that children with special educational needs have the right for education speaking of it otherwise their peers without special educational needs (Mitchell 1990).

The term "inclusive education" means the education of such children altogether, gathering in the same school environment, regardless of the child's color, religion or physical or mental status and its most common context is found in special education and training. This transition to "A School for All" is not just technical or organizational change. It is a movement that bears lucid philosophical orientation (UNESCO, 2001). Orientation towards an education for all had been the key flare of the principles worked out in the Salamanca Declaration entitled "Principles, Policies and Practices in Special Education" since June 1994 (UNESCO, 1994). Thus, the definition inclusion appears (education for all) on a view of acceptance and respect against all children without setting parameters around disability (Zóniou-Sidéri, 2009). By now, this definition of inclusion had been formulated as a major pillar of the educational policy and the framework in which to be achieved (Spyrópoulos, 2014). What reflects the ambitions of the Salamanca Declaration is that inclusive education is an end for itself, as the modus to an inclusive society (Barton, 1998).

The definition of the inclusion describes the process through which the school attempts to rise to the challenge and meet all students' needs separately through reviewing of organization as well as curriculum fostering. Through this process, the school increases its ability to admit and engage recruitment of all the students from the local community who are desirous to study while at the same time reduces the rate of expelling (Sebba&Ainscow, 1996). One fact is that the categorization of schools to general schools and special schools result to racial and disadvantageous perceptions on the part of those people who do not get opportunity to come in contact with other peer students (Fra, 2015). The inclusion of all students with or without disabilities in the mainstream classrooms intends at removing

discrimination and defending the right of every student to exploit every aspect of his personality, and of his educational opportunities (Zoniou-Sideri, & Vlachou, 2006).

It has turned the subject of reflection and research, at the European and international level. Internationally, it is seen more and more as reform that sustains and welcomes the difference among all the learners (Ainscow, 2005). The broader convergence of European growth education policies to be protected the socially vulnerable groups, moreover to alleviate from their social stereotypes and prejudices (Sehrbrock, 2011; Saleh, 1998) and to exploit their cognitive and psycho-emotional potentials. The right to diversity is a fundamental human right (Zoniou-Sideri & Vlachou, 2006). The model of the entire student population "A School for All" - regardless of educational potential, social, emotional, mental and physical condition (Kalogírou, 2014; Angelídis, 2011; Booth, 2000; Booth, Ainscow,&Dyson, 1998; UNESCO, 1994) is the one that reflects the framework of equality provision for equal opportunities and education in contemporary educational reality aspiring to lead the educational daily life to European integration (Soúlis, 2008). Historically, this has been done progressively through a use of definitions that meaningfully have content from mainstreaming then through to integration and finally inclusion (Bricker, 1995). These definitions are conceived with the mind of offering meaningful descriptions of the common course of people with disabilities together with those without in a common educational setting (Soúlis, 2002).

The original definitions of inclusion centred in the consideration and acceptance of difference on people's rights, especially students with special educational needs (SEN) and / or disability, to be members of their neighbourhood public school community, by attending in age-appropriate classrooms and complementing help and support services (Mitchell, 2010, 2015).

In practical terms, definitions relating to integration and inclusive education have been used under different educational structures, as "inclusive" seems to support one school for all development while "inclusion" refers to the use of separate classes in the general school. In "inclusive" education the child is viewed as a problem while in the case of "inclusive" education it is believed the system changes but not the child. Zóniou-Sidéri and Nteropoúlou-Ntérou (2012) argue that the concept of 'integration' is not an end but a means of changing social facts and concerns the wider social structures. Bolstering this view, Kourkoúta (2008) adds, "inclusive education" is the expression of an effective and complete participation — and not merely access and right to shared education, as well as all educational and school processes entailing the students with disabilities and those who have formal development, without resorting in special education or support services. Kofidou

and Mantzíkos (2016) argued that 'integration' was principally different from 'inclusion' in the fact that the first term was practiced with no theoretical and ideological framework and, consequently, failed. Finally, according to Smelter, Rasch and Yudewitz (1994) inclusive education brings SEN students into the mainstream classroom by providing them with support services rather integrated into support services. In other words, definition inclusion does not only limit towards a placement of a child having special educational needs in the regular school but also it extends to the conditions under which all children's education go well (Angelides et al., 2006).

Inclusive education embraces a powerful vision within which aspects of special education and also even the cultural values and practices of general education can be seen (Booth, 2000; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). As enjoined by Soúlis (2008), inclusion is not a personal issue of special education teachers in general the schools hence relieving the general education teacher from its implementation. Inclusion can only be realized and achieved when all stake holders are involved. To this effect, it is required of all stakeholders and especially the school unit administrators to create learning environment that will motivate the use of practices to empower such students. Learning environment cooperation is required. In addition, collaboration denotes interaction of two or more teachers who have varied specializations and includes dialogue, programming shared and creative decision making and feedback in an attempt to provide appropriate services for your students (Hughes & Murawski, 2001).

1.2. Models of Inclusive Education

The international literature on inclusive education models identifies four main types (Papapetrou et al., 2013):

Full Inclusion Model: This model advocates for the equal participation of all students in the general education setting, disregarding their specific characteristics, needs, or the opinions of their parents. It emphasizes interaction among students without providing a supportive framework for children with disabilities, due to the absence of a legislative or institutional framework protecting their rights. This approach has faced criticism for not meeting the diverse needs of the classroom (Kavale & Mostert, 2004), as it lacks individualized curricula and specialist support.

Model of Participation in the Same Class (Focus on Participation in the Same Place): This model, supported by legislative frameworks and curricula, acknowledges the need for and specifies the supportive assistance provided to students with disabilities within

mainstream schools. It argues against the existence of special schools, except for support classes, integrating Special Education fully into general education. In this approach, students with disabilities and their typically developing peers are supported in the general classroom by specialist teachers, without considering the views of the students' families (Norwich, 2000). Also referred to as an advisory model of inclusion (Hmellou, 2011), it has been implemented in the Greek educational system through the provision of parallel support.

Focus on Individual Needs Model: This model suggests temporary attendance at a special school based on assessments of a student's progress and social development, particularly for those facing difficulties that affect their participation and response to the general education curriculum. It centers on the special educational needs of children, addressing these needs not only when they impede the individual's development but also when they disrupt the academic and social development of others. However, while attending a special school, a student's social integration is not emphasized.

Choice Limited Inclusion Model: In this model, special classes provide academic support to students with disabilities but do not facilitate their socialization due to limited opportunities for interaction with typically developing peers. Consequently, it advocates for the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education, with decisions about the type of schooling made jointly by the school and the family (Norwich, 2000).

1.3. International policy of inclusive education

The philosophy of inclusion/inclusive education began to emerge in the early 1970s and, on an international basis, was encouraged by legislative provisions and decisions, such as US 94-142 / 1975, the reference of the Warnock Committee 1978, the Education Act of 1983 in the United Kingdom, and the decision of the Council of Ministers of Education of the Member States of Europe (4-6-1984) on school integration (Τριλιανός, 1992). In particular, the Warnock report examined the issue of people with special educational needs. The Warnock report thus provided a different type of contribution through the target that had already been set in the United Kingdom and related to the mainstream classroom attendance of the handicapped children and to changing their approach. According to the report, children should not be classified just based on their deficiency or intelligence. For these reasons, this report was very influential in all the developments concerned with education in the United Kingdom and even in Europe but also in general (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 1998).

The European Council proposed co-operation programme about the integration of the disadvantaged children in the ordinary schools, a programme of European collaboration concerning the integration of the handicapped children into ordinary schools because of the conclusions made from programmes for the integration of children with disabilities since this came into effect on the basis of the Council Resolution in 1984, "confirm the importance of the largest integration of disadvantaged children in the mainstream schools" (European Union, 1987).

Maybe, the most conclusive decade for the institutionalization of the inclusion was appeared in European countries during the 1980s and especially with the countries of the European Community. Today, "A School for All" includes the very tip of the iceberg of the ideation about educational policy (Τσιναρέλης, 1993). The education policy in support of the principle of as many children with special educational needs being educated in the mainstream school or institution where it is possible both in the United States and in the United Kingdom has informed the policy for educating students with special educational needs to take much the same road in a number of countries (Hornby, 1999).

Then the idea was ripened by means of constant international discussions by the organizations of the United Nations concerning 'Education for All' that resulted in the Declaration (1990) of UNESCO and in the Framework of Action adopted by the World Conference on «Education for All». The objective is a school for all with no discrimination where every child with or disability gets an equal access to classrooms and this improves equality.

Vision education for all and not privilege of the few should have originally appeared half a century prior to the UNESCO declaration of 1990. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, 1948) refers to education as one of the fundamental human rights - in particular, the right enshrined in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (The United Nations, 1989 art. 28, UNESCO, 2001).

In 1994, in the World Conference on Special Education held in Salamanca, Spain, UNESCO was able to awaken further impetuous of the approach to inclusive education upon realizing that the Education for All is far from being true and the children with special educational needs were just one of the numerous groups facing barriers to their education. The final report of the Conference co-signed by ninety- two governments and twenty-five international organizations concluded the principles, policy and practice in the education of persons with disabilities (UNESCO, 1994) as it gave a framework for policy and practice. The Declaration and the attached frame of action are for sure the most important

international document which has ever been issued in relation to the field of special education. Beginning from the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994), the question of inclusion has been an international point of reference for the elaboration of policy and practice of education of children with special educational needs, in the framework of the general strategy being pursued by the United Nations for education for all. This conference reaffirmed the right to education for all persons, which had been included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (UN General Assembly, 1948). In this context, the international community stressed once again its renewed commitment towards safeguarding the right to education to all human beings, regardless of individual differences eventually and requested from all the States which are member of this organization to provide the necessary measures for securing the education of persons with disabilities as integral part of the education system. The Declaration argues out that the value of general schools, with an orientation to inclusive education goes beyond a mere fact that they have the ability to offer quality education to all children but that their functioning is a decisive step in combating discrimination, building of the education's infrastructure and developing an inclusive society (Vislie, 2003). Conclusions of the Conference were as following:

- Each child should have a fundamental right to education and must be provided with an opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every child is unique in his or her specific learning characteristics, interests, abilities and needs.
- Such distinguishing characteristics and different needs must be taken into the account of the educational services' structure and implementation of programs.
- Children with special needs should have the possibility of access to mainstream school.
- Regarding the problem of separation and exclusion, the policy of school integration in relation to children with disabilities from ordinary educational processes is considered one of the most effective means.

The Salamanca Statement, a report published by the United Nations for greater inclusion in respect of students with SEND on an international basis, went further than Warnock and argued all children with SEND should have access to mainstream schooling and it was for schools to adapt provision in order to cater for need. Whereas Warnock had stipulated that of about 2% of students in question so required to be educated in special schools, the Salamanca Statement maintained that only a thoroughly inclusive education system presented the key and sole avenue through which the process of elimination of

discrimination and achieving a totally inclusive society was possible. However, there is no legislative power behind it – it is simply a statement of intention – and so there is no consequence for not doing as it advises (Conner, 2016).

The Warnock Report (Warnock Committee 1978) and the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO 1994) are both key texts in a process that reorients society's wider perceptions from a base in the medical model towards disability, and into the social model. The medical model, in turn, treats disability as an individual's deficit that needs be treated or cured and it is a person's responsibility to fit in the society (McKenzie 2013). According to the application of social model to disability, disablement exists only because the impaired people are oppressed by society, and barriers and prejudices, not individual impairments cause disabilities, and these barriers should be removed by society (Shakespeare 2002).

The UN Convention (United Nations, 2006), thus, is the first international legislation concerning the case of people with disabilities and has been offered by the hitherto impossibility of national administrations to reduce the discriminations against disabled people as well as safeguard their human rights. This Convention was adopted on 12th December 2006 with, two years later on 3rd May 2008 seeing its entry into force. Ratification was effected on 23rd December 2010 with special emphasis being exerted on the accompanying Optional Protocol (Liasidou, 2017).

It is already seen in the spirit of the UN Convention on the Disabled in its first article of the identification of people with disabilities. Also important is Article 8, aiming to raise public awareness on people with physical and mental limitations removing possible stereotypes as well as racist perceptions on these people. This Convention also emphasizes on the taking of necessary measures to improve the access to all areas and make their daily lives easier. However, priority is given to Article 24 that establishes the personal right and the provision of a modern educational integration system for a person with disabilities. Reference is also made to the need for equal access in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education as well as adult education and lifelong learning.

The most outstanding texts on children's rights, the Warnock Committee (Warnock Committee 1978) together with the Salamanca Declaration (UNESCO, 1994) and the UN Declarations (The United Nations, 1989; United Nations, 2006), are believed among those that were drafted and accepted and incorporated into majorly civilized countries legislation in the twentieth century on children and human synthesis. Based on the concept of inclusiveness, these three historical movements for integration and in particular for the education of the disabled.

In May 2009 the Council of the European Union has set its strategy objectives, as a follow-up to the strategic framework of European cooperation in the education and training ('ET 2020'), which underline on importance of inclusive education to address disability related barriers in education. This framework is none other than that of the "ET 2020 Framework" of the European Policy Cooperation (European Council, 2009). The Council considered that in order for a student to be able to safely exchange with his peers coming from different backgrounds, education has to fight against all types of discrimination and protect all young people. Madrid hosted an International Conference titled "Inclusive Education: A Way to Promote Social Cohesion" (IEA, 2010), which met in Madrid on 11-12 of March 2010 and was attended by some 300 delegates from the countries. The intention was to allow an opportunity for reflection on how the three principles of quality, competence, and equality could be integrated in all levels of education. Proposals that have come out include:

- Anthropocentric inclusive education will form a basis and will benefit all the students with or without SEN either due to disability or otherwise. Inclusive education will be the mode through which students are prepared for looking in a pluralist society.
- For the implementation of inclusive education, flexible education systems required treating diversity like a value eliminating all barriers (physical barriers, training programs and materials, attitude, equipment and special aids, social activities, communication, access to sign language and other educational tools so as to improve oral communication). Also, teamwork, school leadership, harmonious conditions among all students and cooperation between parents of professionals and volunteers are of main concern.
- Teacher training (both initial and the one they receive during their service) should be given very special attention in all the levels. They should be prepared to meet different needs of students, which is a critical factor for inclusive education to succeed.

The view of the European Commission (European Commission, 2010) that is offered in its Strategic Framework for Disability 2010-2020 highlights the strong mandate that has the European Union and the Member States to improve the conditions of life at the social and economic dimension of people with disabilities and also underlines the ambition to create in Europe a continent of no barriers. The 2010-2020 Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training of the European Commission (European

Commission, 2011) as well as the Council Conclusions on the Social Dimension of Education and Training of May 2010 (Council of the European Union, 2010) reformulated the message on the social dimension of education and training by pointing out that educational systems should answer to diversity and provide to all learners, including those with disabilities and/or SEN, successful educational inclusion (Liasidou, 2012).

This vision of inclusive education has recently been further endorsed in the Declaration "Education 2030, towards inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all". The Incheon Declaration has been adopted on 21 May 2015, at the World Education Forum held in Incheon, Republic of Korea. The same is an aspirational document that commits to eliminating all forms of exclusion and marginalization. Ainscow (2016) presents a radical change agenda, in view of these new international policy thrusts focusing on national justice policies and that for the development of good school practices towards inclusive education.

Most states have introduced inclusive education in regard to that. Although a major achievement has been witnessed in the last twenty years on increase of access to basic education, extra measures need to be taken to reduce barriers to learning and allow every learner in schools and other learning settings get a meaningful learning experience without exclusions (UNESCO, 2017).

In conclusion, the surveys and the regulations seem to agree that:

- A public education without exclusions has significant benefits for all the students regardless.
- Inclusive education is a right as opposed to being a privilege for some selected students and
- The successful functioning of inclusive classes does not exclude any more successful training in separate special structures (Cole, 2006).

1.4. Measures and legislative provisions of inclusion in Greece's educational system

The rapid political steps of implementation from the time towards years have made inclusive education at the national level a central issue in Special Education research field for the last thirty years in Greece. However, this move was mostly limited at the political level through adoption of relevant legislation but not effective implementation. Since then, a number of legislations, in harmony with the globed trend and perspective for education for all in Europe, are coming to contribute special and general education.

The first Special Education law is Law 1143/1981 on "Special Education, Special Professional Education, Employment and Social Care of the Deviated from the Normal Person". This Law was voted and published far earlier in comparison to the UNESCO Declarations of 1994 and 2017 and constituted the highest triumph of Greek education regarding issues pertaining Special Education. This is the first time that the state took up its responsibilities to the people with disabilities, although not addressing education as required. This law is governed by the principles of recognition of equal rights, opportunities to all citizens, to the school and social integration and that of occupational, social rehabilitation (Τζουριάδου, 1995). Special Education was given a) in general schools, b) special departments under the general school and c) special schools (Ζώνιου-Σιδερή, 1998).

However, this Law of special education contexts the said content in a restricting manner for it enjoins the same to accept the rules and dictations that medical science made (Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου, 2012). Although the spirit of the Law is heavily based on the traditional medical model that defines disability on a person's weaknesses, however, the enactment of Law restricted special schools, and for the first time, established supportive teaching classes and parallel special classes attending to regular schools. These special classes constituted full-time education for children with low intellectual ability and partial education of children who had learning difficulties (Παντελιάδου, 2007). This Law was accused of reflecting the distinction between "normal" and "abnormal" people, classifying the students to categories of problematic people while leading them to marginalization (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2004), thus the "binary" education system is perpetuated. That is to the regular schools on the one hand and to the special classes as well as institutions. Besides, there existed no reference to the integration of people with special educational needs in this Law. Law No.1143 / 1981 seems to be the most unfair Law and although it has received the strongest criticism from Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη (2012) it is used as a constant source of abstraction of principles, content and values from the subsequent Laws, which have declared their intention to change the educational treatment of people with disabilities. After that, a rapid development in Special Education was started and by the year 1991, 706 Special Education units were operating.

The other two laws succeeded Law 1566/1985 and Law 2817/2000 by a clear, more oriented integration policy. Initially, the criticisms expressed against the previous Law 1143/1981 led to the Law 1566/1998 for the general education: "Structure and operation of primary and secondary education and other provisions". More specifically, this Law had an essentially the abolition of the discrimination of children in normal and abnormal and the integration of children with disabilities in general schools, while it was an effort by the

State to follow European data (Ζώνιου-Σιδερή, 2000). As paraphrased Λαμπροπούλου and Παντελιάδου (2000), for the first time, there was an integrally part of the general education legislation setting at least the legislative, administrative conditions for inclusion of special needs students. Also, for the first time, special auxiliary services were introduced, such as the school psychologist whose task was mainly identification and support of students with disabilities ranking them in special education school structures (Πολυχρονοπούλου, 2001). According to this law, pupils with special educational needs attend schools or classes of a special nature or they go to the regular schools in order to obtain an adequate special education and learning in every case (Article 2 (4)). It further emphasizes of executing specific programmes according to the type and degree of needs, the training opportunities and the integration into the production process taking other special conditions into account (Article 33(3)). The state, in an official statement, said that it hoped to eradicate the dividing lines within the educational system, which had elaborately been under way since 1983–84 with the creation of special classrooms inside general public schools (Ζώνιου-Σιδερή, 2009).

Still, this time it was considered again that segregation had not actually been eliminated and that simply "divergent" individuals were given a new name as disabled while still in fact being segregated in education. As it is evident, Greece is an oscillating global model, only a little belatedly (Ζώνιου-Σιδερή, 2000). At the same time, though, there was a conk reverse trend, a steadily increasing flow of students from general to special education. As a result of this practice, three years later, in 1988, Law 1771/1988 was laid down by the effort of the Greek State to fill the gaps of Law 1566/1985.

The above, for sure, resulted in the filling of special classes by children with learning disabilities, who have various types of disabilities and are also from minorities (Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου, 2012). The Law contained together with other amendments the necessary adjustments and changes of the system of introducing people with special educational needs to higher education. According to Ζώνιου–Σιδερή (2004a), by the Supplementary Law 1824/1988, reinforcement teaching was being introduced at school for pupils having any kind of learning difficulties at the primary and secondary cycle.

Then, Law 2817/2000 succeeded is "Education of persons with special educational needs and other provisions", in which a series of elements defining the institutional framework of special education with a more modern perception than before. This law recasted the contents of Special Education, wherein the focus was laid on the educative needs of the disabled person and not with the causal cause of these needs. Attending a high

school is a 'natural learning framework' for children with special learning needs. For instance, the special schools are subjected to restrictions and full classes abolished. Only part-time departments renamed integration departments remain while other structures such as parallel support and home teaching are being developed. The teaching uses new technology multi-media, Braille machines, sign dictronaries. Sign language is recognized as the official language of the deaf human beings. In particular, establishes the introduction of "special educators," the institution of individualized programs, to set up Evaluation and Support Diagnosis Centers (KDAY). The aim of it in consideration of Article 2(2) is to avail services of diagnostic, evaluation, and support to learners and especially learners with special educational needs. They also aim on providing support, information and awareness to the teachers, parents and the society. New specializations of Special Education staff is being created, like music therapists, sign language interpreters and the Pedagogical Institute creates a Department of Special Education. It is from this point of view that the theoretical framing of the model of inclusive education is integrated, and interest expressed in relation to inclusive education within the Greek mainstream - without the simultaneous creation of a complete system of special education (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2012).

However, even this Law underwent criticisms because it keeps a special education system alongside public, makes use of obscurantistic terminology, excessively concentrating the Evaluation and Support Diagnosis Centres in big urban poles and while insisting on integration, does not meanwhile provide for a specific measure to help pupils and teachers in the general education schools. Simultaneously, more children fail because of intensified regular school. The model had actually theoretically been followed as the single school one; in practice, however, it was the model with enhancing interaction through reductions of children's problems (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2004). Continuing the critique to his Law 2817/2000, Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου (2012) propounds integration as a form of defense proposed in integration classes and parallel support to shield the uninterrupted operation of general education by the externally constructed students (students with disabilities) and internal enemies (students with learning disabilities) who threaten the stability of the system.

The above Law stipulates that inclusive education policy cannot be regarded isolated from the wider social forces who claim social and educational integration making inclusion a matter of political matters and not a technical one (Zoniou-Sideri et al., 2005).Nevertheless, institutionalization of integration turned out not to be sufficient for significantly improving the conditions in Greek educational reality taking into consideration that it was not directly followed by designing an educational policy which would include

educational preparation of the teachers serving on training service, necessary adaptation of the curriculum and relevant school book in their recipient public, and appropriate reorganization of the school environment(Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2000). As such, special classes' confusion and prolongation of an educational policy of exclusion has been significantly growing (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2012).

In 2008, New Law 3699/2008 on Special Education "Special Education and Training of People with Disabilities or Special Educational Needs" was adopted. According to the current Law 3699/2008 (Article 2(4)) essentially it is the purpose of all Special Education and Training the comprehensive training of students with a disability and special educational needs in order to develop their personality seek equal opportunities, full participation and contributing to society, the independent life, the financial self-sufficiency and the autonomy at the context of preschool, primary, secondary, tertiary education. In this Law, the definition Special Education is enriched with spiritual, moral cultivation. The Law declares that education helps in moulding the character of students defining their social relationships through a systematic and time-bound process of transfer of knowledge, value, competences, skills being provided by the mainstream schools.

This law, though continuously amended, still provides for two forms of integration in the Greek educational system like the previous Law 2817/2000: (1) parallel support in the classroom of general school where a special education teacher is present besides classroom teacher and pupil with SEN attends the general school curriculum and (2) inclusion department, Special Education Structure within the general schools as separate department which receives SEN pupils from all classes and aims to educational intervention with personalized programs.

Special mention should be made of Law 4074/2012 on: "Ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities". This Law ratifies the United Nations International Convention (2006) and the Optional Protocol. Therefore, this confirms adjustment of Greek educational policy for people with disabilities to requirements of the international and European institutional framework. Issues in this context include them dealing with how school units function, the way they are enrolled in ordinary schools and the broader design of Special Education and Training. In accordance with this Law, therefore, Greece is obliged to adopt the principles of the UN Convention (United Nations, 2006) and apply the integrated education policy ensuring, according to

Article 24, equal participation of persons with disabilities in an educational process treating diversity with respect (Στασινός, 2016).

Therefore, during progress, one can outline a range of theoretical and practical challenges and contradictions associated with the implementation of inclusive education. Worth mentioning is the research of Zoniou-Sideri and her associates (2005) regarding the functioning of 'inclusive education classes' in preschool and primary education and whether their role facilitates or hampers integration. In the first years of the 1980s, some move has been made concerning the potential creation of special classes in mainstream schools that precisely targeted at increasing the quality of education offered to this group of children. By Law 2817/2000 they became automatically integration classes. Even though many policy issues arise on the account of simple renaming of classes (but represent something entirely different), for the first time, an accession language has been adopted by law (Deropoulou-Derou, 2012). At the same time, Zoniou-Sideri et al. in 2005, characterized the simple process of renaming special classes into inclusion or co-education classes as a classic paradigm of the way that accessions about education policy are implemented in Greece. They even concluded that in order for an inclusive education model to be implemented on a foundation based upon the essential principles of a democratic school, a different type of education was required for general and special education teachers with regard to the basic restructuring of the education system. Eventually, the reality proves inclusive education staying on paper at the same time creating climate of confusion concerning principles, aims and practices of inclusive education (Deropoulou-Derou, 2012).

Though attempts are made geared towards ensuring a smooth integration of children with SEN in mainstream schools, the climate of confusion prevails with so much evidence doing rounds on the most recent ministerial decisions and circulars. In a statement on 02-07-16 (HE 100574 / D3), the Ministry has announced the establishment of hundreds new Special Education and Training structures outlining the key concern to meet each student's educational needs at his or her final extent into the most appropriate educational environment. For this, the beginning of structure creation for Special Education and Training is carried out, including the Integration Departments. The Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs (YPEPTH) annually increases the Integration Facilities by 20% and the Special Schools by 8% in times of crisis and budgetary pressures. Another Ministry of Education announcement in June 2017 entitles HR 100575 / D3 as one important step for the educational improvement of students with disabilities and / or SEN, committing to continuing the efforts of modernization – amongst others - of its legislative framework and curricula in special education, on the one hand by strengthening the basic

guiding principle of its pedagogical integration and on the other its upgrading as far as the kindergartens that specialize with the aim of meeting the educational needs of each child, within the most appropriate educational environment.

In the same announcement, it is noted that in the school year 2016-17, after 8 complete years, 531 Integration Departments were established, 3 Special Kindergartens, 9 Primary Schools, 5 Special Vocational Education and Training Laboratories (EEEK) and 9 Special Vocational Gymnasiums and within the next few days we announce the establishment of 1 Special Kindergarten, 1 Special Primary School, 2 CEE and 9 Special Vocational High Schools and High Schools that will be operational from the new school year (YS 100574 / D3).

Provisions for Inclusive Education Co-Curriculum Programs Later, Circular 109631 / D3 / 29-6-2017 was issued referring to Inclusive Education Co-Curriculum Programs according to §3a of article 82 of Law 4368/2016 that was added as §6 in article 6 of Law 3699 / 2008. Under cross-program teaching measures, it is mentioned that coeducation programs can be listed through the special education and training units for primary and secondary education with units of general education being under co-location or not. More specifically, the inclusion programs pursue for the integration and equal opportunity in education, as well to develop cognitive, learning, emotional and social skills of students with disabilities and / or SEN. Moreover, the inclusion targets to sensitize the students in general educational schools on all issues relevant to human rights, respect of diversity and human dignity.

Simultaneously after Press Releases issued by the Secondary Ministry of Education and the Regional Units Directorates informed the citizens about the establishment of a Unified Special Vocational Gymnasium (GSE) / offered to students with SEN since it is the most suitable educational outlet for them offering parallel and guaranteed professional rights.

Nowadays, the trend of Special Education is to assure the right of all children to education and establish schools with including children themselves, understanding their specialties, supporting learning and meeting individual requirements. The separation of schools into general and special education forms various educational unfairnesses (Λαχανά & Ευσταθίου, 2015). Recent events, however, highlight that the educational system failed to substantially include all students in school life's various educational and social deeds as well as the perpetuation of marginalisation (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη & Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου, 2012).

In fact, the challenge lies not so much in operation of special schools as in the appearance and reproduction of special education practices within the mainstream school (Zoniou-Sideri & Vlachou, 2006). The reply of the schools to this new challenge, that is the different ways to learn and then the possibility to develop different curricula has to be able to give at school a change in its own capacity. Both this broader social culture change and reorganization of education policy are required, both at the level of curriculum development and implementation (Armstrong, 2003; Ainscow, 2005). At the same time, political and governmental vision for the plan, direction, and targets of educational policy remains confined at level of intentions (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη & Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου, 2012).

Inclusion focuses on how the schools will go about adopting and preparing in order to accommodate and train the students who are with special educational needs as well as those that of people with behavioral disabilities. By this, political and practical dilemmas arise of what the role of the special schools is not, who can participate in inclusive education but also the size and equity at resources. These dilemmas are a constant challenge for the school system globally (Ainscow, 2007; Armstrong, 1998).

In all cases, however, the ineffectual mainstreaming of disabled and non-disabled students can be only considered as failure of one school context based on the contradiction between the intention of a school to educate and its relative inability to face such needs (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2004b). There are no trodden and undeviating guidelines on how to apply inclusion other than suggestions that can be applied in a case-to-case basis as well as the effort of keeping huge the educational community consistently into consisting teachers, school principals, and school counselors (Ainscow, 2007).

This adoption of a separate Special Education Law against inclusive education, based on a philosophy which leaves the untouched education system presented as a measure in favour of inclusive education. What therefore remains clear is that it lacks in the Greek educational system an inclusive philosophy, targeting, and programming (Λαχανά & Ευσταθίου, 2015). This meant that the education system has to be ready to deal with different forms of disability possessed by each student so as to bring about equal opportunities for learning and socialization of all children (Τζουριάδου, 2011). The lack of planning and the development of social and educational policy programs in the Greek educational space are elaborated below, as well as the legislative framework for integration that does not supply measures such as the development of new curricula geared to the diversity of each child and not to the age homogeneity of the student population (Ζώνιου-Σιδερή 2004a).

Proper functioning of Inclusion is that it accepts diversity and removes exclusion at all levels (social, economic, academic, racial, gender etc.) (Slee, 2012), adaptation of teaching (pedagogical and teaching methods) and Curriculum, teacher collaboration, and school unit manager support (Takala et al., 2009). It is thus about the state-of-the-art planning of the Curriculum (AIS) and about an organizational strategy from school principals in general schools corresponding to all the range of divergence of student's learning abilities (Στασινός, 2016).

1.5. Protocols of inclusion in Greek schools

Special Education in Greece tends to complete a forty-year route. During this time, through different legislation, a variety of structures as well as educational and diagnostic services, were developed. However, the development of Special Needs Education in Greece until 2000 had no substantial results because it was based on the separation model and not on inclusion (Λαμπροπούλου, 2008). The legal framework has been modernized in recent years, but to date, no appropriate programs have been developed to meet all students with disabilities. Therefore, access and equal opportunities for all are not guaranteed, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη & Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου, 2012).

The school in Greece as it operates today can be said to be not "One School for All" in the sense of inclusion. Nevertheless, through all Greek legislation, the implementation of an educational reform for people with special educational needs has been promoted. The existence of support structures and institutions, such as integration classes and parallel support in mainstream classes and their functioning, when satisfying the requirements, are considered to be working towards inclusive education with educational and social implications (Στασινός, 2016).

Specifically, the implementation of the inclusive policy on diagnostic, diagnostic and educational process for students with disabilities and special educational needs is promoted by Law 4547/2018. Therefore, according to section 51, Issues of Special Education of Law 4547/2018, sections 4 and 5 of Law 3699/2008 are replaced by the following:

Article 4

Diagnostic, evaluation and support bodies

1. "The special educational needs of students with disabilities and / or specific educational needs are investigated and identified by the Centers of Educational and

Counseling Support (K.E.Σ.Y.), the Interdisciplinary Educational Assessment and Support Committees (E.Δ.E.A.Y.), and those recognized by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, Community Mental Centers Child's and Adolescent's Health of Other Ministries (Ko.Kε.Ψ.Y.Π.E.)".

In more detail, the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (K.E.Σ.Y.) are the evolution of the Diagnostic and Assessment Support Centers (K.Δ.A.Y.), later called the Diagnostic and Differential Diagnostic Support Centers (KE.Δ.Δ.Y.) (Law 3699/2008). The Educational and CounselingCenters (K.E.Σ.Y.) provide educational opportunities for students with special educational needs, coming from vulnerable social groups (Law 4547/2018). Its work incorporates broader support functions for school units, students, teachers and parents, as well as raising awareness of the community as a whole. They are active in the areas of research of educational and psychosocial needs, assessments, planning and implementation of educational and psychosocial interventions, as well as career/vocational orientation actions (Decision 211076 / ΓΔ4).

According to Law 4823/2021 - Official Gazette 136/A/3-8-2021 article 11, the Centers for Educational and Counseling Support (K.E.Σ.Y.) established under paragraph 1 of article 6 of law 4547/2018 (A' 102) are renamed to Centers for Interdisciplinary Evaluation, Counseling, and Support (K.E.Δ.A.Σ.Y.). Also, the Diagnostic Educational Assessment and Support Committee (E.Δ.E.A.Y.) are renamed to Interdisciplinary Support Committees (E.Δ.Y.).

The Diagnostic Educational Assessment and Support Committee (E.Δ.E.A.Y.) facilitates and actively supports the work of general education teachers. The Diagnostic Educational Assessment and Support Committee (E.Δ.E.A.Y.) is the body responsible for the educational evaluation and support of students and overall support for the school community. This committee shall be established by decision of the relevant Director of Primary or Secondary Education, upon recommendation by the Director of Special Education and Training School Units (Σ.M.E.A.E.) which is the Support Center of the School Educational Support Network (Σ.Δ.E.Y.) and consists of the head teacher of the school unit, who acts as coordinator, one (1) special education teacher, one (1) psychologist, one (1) social worker and those teachers in charge of the student's or group of students in need of support (Law 4547/2018).

School Support Education Networks (Σ.Δ.E.Y.), which consist of school units and Laboratory Centers (E.K.) of primary and secondary general and

vocational education, as well as special education and training, are intended strengthening and promoting cooperation, as well as coordinating the work of school units and Laboratory Centers (E.K.), to ensure equal access for all students to education and to promote their overall psychosocial health (Law 4547/2018). In the Laboratory Centers (E.K.) (provided for in section 10 of Law 1566/1985 (A '167), as renamed by section 8 of section 46 of Law 4186/2013 (A' 193)) students of technical and vocational schools carry out their internships.

       Finally, the purpose of the Community Mental Health Centers for Children and Adolescents (Κο.Κε.Ψ.Υ.Π.Ε.) is to provide integrated child psychiatry and psychosocial care to the population of the sector, children, adolescents (0-18 years) and families. with prevention, diagnosis and treatment services. (Joint Ministerial Decision No Γ3α / Γ.Π. 44342 / 2019).

2. "In the context of individual assessments, the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.) may evaluate students who have not reached the age of 18 years. Persons over 18 years of age, who have previously been evaluated by the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.) as persons with disabilities or special educational needs, fall under the responsibility of the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.) for the issuance of assessments - opinions concerning attendance at educational structures, provided they have not exceeded thirty years of age".

Article 5

Diagnostic Procedure

1. "Sensory and hearing disorders, motor or other physical problems, as well as serious or chronic health problems, are certified with a medical health report issued by a public health institution or a public health committee. The same service determines what kind of technical aids and instruments the student needs at school or at home. Students with visual or hearing disorders may apply to the medical services operating at the Center for the Education and the Rehabilitation of the Blind (K.E.A.T.) or the National Institute for the Deaf, respectively, for providing medical health report".

       More specifically, the Center for the Education and the Rehabilitation of the Blind (K.E.A.T.) operates in Athens as a Central Office and in Thessaloniki as a Peripheral Directorate Branch, covering the needs of young people and adults with

visual disorders at a national level. At the same time, the National Foundation for the Deaf provides special education and care for the purpose of vocational rehabilitation and all forms of assistance to the deaf and hard of hearing and their families.

2. "The investigation, evaluation and identification of the types of difficulties and potential educational, emotional, psychosocial and other learning needs and barriers shall be carried out at the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.) by a three-member interdisciplinary team. This interdisciplinary team is made up of a teacher specializing in Special Education, Primary or Secondary Education, depending on the grade from which the assessed student derives from, a social worker and a psychologist. The interdisciplinary team may also include a speech therapist, an occupational therapist or a physiotherapist or a member of the specialized Special Education Staff (Ε.Ε.Π.) of Discipline ΠΕ 31, as the case may be, upon recommendation by the three-member interdisciplinary team".

More specifically, in the Discipline ΠΕ 31 of the Special Education Staff (Ε.Ε.Π.) specialized staff are: a) blind professional orientation, b) mobility, orientation and day-to-day living skills, c) sign language Deaf. In addition, the Special Education Staff (Ε.Ε.Π.) consists of specialties such as: speech therapists, psychologists, child psychiatrists, school nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers, pediatricians, music therapists.

3. "After the evaluation by the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.), the interdisciplinary team shall prepare an evaluation report - certificate. The report identifies and describes the type of special needs or learning or psychosocial difficulties the student is facing, as well as his or her aptitudes or interests, and proposes, where appropriate, the appropriate educational and inclusion framework, changing school context whenever appropriate, the necessary psycho-educational and teaching support, as well as the necessary technical aids and educational materials to facilitate the student's education and communication. The evaluation report - certificate is accompanied by a Personalized Educational Program (Ε.Π.Ε.) framework, which includes key points-axis and general guidelines. The basic shapes-axis of the Personalized Educational Program (Ε.Π.Ε.) are formulated in collaboration with the student's parent or guardian or even the student himself, with a disability or special educational needs, wherever possible. The final evaluation report - certificate and key points of the Personalized

Educational Program (E.Π.E.) are apprized-publicized to their parents or guardians".

4. "Educational and Counseling Support Centers (K.E.Σ.Y.), depending on the type and degree of special educational needs and specific learning difficulties, determine the re-evaluation time, which is stated in the evaluation report - certificate. If a re-evaluation is not indicated, the reports of the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (K.E.Σ.Y.) shall be valid on a permanent basis".

5. "Where there is a divergence of opinions between the evaluation reports and certifications of the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (K.E.Σ.Y.) and the Community Mental Health Centers for Children and Adolescents (Ko.Kε.Ψ.Y.Π.E.) for the same student or when parents and guardians disagree with the outcome of the assessment and report-certification of the Educational and Counseling Support Center (K.E.Σ.Y.), parents or guardians have the right to appeal to a five-member Interdisciplinary Committee of the Secondary Education (Δ.E.Δ.A.), which is comprised after the Peripheral Education Director has decided. This committee is composed of the educational project coordinator for the special education and integration education of the Relevant Regional Educational Design Center (ΠE.K.E.Σ.), as chairman. Moreover, is composed of an educational project coordinator of the Relevant Peripheral Education Center (ΠE.K.E.Σ.) depending on the grade from which the assessed student derives from, a teacher specializing in Special Education and Education for primary and secondary students on a case-by-case basis, and in particular in the Discipline ΠE02 of philologists for secondary education, a psychologist of DisciplineΠE23, and of a Discipline ΠE30 social worker, as members. The Interdisciplinary Evaluation Committee of the Secondary Education (Δ.E.Δ.A.) may recommend to the Peripheral Director of Education the extension of its composition, with additional members from other specialties of teachers or Special Education Staff (E.E.Π.) if their involvement is deemed necessary for the needs of the case-by-case evaluation. The student's parents or guardians may also choose an expert, who shall provide an opinion before the five-member Interdisciplinary Evaluation Committee (Δ.E.Δ.A.), without the right to vote. The decision of the Interdisciplinary Evaluation Committee of the Secondary Education (Δ.E.Δ.A.) is final. If there is a dissidence between the reports-certifications-assessments issued by the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (K.E.Σ.Y.) and those by the Community Mental Health Centers for Children and Adolescents (Ko.Kε.Ψ.Y.Π.E.) regarding the same student and parents

or guardians do not resort to the five-member Interdisciplinary Evaluation Committee of the Secondary Education (Δ.Ε.Δ.Α.), then what prevails is the evaluation report - certificate of the Educational and Counseling Centers (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.)".

In detail, part of the mission and duty of the Peripheral Educational Planning Centers (ΠΕ.Κ.Ε.Σ.) is that Educational Project Coordinators are responsible for the educational planning as well as to design, monitor, coordinate and support the educational work of the School Units, Laboratory Centers (Ε.Κ.) and the coordination of the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.) which belong to their area of competence, the scientific and pedagogical support of teachers, the organization of teacher training, and the support the planning and evaluation of educational work at peripheral level (Law 4547/2018).

6. "School units and examination committees for students with disabilities and special educational needs are required to implement the proposals set out in the evaluation reports – certifications drawn up by the competent services".

In particular, the Committees set up to deal with students with disabilities and special educational needs for the National Entrance Examinations, in accordance to the subparagraph α of paragraph 3, of Article 27 of Presidential Decree 60/2006 (Official Government Gazette ΦΕΚ65 / Α), presence is required of the Consultant of Special Education or its General Manager of the Relevant Education and Counseling Center (KESY) or secondary education teachers serving in it, to provide clarifications or explanations on issues referring to special educational needs when they are asked by the committee which is in charge of the implementation of the examination.

7. "a) Secondary education teachers specializing in Special Education (EAE) who serve in the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.), under the coordination and planning of the Head of the Education and Counseling Support Center (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.) and the training coordinator for special education and integration education:
(aa) conduct information-training meetings with teachers and pupils to inform them about the process of examining students with disabilities or special educational needs,

(bb) during the implementation of the National Entrance Examinations, they attend the special examination centers and support the work of the committees which are responsible for examining students with disabilities and special educational needs by providing clarifications or explanations on issues referring to special educational needs when asked by the committees".

According to Article 6 of Law 3699/08concerning the education of students with disabilities and special educational needs, and amendments to the Laws: a) Law 3879/2010, b) Law 3966/2011, c) Law. d) Law 4368/2016, e) Law 4452/2017 and f) Law 4547/2018 the following shall apply:

Attendance:

1. "Students with disabilities and special educational needs may study:

   (a) In the classroom of the general school, in the case of students with mild learning difficulties, supported by the classroom teacher, who shall cooperate on a case-by-case basis with the Education Centers and Counseling Support (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.), with the Coordinators of a General and Special Education and Integration Education Training Project.

   (b) In the mainstream school classroom, with parallel support - inclusion, by EAE teachers, when required by the type and degree of special educational needs. Parallel support is provided to students who, with appropriate individual support, can attend the detailed curriculum of the classroom, to students with more severe educational needs when there is no other EAE framework (special school, integration department) or when parallel support is required - based on the report-certification of the Center for Educational and Counseling Support (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.) - because of their specific educational needs. In the latter case, special teacher support can be provided on a permanent and scheduled basis. Parallel support is solely suggested by the Relevant Training and Counseling Center (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.), which in its written report determines the hours of parallel support on a case-by-case basis. Applications for parallel support are submitted to the school management and through the relevant education directorate are forwarded to the EAE Directorate of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religions for approval and implementation planning. The time for applying for parallel support is set from the date of enrolment in the school until October the 20th of each school year".

From 1-9-2010, parallel co-education support-inclusion can also be provided through specialized educational support programs for inclusion of students with disabilities and / or special educational needs, which are included in Actions co-financed by the European Union and the State of the National Strategic Reference Framework (Ε.Σ.Π.Α.), by teachers of the discipline ΠΕ60 Kindergarten and ΠΕ70 Teacher Classes with formal qualifications in placement in the EAE, ΠΕ61 Early Childhood Educators Specialists in Kindergartens, ΠΕ71 Special Education Teachers in Primary Schools ΠΕ02.50 Philologists Specialists, ΠΕ03.50 Mathematicians Specialists and PE04.50 Physicists Specialists. If the above teachers are not enough, other teachers of the ΠΕ60 Kindergarten and ΠΕ70 Teachers may also participate in these programs, as well as teachers of the ΠΕ02 Philologists, ΠΕ03 Mathematicians and ΠΕ04 Physicists.

Teachers in all of the above disciplines may additionally provide:

i) supportive teaching for students with disabilities and / or special educational needs, who are provided with parallel support-inclusion upon completion of their courses, by decision of the teachers' association, on a proposal from the relevant Education and Counseling Center (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.) and with the consent of the guardians of the students,

ii) a personalized supportive education program in the context of inclusion relating to other students with disabilities and / or special educational needs, is defined as appropriate, as needed, and taking under consideration the hours of support which are needful, by the relevant Educational and Counseling Support Center (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.). Teachers of all the above disciplines attend a training program. During the course of this program, trainees are considered to be in an ordered service and the training time is counted on their prior work experience. By the decision of the Minister of Education, of Research and Religions, which is issued by the Institute of Education Policy (Ι.Ε.Π.) and published in the Government Gazette, the objectives of the training program, its total duration in hours and the teaching, thematic units are specified. The same decision defines the number of teachers who will attend it, the bodies that will implement it and put it into effect, the conditions and procedure for the selection of trainers, as well as any issues related to the training of the above teachers. Following the abolition of the Peripheral Training Centers (Π.Ε.Κ.), article 49 of Law 4547/18 states that "Bodies of Teacher's Training" may be: (a) school units, (b) Peripheral Educational Planning Centers (ΠΕ.Κ.Ε.Σ), the Educational and Counseling

Support Centers (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.) and the Education Centers for Sustainability (K.E.A.) under the coordination of Peripheral Educational Planning Centers (ΠΕ.Κ.Ε.Σ.) (c) Higher Education Institutions-Public Universities (A.E.I.) in Greece. The training program, access on their request, is taught by specialist scientists, members of Teaching - Research Personnel (Δ.Ε.Π.) or Educational Staff (Ε.Π.) of Higher Education Institutions (A.E.I.), Coordinators of Educational Projects, public education teachers as well as other civil servants and individuals with the required scientific and teaching qualifications, with hourly remuneration, the amount of which is determined by a joint decision of the Ministers of Finance and Education, Research and Religious Affairs in the Official Gazette.

In depth, the Peripheral Training Centers (Π.Ε.Κ.) institution has been, in recent years, one of the main providers of the retraining in primary and secondary education aimed at reinforcement, assistance and enhancing their professional development, according to the sections 28 and 29 of Law 1566/1985 (A '167).

Furthermore, Institute of Educational Policy (Ι.Ε.Π.) is a scientific agency that provides support to the Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs on issues regarding primary and secondary education, post-secondary education, transition from secondary to higher education, teacher training, student dropout and early school leaving. Co-operation with I.E.Π. is required for every relevant initiative or action taken by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs departments or the agencies supervised by it.

The Education Centers for Sustainability (K.E.A.) have as their mission (Ministerial Decision 77877 / D7 / 2019):

i)   supporting school units on issues regarding sustainability education, with a focus on the environment and areas related to sustainable development, such as health promotion and culture,

ii) the interconnection of the education community and the local community to ensure sustainable environmental management and the emergence of sustainable solutions to local issues (paragraph 1 of Article 12 of Law 4547/2018).

(c)   "In specially organized and appropriately staffed Integration Departments (T.E.) operating within general and vocational schools with two (2) different types of programs":

i) "Common and specialized curriculum, defined by a proposal of the relevant Center for Educational and Counseling Support (K.E.Σ.Y.) for students with milder forms of special educational needs, which shall not exceed fifteen (15) teaching hours per week, for each student .Students without Integration report-certificate issued by a diagnostic operator, may also attend the Integration Departments, subject to the agreement of the Coordinator of the Educational Project ofSpecial and Inclusive Education. A minimum of three (3) students and a relevant diagnostic report-certificate are required for the establishment of Integration Departments. In the case of co-located or adjacent school units, the Integration Departments (T.E.) shall be joined up to a maximum of twelve (12) students per Integration Department (T.E.)".

More specifically, the purpose of the Integration Departments is to fully integrate students with special educational needs and / or disabilities into the school environment through specific educational interventions. The teacher of the Department of Integration (T.E.) supports students within their classroom environment, in collaboration with their classroom teachers, with the aim of diversifying activities and teaching practices, as well as adapting the educational materials as well as the educational environment. Support in a special classroom is provided if the particular educational needs of the pupils so require, with the ultimate aim of providing them with future support within their classroom environment.

ii) "Specialized extended group or individualized curriculum, defined by the proposal of the relevant Educational and Counseling Center (K.E.Σ.Y.), for students with more severe special educational needs, which are not covered by independent school units which correspond the type and degree of these needs. The specialized program may be independent of the joint, according to the needs of the students. In such cases co-teaching is carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the diagnostic services".

According to Law 4452/2017: "Students diagnosed with disabilities and / or special educational needs, by a competent public institution (K.E.Σ.Y., Medical and Pedagogical Centers, Public Hospitals), who attend primary and secondary schools and vocational training may be divided into sections of the same class of the relevant school unit concerned, as follows":

a) "The number of students with disabilities and / or special educational needs, alleged by the Law 3699/2008 in paragraph 1 of section 3 and paragraph 2 of section 3, with the exception of specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysreading, dyscalculia, dysorthography, may not be greater than one (1) per classroom. If after the division of pupils into sections of the same class it is found that the number of pupils referred above in the previous subparagraph, is more than one (1), the number of pupils in the class may be smaller and can be reduced by three (3) pupils of the prescribed maximum number of pupils per section in accordance with the applicable provisions".

More specifically, paragraphs 1 and 2 of section 3 of Law 3699/2008 state: (i) Students with disabilities and special educational needs are considered those who, for the whole or a certain period of their school life, have significant learning disabilities due to sensory, cognitive, cognitive, developmental problems, mental and neuropsychiatric disorders that, according to interdisciplinary assessment, affect the process of school adaptation and learning. Students with disabilities and special educational needs are specified, in particular, those with intellectual disability, sensory impairments (blind, visually impaired with low vision), hearing impairments (deaf, hard-hearing), chronic non-curable diseases, speech disorders, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysreading, dyscalculia, dysorthography. Also, students with attention deficit disorders (ADHD) with or without hyperactivity, pervasive developmental disorders (autism spectrum), mental disorders and multiple disabilities. The category of students with disabilities and special educational needs does not include students with low educational success or achievement that are causally linked to external factors, such as linguistic or cultural specificities. (ii) Students with complex cognitive, emotional and social difficulties, unlawful behavior due to abuse, parental neglecting and abandonment or domestic violence, belong to people with special educational needs.

β) "The number of pupils diagnosed with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dysreading, dyscalculia, dysorthography, may not exceed four pupils (4) per classroom.

If after the distribution of pupils into sections of the same class it is found that the number of pupils referred above in the previous subparagraph is more than four (4), the number, in total, of pupils in the class may be done smaller and can be reduced by three (3) pupils, fewer of the prescribed maximum number of pupils per section in accordance with the applicable provisions, provided there is no

Integration Department at the school. The reduction referred to the previous subparagraphs shall be carried out by the decision of the relevant Peripheral Director of Primary and Secondary Education, following the recommendation of the competent Director of Education. The Director of Education shall, in the formulation of the recommendation, take into account the relevant decision of the teachers' clubs and the opinion of the Coordinator of the Educational Project of Special and Inclusive Education and the responsible Coordinator of the School's Educational project of Pedagogical Responsibility".

2. "Students who cannot look after themselves are studying either at, the Structures of School Units of Special Education (Σ.Μ.Ε.Α.Ε.) or in schools of general education or in Integration Departments (Τ.Ε.) with appropriate support and the presence of Special Assistant Personnel (Ε.Β.Π), depending on the type of disability and the specific educational needs that resulting therefrom. The possibility of supporting students in the previous paragraph may also apply to a school nurse following a public hospital report-certification".

In more detail, the structures of school units of special education which pupils with disabilities and special educational needs can attend, are the following:

For secondary education:

- Lower secondary special education schools (gymnasia EAE)

Pursuant to law 3699/2008, students may attend the preliminary year and grades A, B, C to lower secondary special education schools up to the 19 years of age.Graduates of primary education with disabilities or special educational needs can enrol directly in grade A of lower secondary special education school, following an evaluation from the relevant KESY.

- Upper secondary special education schools (lykeia EAE)

Pursuant to law 3966/2011, upper secondary special education schools offer a preliminary year of attendance apart from the grades A, B, C to students. Graduates of lower secondary special education schools with disabilities or special educational needs can enroll directly in grade A of upper secondary special education schools, following an evaluation from the relevant KESY.

For vocational upper secondary education:

- Special needs vocational lower – upper secondary education schools (ENEEGy-L)

Pursuant to law 4415/2016 special needs vocational lower – upper secondary schools offer attendance of grades A, B, C, D of lower secondary special education schools and grades A, B, C, D of upper secondary special education schools. Students with disabilities and special educational needs, following an evaluation from the relevant KESY, may enroll in them. These students benefit from the timetable and curricula of the specific structure and within academic and vocational education may follow a post-upper secondary education school structure and an autonomous or inspected professional experience.

More specifically, graduates of primary education (general or special) and of grades A, B of special vocational education and training workshop, following an evaluation from the relevant KESY, can enroll to grade A of special needs vocational lower secondary education school. Students may first apply to grade A until they are 16 years old. Upon completion of attendance to grade D they acquire a lower secondary education school degree.

Graduates of special needs vocational lower secondary education school may attend, if they wish, following an evaluation from the relevant KESY:

- Grade A of a special needs vocational upper secondary education school.
- Grade A of a general upper secondary education school.
- Grade A of an upper secondary special education school.
- Grade A of a vocational upper secondary education school.
- Grade A of an evening vocational upper secondary education school.
- State vocational training institutes for adult graduates of compulsory education.

As far as admission and attendance requirements for students of grades A, B, C, D of special needs vocational lower – upper secondary education schools is concerned, the terms and conditions are the same as in force for the vocational upper secondary education school (day or evening), following of course an evaluation from the relevant KESY.

The special vocati0onal education and training workshops (EEEEKs) are school units of secondary education. Students who have completed either a mainstream primary school or a special education primary school but have not exceeded the 16th year can enroll in EEEEKs after a recommendation of the competent Centre of Educational and Counseling Support (KESY). EEEEKs are for

students, who have difficulties in following the curriculum of secondary education and present disabilities and/or special educational needs. As in mainstream schools, these workshops have a six-grade system and follow the analytical and hourly structured programs according to the provisions in force, taking into consideration, however, the special educational needs of students as described in the personalised educational programs.

In addition, the Special Assistant Personnel (E.B.Π.) exercise the duty of students' care and auxiliary educational tasks under the guidance of her classroom teacher in Special Education and Training Units (Σ.M.E.A.E.).

3. "For students with disabilities and special educational needs attending secondary schools, their attendance shall be considered adequate where the total of absenteeism does not exceed thirty percent (30%) of the absences provided for in the relevant curriculum concerned. Schedule-based studies and additional absenteeism are proven due to their participation in rehabilitation and treatment programs. The need for rehabilitation and treatment of the physical or mental health of students with disabilities and special educational needs is attested by a public body certificate, which clearly shows the need for the above absence and its exact time".

In addition, "For students attending primary and secondary schools of general and vocational education, diagnosed by a competent public body (K.E.Σ.Y., Medical and Pedagogical Centers, Public Hospitals) with disabilities and / or special educational needs, upon parents' or guardians' request, the degree of examination of the second foreign language taught, shall not be calculated in the general degree of promotion or dismissal".

4. "When the education of students with disabilities and special educational needs becomes particularly difficult in the schools of the common curriculum or in the integration departments (T.E.), due to their specific educational needs, the education of such pupils shall be provided:

(a) In autonomous Σ.M.E.A.E.

(b) In schools or departments operating either with autonomy or as annexes of other schools in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, institutions of training and educating minors, chronically ill institutions or Mental Health Units' education and rehabilitation services, provided that inside them are living children of school-age, who are disabled, with educational needs. These educational structures are

considered to be Σ.M.E.A.E. appertain to the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, fall under the framework of the E.A.E. that regards school children and implement educational programs which are overseen by the Ministry of Education, Research and Religions. The details of the organization and operation of these Σ.M.E.A.E. are regulated by joint ministerial decisions of the substantially competent Ministers.

(c) Teaching at home, when deemed necessary, for serious short-term or chronic health problems that do not allow pupils to move to and from school. Approval of home teaching is approved by the director of education the corresponding grade in which the student is attending, following reasoned recent medical report-advice, stating the length of forced stay at home. This report-advice is provided by a public medical and educational service or a public health committee. Promotional or advanced school-leaving examinations are governed by the provisions of the individual lessons learned. The e-learning system education can also be used in the home-based curriculum.

Home teaching is not necessarily provided by a E.A.E. teacher, unless the relevant Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ has given its report-certification".

5. "For every student with a disability and special educational needs, the Personal Educational Program (Ε.Π.Ε.) is designed by the interdisciplinary team of the relevant Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ., composed, developed and implemented by the competent E.A.E. teacher, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, the Coordinator of the Educational Project of Special and Inclusive Education.

In the design of Ε.Π.Ε. the parent or guardian of the student and the Special Educational Stuff (Ε.Ε.Π) of Σ.M.E.A.E. also participate, at the invitation of the relevant Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.".

"At special education and training school units of primary or secondary education, inclusive education programs may be implemented, with co-located or non-co-located units of general education. The objectives of inclusive programs are, in particular, to promote inclusion and equal opportunities in education, to develop the cognitive, learning, emotional and social skills of students with special educational needs and / or disabilities, as well as to raise the awareness of general school students at training in human rights issues, respect for diversity and ensuring human dignity. The decision of the Minister of Education, Research and Religions, published in the Government Gazette, specifies the competent body and the

approval procedure, the manner of implementation and evaluation of the above programs, as well as any other details necessary for the implementation of this paragraph".

2. Skills and competences of the directors of Special Education Units

The course described here is a model reflecting an implementation and application of protocols for Special Education in Greece that cannot be. Easily defined or described. That condition is a result of the multi – dimensional character of Special Education in the country. As noted in the previous chapter, Special Education is provided through various institutions and educational units that make every possible effort to provide an effective response to children with disabilities and/or special educational needs for surmounting learning difficulties, obtaining enrichment of their educational background, and ensuring professional life in the future (Χρηστίδου & Χρηστίδου, 2018). It becomes evident that Special Education is an independent educational course that coexists with general and typical education.

The common place and aim of both procedures is the idea of inclusion at any rate. The inclusion basis is related to the deliberation and individual support with each student for reaching the same or similar educational, cognitive and learning level without premises, difficulties, problems, and background that could be present in every student. In this light, inclusion nurtures the potentiality of the students by offering them the needed skills and knowledge for accomplishing their goals for the benefit of all society course (Bouillet, 2013). The basic policy for the implementation of Special Education in the context of real school life is the clear division between Special and typical Education processes and institutions, regardless the common ground of inclusion characterizing the whole philosophy of the Greek educational system. Such decisions are based on a belief that only through this division, both typical and special educational students could reach better educational results.

Typical education students attend the standard educational program that is formed according to demands and potential of an average student. On the other hand, students with disability and/or special educational needs are better served in individual educational programs and mainly institutions whose form and structure adapt to those requirements and demands (Bossaert et al., 2015).

The following institutions and units offer time Special Education in Greek secondary Education (Στασινός 2016):

1. School Units of Special Education and Training. This category consists of the "Schools of Special Vocational Education and Training (in Greek ΕΕΕΕΚ)" and the "Single Special Vocational Gymnasiums and Lyceums" (in Greek ΕΝΕΕΓΥΛ). The

attendance of these school units is open only to students with heavy or medium disability and/or special educational needs.

These units, as already their names imply, they tend to have more vocational character since they prepare their students so that they offer the best possible employment prospects through the use of their tendencies, abilities and desires.

2. The Integration Classes (in Greek Τμήματα Ένταξης). Those classes are targeting to support students with mild learning difficulties and soft educational needs. For that reason, the Integration Classes are developed in typical education schools, while the students who attend them follow at the same time the standard educational program.

3. The Centers for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Consultation and Support (in Greek ΚΕΔΑΣΥ). These Centers play a very important role for the application of Special Education in the Greek educational system since through these centers, all the other school units are provided with guidelines and support to perform their tasks.

It is of importance to mention that the Centres do not only carry out educational jurisdictions over students with disability and/or special educational needs, but they also carry out counseling responsibilities in order to support their vocational and employment prospects.

In Greece, there is at least one Centre in the capital of every prefecture, while in the big cities like Athens or Thessaloniki there are more than one.

The above categorization of educational units is very important in the effort to decide on the exact skills and competencies which a director should be able to possess with regard to promoting the application of Special Education protocols and processes. In this way, it is clear that all directors of the units follow the goals of Special Education under the mission, the vision and the responsibilities of their units. Furthermore, all follow the educational policy of inclusion as it is adapted in the structure of their units.

However, a difference in the administrative and organizational structure of each unit, as well as the variety of different students or cases that attend these units, determine a difference in the appropriate skills and assets that a director should have in order to perform his/her tasks in the most effective way (Chua Yan Piaw et al., 2013).

2.1. The case of the directors of School Units of Special Education and Training

The duties and responsibilities of the directors for the School Units of Special Education and Training in Greece are numerous and diversified, which can be considered, generally speaking, as administrative, scientific, pedagogical and instructional. The variety

of skills and competences a director should possess in order to fulfill his/her duties with the best possible way dictates the versatile character of the director's duties (Arhipova et al., 2018).

2.1.1. General skills and competences

A head of a School Unit of Special Education and Training is, above all, a civil servant with the basic mission to implement governmental and public policies and principles. Public administration is a very vital sector for the good operation and success of the Greek educational system since it determines its organization and function of the units, as well as the framework for the successful completion of their mission. Administration of education in Greece has rather a centralized character.

Basic principles and policies come from the ministry of Education that makes absolute decisions over these matters. The ministry of Education gives guidelines and instructions in regional, prefectural and local level according to the orientation and the choices of the government. This results in a very complicated administrative system for the Greek education which is elaborated at the following hierarchy: Minister of Education → Regional directors of Education → Prefectural directors of Education → Local directors of schools. There are also the Educational - School Counselors, one of which in a regional level is responsible for Special Education matters (Αργυροπούλου & Συμεωνίδης, 2017).

The director of the school unit, be it a Typical or a Special education school, is the lowest official with administrative duties and decision-making powers. His main duties at this post are (Bitterova et al., 2014):

1. To shape and promote the vision of the school community and to support its collective targets.
2. To be instructor and mentor of all the teachers in his school by giving them solutions and instructions in every matter possible. It is very important to support the youngest teachers or the ones with less experience, who have to consider him as their role model.
3. To develop ways and to find alternatives in order to promote his/her cooperation with all the teachers under his/her responsibility. The teachers must feel comfortable to work together with their director, which has to be friendly and available for their proposals and actions.

4. To coordinate the work of the teachers as a unity, that is as the collective work of the school unit. In that frame, the director has to inform the teachers about contemporary educational issues, protocols and legislation coming under his concern and how to implement those in daily school life.

5. To ensure a spirit of cohesion among the teachers and to promote the collaboration of teachers with one another. Education is a very strenuous process, which preconditions the good and fruitful cooperation of the teachers, the exchange of opinions and experience between them, but also the exploiting of each teacher's skills, tendencies and inclinations.

6. To develop paths of collaboration with the parents of the students with a spirit of mutual understanding and responsibility.

7. To make himself/herself available for cooperation with his/her administrative and scientific directors so that he/she would better understand the present educational policy and protocols and implement them more adequately in his/her school unit.

As it seems, the role of the director of the school unit into the Greek educational system is very meaningful as it happens also in other countries (as for example Great Britain, France and United States etc.).

This fact brings to light that the director of a school unit should have in the first place skills and competences in an administrative and managerial level, since it is obvious that he/she is actually the main factor for the efficiency and effectiveness of the work and progress of the unit. Therefore, the "good" director should have or develop the following competences (Αργυροπούλου, 2010):

1. Understanding of the school culture and of its importance for the well-being of all interested parties of school life (students, teachers, parents etc.).

2. Recognition of the catalytic role of teachers who, therefore, should be encouraged and helped to develop their individual skills in education and teaching.

3. Commitment towards values like parity, common goals and offer of initiatives.

4. Encouragement of collaboration and at the same time discouragement of abstention from educational obligations.

5. Openness for dialogue and discussion with the goal of determining the specific aims of the school unit in full exploitation of the available human resources according to the needs and particularities of the students.

6. Knowledge and awareness of the structure of the Greek administration system and use of bureaucracy in such a way so as to promote the mission of the school and not as an obstacle for further development and evolution.

7. Awareness of the fact that the school unit, besides its autonomy, is an institution that exists within the limits of a social framework, which is related with the place that the school is.

Therefore, that local society should not be treated as something strange from school but rather a source for ideas and creation of synergies. Thus, the director should be alive to the fact that interactive relationship between his/her school and local society and thereby try to design bridges and canals for regular communication and change of experiences. All the above competences are constituents of a qualitative educational leadership and success.

According to Συμεωνίδης (2016), ιn the case when the director is characterized by these competences, it is very likely that he/she will be in a position to:

1. To inspire an involvement from all the partners of the school to the mission and vision.

2. To coordinate the work and the staff through the appointment of several roles and tasks.

3. To get involved in a very active way in the programming of the responsibilities and of works of the school.

4. Empathy—making him/her sensitive to the opinions and thoughts of the teachers in order to use them as premises for further initiatives.

5. Intensive, passionate care toward the progress of the school.

6. Avoid infertile repeating of procedures that have proved to be inadequate or inappropriate for the students and teachers again.

7. Pay emphasis on quality of the teaching.

8. Identify the high standards of the learning process, which enables it to achieve qualitative outcomes with regard to the benefits of school students.

9. Embrace every novel and innovative method or methodology of teaching and learning, which is put forward compatible with the needs and demands of the students.

Yet, a director of a school unit, whether it be Typical or Special education, needs to be dedicated to the hard and tough skill of decision-making and initiative. That skill, necessary for every director, seems more necessary at a director of the current Greek school (Ευρωπαϊκή, Επιτροπή, 2019).

Till the early 90s, the learning and educational demands of the Greek schools were easier and simpler to be dealt with. This was mainly because of the fact that the homogenous character existed among the student community since Greek society, in general, had not accepted large number of foreigners or immigrants. The school timetable and the content of the courses had that structure with no demands for evolution or adaptation. In this way, the role of the director became quite normal insofar as they were only teaching and had fewer administrative roles (Μάρκου, 1995). The situation began to change in the 90s when a large number of immigrants with children attended Greek schools. To correspond to these needs, the school timetables have changed by adding courses for the teaching of Greek as foreign language. This addition, however, didn't change that situation that student population had become heterogeneous and that a standard timetable and courses couldn't cater to those diversified needs.

This was the event that for the first time in the Greek education system there emerged the needs for individual ways of teaching and learning, on the basis of specific needs of diversified students (Γκόβαρης, 2011). It was a problem whose answer concerned the children of immigrants in terms of the need to teach individuality in the face of the diversified student capital. In the late 90s and early 2000s, the Greek educational system started changing in order to accept children with disability or/and special educational needs. It was in that period when the official educational policies first began to take into consideration the fact that the children with disability and/or special educational needs are a substantial part not only of the student population but also of the Greek society.

These children shouldn't be treated with compassion but as the future active citizens who, with the necessary support from the educational system, could be in position to participate in the social and professional life as equal members (Ζαγκότας, 2010). Organizing Special Education hasn't been as easy to do. Timetable of the school for the students with disability and/or special educational needs at this point became more complicated than the schedule used for standard. At the same time, there had to be a development of knowledge and attitudes among the teachers that would correspond to the new conditions, while the appearance of teachers with new specialties became an actual necessity.

The standard program until then consisted of courses of a mainstream nature such as Greek language, philosophy, mathematics, physics or chemistry, but the new diversified program for students with disability and/or special educational needs should also offer courses in other subjects like gardening, hairdressing, simple economics, arts and crafts, IT

and cooking. That condition evolved along the years, yet it remains valid even today for Greek Special Education schools. The teachers working and teaching in these schools must possess specialized knowledge on the cases of disability and on learning difficulties. At the same time, the stuff of the school suggests an enormous variety of teachers within all of its disciplines to be coordinated and encouraged to make collective results for the sake of students. In that framework, the role of the director of the school became increasingly important.

The coordination within the team of teachers may not be possible if the director has no skills to make decisions that will help him determine the guidelines of the work of learning and directions of teaching methodologies. Simultaneously, the director must be in a position to tap the potential within his staff and take all initiatives required to make this possible (Ζαγκότας, 2010).

2.1.2 Administrative skills

At the next level, the school for Special Education unit director shall be Thus, the director, being an employee and official of the government, ought to carry out his work and duties in a manner that is consistent with Greek public and administration legislation specifications and demands. The meaning of this is, therefore, that one of the most basic skills that must have a director is deep knowledge of Greek public administration. We should never forget that the school unit is a civil service which functions under the rules of public sector. This affects many aspects of school life that extent from the selection of personnel to the ways that procurement procedures are performed (Μαδεμλής, 2014). The director does not have the ability to choose the teachers who will work in his/her school.

That choice is an exclusive responsibility of the Greek state and specifically of the Greek Ministry of Education. It shows that the director is compelled to accept the teachers who have been chosen for the school by the central administration and work with them under the relation of an employer to his/her employees. "The teachers have specific rights and obligations about their duties, as stated by the Greek public law (Laws 2413/1996, 3528/2007, 4152. For example, secondary education teachers work 23 teaching hours a week (for those up to 6 years' experience), and after 20 years of teaching service, their working shift is reduced to 18 hours. The teachers also have the right for days off, for sick leave and the right to ask to serve in a different school. On the other hand, the main duty of the teachers is to fulfill their teaching duties according to the timetable of the school and to help in administrative matters which are related with the function of the school (for example

drafting documents, keeping statistics and data concerning their educational work and completing in an appropriate and right way the book of the school protocol and the book of minutes). Consequently, considering all the above, it comes out that the director of the school unit should know the matrix of rights and obligations of the teachers because these are dictated by Greek public law in order to perform his/her work in such a way as to ensure the obligations will be fulfilled and the rights will be enjoyed. On the other hand, the director of the school is responsible for the procurement procedures of the unit.

The commissions that a Special Education school should bear are more than those in a normal education school, since these include goods for the proper functionality of the specialized courses of the school program. A Special Education School requires, for example, apart from books of general interest, also scientific books with useful information for learning difficulties and disabilities. A Special Education school furthermore needs provisions for its greenhouse and for the cooking and hairdressing classes and generally for the courses that have a vocational and training character. The money though that are available for the school unit in order to go on with its provisions is of public character and comes from the Greek state as well as from local and municipal authorities. This money cannot be spent without any order and without following some procedures that are described in the Greek legislation for public procurements. This is indicative of the need for the director to be knowledgeable about the relative laws and ways in order to build synergies with the municipal authorities that will offer him/her the necessary funds (Αργυροπούλου, 2012). Another crucial domain of public law is in data protection, with which he should have a stable contact as well.

The issue of personal data protection has been regulated by the General Regulation on this matter from May 2018 (Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)). The GDPR refers to all institutions and persons, inclusive of private and public institutions, units, enterprises, state authorities, associations, etc., that manage, process, store, and distribute personal data, whether they have their registered office and activity in a country of the European Union or not. Main features of GDPR:

1. Legality, objectivity and transparency. The data is processed in a legal, equitable and transparent manner.

2. Purpose limitation. The data are collected for specified, explicit, and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a way that is incompatible with those purposes.

3. Data minimization: the collected data are relevant to the given purpose of processing, adequate and limited to minimum necessary for the purposes in which they are processed.

4. Accuracy—data must be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date; every reasonable step must be taken to ensure that personal data which are inaccurate in relation to the purposes for which they are processed are erased or rectified without delay.

5. Data stored in such a manner that it allows for the identification of data subjects only for as long as is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed.

6. Integrity - confidentiality. Data is handled in a way that provides appropriate security for personal data.

The application of GDPR to Greek schools, as it is is mentioned in the case under consideration, it is not optional but a strict obligation that the director has.

Such a duty assumes an even higher dimension in a Special Education School, where personal data of the students may consist of extremely sensitive ones relative to problems that have to do with their health (e.g. serious illness, medical and disability data, biometric and genetic data) or relatives (e.g. abuse cases, children's neglect, etc.). As a result and in compliance with GDPR, a director of Special Education Unit should:

1. Assure the protection of personal data of students and their family under his knowledge, and avoid leakage to unauthorized people.

2. Protect the personal data of teachers under his responsibility.

3. The special emphasis on keeping safe sensitive data, the leak of which can harm the life, integrity or personality both of students and teachers.

4. Ensure the usage of data for the benefit of students according to their learning specifics and educational necessaries.

5. Inform and advise all stakeholders and teachers about their rights and obligations to comply with the legislation regarding protection of personal data, including training for staff relative to the matter.

6. School observation is in compliance with all the legislations concerned for data protection, information activity audit and the training of staff participating in processing operations.

7. Advice the school in relation to the matters of data protection and overview the results.

2.1.3. Organization and management

The school unit is an independent institution and organization controlled by the Greek Ministry of Education. That organization is a constantly changing field which requires the director to be very changeable and flexible. The situation aggravates in the case of a Special Education School where the director is responsible not only to manage the general educational policy changes but also to apply these changes for the benefit of the children with disability and/or special educational needs (Arhipova, 2018). In this frame, the mandatory skills that a director must have are:

1. Communication skills

Communication is the ability to put across our thoughts and ideas either orally or by writing. A good communication necessarily involves the possibility to listen to our interlocutor and the ability to be open-minded about other views or opinions. The director should be open for communication with the team of teachers and to listen to what they want to say about the ways the school functions, as well as the process of teaching itself. The school may also receive feedback through communication from the parents of the students who evaluate the learning interventions of the school and their impact in the life of their children. Anyway, the feedback might serve as a basis for the organizational change and amelioration of the procedures and protocols which are followed for the learning process (Luthra, 2015).

2. Creativity.

Creativity is the ability of imagination and thinking beyond the ordinary or as it is expressed in one phrase to "think and act Out of the box". To be creative, one must be able to discover new and innovative ways of thinking and the way things are done. This competence is necessary for the director in finding the ways to meet the complex needs of the school and the upcoming problems that appear on the school environment (Stoll & Temperley, 2009). Specially, in the situation of students with disability and/or special education needs, skill of creativity seems to assume even greater importance as probably it

would be up to the directors to deal with matters related to each student's individual case. Creativity assists the director in arriving at the right and creative solution to every problem by simultaneously removing its negative effect to the unit.

3. Knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

It is necessary for the daily work that one knows the most recent developments in computers and software for the work that has to be carried out at a Special Education School. ICT might provide a diversity of ways of representation, expression, and management of information and these features are particularly useful in Special Education as students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, according to their individuality, could communicate, express and manage information in various way. Audio information for example could be turned into visual though ICT and that could be of great help for a deaf student. Students who do not speak can express themselves in other ways, with music, drawings or blogs. Moreover, the opportunities given by ICT (for instance collaborative learning, chances for knowledge creation, individualized feedback through multiple representations) could help the social and school integration of "disadvantaged" students as well as the development of self-confidence and the strengthening of their possibilities for integration (Ξανθούλη et al, 2016). The use of ICT software: web tools (wikis, blogs, e-portfolios), virtual worlds, distributed learning systems (mind maps, etc.), asynchronous e-learning platforms, social networks all provide new perspectives for Special Education. ICT offers the opportunities for the self-regulated learning to the students, at the same time promoting cross-communication, social learning, autonomous active participation in the learning process, equal collaboration and decision-making as well as personal expression and creativity.

With the same meaning, ICT provides everybody with free accessibility not only to new potentials, but also to previously overlooked rights, such as for integration, for equal social life and for professional success. Special report should be made to the use of ICT for the development of self-regulated learning as it is providing prospects to every student in order to follow his/her own learning potentials and receive the personalized educational support, according to their needs and specific features (Φραγκάκη, 2015). It is obvious that a director of Special Education School should be conscious of all evolution and progress in the field of ICT in order to propose ways for their using in daily school and learning life. Also, the sound understanding of ICT and their benefits for the students with disability and/or special educational needs will enable the director to motivate other teachers to use these technologies as well in their classes.

At the same time, the director would be in the position to evaluate the results of application of the ICT methods and protocols and suggest alternatives and new ways of improvement of the produced educational results.

4. Teamwork.

Enabling teamwork is a very important skill for the director. For all kinds of organizations, no matter the size, the ability to work within a team environment makes for an important factor with regards to achieving its goals and bringing results (Polega et al, 2019). Such condition appears even more crucial in a Special Education School where teachers of different and various disciplines are responsible to support educationally children with a multitude of disabilities, learning difficulties or other special educational needs.

5. Flexibility.

The best way to deal with the case of students in a Special Education School is through an interdisciplinary approach, where the possession of the skill of teamwork seems to be the condition and mean to reach that target. A very important skill is flexibility in the ever-changing work environment. It is classified as a "soft skill", that is as a skill that is related exclusively with the behaviour and the personality of the director.

At any rate, flexibility is the capacity to incorporate changes and new data, to adapt to new plans, if necessary new objectives, and to use new information and situations in a creative way. In doing this, the director shall come across changes in the legal and institutional framework regarding the function or the structure of school, in the official educational policies of the state and in the scientific evolutions related to the support to students with disability and/or special educational needs. It should also be added that the director will meet changes of the teachers of the school, a fact that would provoke his skill of flexibility in order to be able to adapt his/her methods and demands according to the abilities of the educational stuff. Lastly, the director is supposed to be flexible while dealing with the students being aware of the fact that each one is an individual case and needs a personalized approach (Day et al., 2016).

6. Information management.

Information management is a more applied skill. It has to do with the ability to know how we can find something that we need and retrieve information when needed. To perform that skill, the director must have a very analytic knowledge of all the factors that lie in relationship with the environment of the school. Such are the legal framework,

personalities and specialties of the teachers, characters of the students and the conditions of living of their families, but also economic image of the school, status of school's inventory, richness of school's library and condition of electrical, technological or other equipment of the school.

The management of the information above is very demanding but also necessary for the school director to achieve success in their work (Blau & Presser, 2013).

7. Self-control.

The ability to be able to have self-control over various situations that may be personal or professional. When self-control is strong, a person has the ability to cope successfully with different life situations (Sesen et al., 2016). The director of a Special Education school must have a very developed sense of self-control, especially since he/she has to always keep calm and tranquil to be able to take the right decisions to react in view of the situations generated by the students with disability and/or special educational needs.

We should not forget that these students, according to each singular case, are not always cool or calm, while on some condition they might even respond in a violent way. On the other hand, the parents of these students tend to be sometimes aggressive with the teachers or the director in case they disagree on a subject which has to do with the learning abilities of the student. Consequences will be bad especially to the student and for the school if the director or the teachers responded accordingly. That is why self-control is important to a director in order to keep the control of the school at all times.

8. Character and personal development.

Thus, under the general requirement of highly qualified and inspired leaders at schools, and very specifically under the professional demands of today's competitive environment, mainly within a Special Education School Unit, a high sense and perception of his role and mission as part of the educational chain that connects the official educational and learning policies with the sensitive group of students with disability and/or special educational needs is a particularly important feature for the director. Directors should try to develop initiatives and solutions that will create satisfaction among all members as well as parts involved into the process of learning. As it is already mentioned, the stakeholders of the school except the director are the teachers, the students, the parents, the local community and authorities and generally every person, institution or private or public structure that in one way or another is in connection with the school.

It is the responsibility of the director to keep all of them happy by trying to fulfill their needs, which would create a kind of ambiance of trust, confidence, sincerity, and integrity around the person of the director. Over that solid ground will bloom and bring extremely positive results with direct effect on the students for all society. The key factor of that progress is the director and his empathy and solid character skills (Ketelle & Mesa, 2006).

2.1.4. Extensive experience in Inclusive Education

The head of a Special Education School is characterized by the presence of teaching duties and functions of an administrative character. The particularity though of the Special Education School is that the learning work and the educational methodologies apply to students which cannot follow the standard program of the typical schools because of learning difficulties caused by a disability, a disorder, a mild or severe developmental factor. On the basis of all these, a Special Education School has reason to be created and to exist so as to provide the appropriate educational environment to the students described above and to provide them support under the principles of inclusion.

Inclusive Education is an alternative framework and philosophy supporting a broad reform plan for education and the change of participants in it, through their active involvement and voluntary commitment to the principles of Inclusion. It is also conceptualized as a continuous process (and not a static stage that will be attained one of these days) that requires constant vigilance in an attempt to reform education policy. Inclusion is based on democratic values, such as respect, equality, cooperation, acceptance and justice, advocates the partnership of different students and transforms the school into a healthy society of solidarity and a community of practice. The Inclusion theory is based on three axes. The first is related to overcoming all obstacles that stand against the education of children. The second one is related to giving chances of equal participation and access to all students without any discrimination, so as to succeed within their school units. Thirdly, inclusion is developed upon the denial of any form of violence, exclusion or marginalization of a student because of his/her background, language, religion, gender, disability, performance or socioeconomic background (Devecchi & Nevin, 2010). Within Inclusive education, diversity is something 'legitimate' and is not considered as something that needs to be 'solved' or 'assimilated'. Inclusive practice is based on the teachers themselves. In Inclusive education, diversity is something "legitimate" and is not considered as something that needs to be solved or assimilated. At the same time, in an

inclusive setting the teachers would feel in a much more comfortable position to set clear goals, develop constructive relationships with their students and motivate them to defy their expectations. School culture, that is, the set of beliefs, attitudes and perceptions are reshaped. In this case, the school culture is constructed on the following threefold: security → acceptance → cooperation. In that culture, common values are set, cooperation networks are structured and the members are given the feeling of "belonging", that is of a common "code of communication" where each one understands and appreciates the other. In its policies, the Inclusive Unit is characterized as an open system, functioning with parents and with the community and "listening" and understanding the concerns and the needs of the students. Inclusive Education is related to all individuals involved in educational processes and educational systems as a whole.

Its realization involves the creation of a clear framework totally responsive to its goals and characteristics, the adoption of suitable strategies, and above all the active readiness by the participants to change their mentality. Thus, through their action, their modern perceptions and their high skills, they are going to achieve a deep reconstruction of the educational systems, so that they correspond more effectively with their mission and with their crucial and diverse role. If all the above is taken into account, then it should come as an inevitable result that a director would not be able to succeed in the fulfillment of his obligations without having triumphed over the principles and values of inclusive education.

After all, the aim of a Special Education School is not to transfer knowledge and information, but to support students to obtain skills and competences, and to be in a position to claim the same rights and undertake the same obligations with all other students and future citizens. As such, the directors ought to have very many years of professional teaching experience, not only in Special Education Schools, but also in typical schools. That experience will allow the director to better understand the differences between the students with and without disability and/or special educational needs and to trace the fields and subjects that are more appropriate for the support of the latter and in order to acquire similar competences with the first. In doing so, the directors will have all adequate background to apply inclusive education protocols, and in changing the inclusive educational theory from an ideological approach into a practical dimension of the school life (Carter & Abawi, 2018).

2.1.5. Academic and practical knowledge of disability, of learning difficulties and of special educational needs

It is difficult to give a generally accepted definition that fully reflects the evolutionary nature of special education needs, because they are always characterized by social norms, the goals of the education system and generally the values of the community (Νικολαΐδης, 2013). In Greek educational system, the reference and clarification of the terms disability and special educational needs is provided by the law 3699/2008, according to which students with disability and/or special educational needs are the ones who "…*for the whole or a certain period of their school life show significant learning difficulties due to sensory, mental, cognitive, developmental problems, mental and neuropsychiatric disorders which, according to the interdisciplinary evaluation, affect the process of school adaptation and learning…*". Furthermore, at the same category could be classified the students *"…with mental retardation, sensory visual impairments (blind, visually impaired), sensory hearing impairments (deaf, hard of hearing), motion disabilities, chronic incurable diseases, speech-language disorders, learning disabilities, special learning disabilities, illiteracy, dysgraphia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder with or without hyperactivity, pervasive developmental disorders (autism spectrum disorder), mental disorders and multiple disabilities…"*. Finally, the law refers also to students "…*with complex cognitive, emotional and social difficulties, delinquent behavior due to abuse, parental neglect and abandonment or due to domestic violence…*" who are also considered to have special educational needs.

The most usual cases of disability and of learning difficulties that characterize students in Greek secondary education are the following:

1. One of the most numerous groups of students with special educational needs is students with learning difficulties. These students are not characterized by any obvious or other disability, but they have certain characteristics that make their learning efforts difficult. In most cases, if the diagnosis of special learning difficulties is made in time, then a training framework can be proposed for the student to overcome or at least overcome to a large extent any learning difficulty (State of Victoria, 2019).

2. Mental retardation, which is one of the most common disorders requiring special education. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental retardation as a state of incomplete development of the mind and impairment of skills, which appear during the developmental period of the child and which are related to the totality of cognitive, linguistic, motion and social abilities. Mental retardation can occur at any stage of the developmental period, from conception to developmental completion (16th year). The

causes of mental retardation are usually classified into two broad categories: a) genetic and b) environmental. Genetic causes include hereditary factors, while environmental causes include external factors, which act during the period of development of the individual. Environmental causes could be injuries (for example the baby falls from the bed to the hard floor), illness or other disorders (as acute encephalitis) and of course poor quality diet and lack of exercise. Down syndrome is one of the most common causes of mental retardation (Ηλιακοπούλου, 2017).

3. The existence of mobility problems in a student is a particularly difficult circumstance for him/her, as these are disabilities that are very obvious (paraplegia, amputations, etc.) and have a direct impact on his/her daily functioning. After all, the way society is organized exacerbates the difficulties arising from that form of disability, as people with mobility disabilities have difficulty even in issues that are commonly considered facts such as smooth motion indoors or outdoors. The situation becomes even more difficult if one considers the prejudices that are associated with mobility disability and especially the feelings of sadness and pity that it causes to people. This inevitably affects students psychologically, as they tend to adopt feelings of self-pity and ultimately guilt and shame for themselves (Παπάνης et al., 2009).

4. In addition to mobility disabilities, sensory disabilities are particularly common, equivalent to complete loss or reduced activity in one or some of a person's senses. The most common cases are related to the senses of vision and hearing.

Students with vision problems, in addition to the difficulties they obviously face at the level of autonomous living, they also have to deal with daily information and communication problems, especially in cases where technological devices with appropriate software or printed material are not provided or are not available in Braille language. At the same time, these students often find it difficult to use even simple appliances or equipment, while they can easily lose their orientation when the location of things in their living space changes or when there is no relevant relief marking or audible warning (Κατσουλης & Χαλικιά, 2007).

On the other hand, in the category of sensory disabilities we can also find the students with hearing issues. These students are characterized as deaf, which means individuals who have no sense of hearing at all and individuals with reduced hearing ability, which can be significantly improved by using a technological tool or headset. In any case, students with hearing problems during their school life present difficulties at the level of literacy, which mainly concerns reading and writing. Their inability to absorb sound stimuli

results in the difficult production of speech or in the production of speech with abnormal fluctuations of tone (too loud), in the inability to maintain rhythm, in the use of reduced vocabulary and in the omission of sounds. Overall, the situation gives students emotional stress and anxiety, which at the level of the learning process results in a low degree of concentration, refusal to participate in classroom activities and delayed speech development. In addition, students have problems to communicate with others, which become even more severe when there is no knowledge or interpretation with the use of sign language or of a device with visual messages and vibration (Κούλου&Τσιντώνη, 2019).

5. A special case of students with disabilities and special educational needs are students with mental and behavioral disorders. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019), mental health is the state where a person is aware of his abilities and skills, faces with vigor and composure the conditions (positive and negative) of life and desires active integration into society and its productive forces. The constant and for a long time deviation from this state, which is manifested briefly with abrupt changes in thought, mood and behavior, with phobias and stereotyped behaviors, with personal discomfort and functional disability, characterizes the transition to the state of mental disability. Mental disability is not a privilege of adults, but it also manifests itself in the student population through psychosis, anxiety disorders, depression, schizophrenia or emotional and behavioral disorders (hyperactivity disorders, behavioral disorders, etc.).

Students with mental disabilities usually experience bad situations from those around them, which lead them to stigmatization and social isolation. Many times, these students are monitored by a mental health specialist (psychiatrist or psychologist), while they also receive special medication in order to be able to function in an acceptable way at least within their personal and school environment.

6. One of the most common cases of disability is the case of autistic spectrum disorders, which are part of the diffuse developmental disorders. According to the DSM-V (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) diagnostic criteria, autism spectrum disorders are characterized (briefly) by persistent deficits in social communication and interaction and by stereotypical behaviors (such as obsession with certain actions, repetitive movements, and sensory hypersensitivity). These symptoms appear in the early developmental stages of the individual, while causing significant "damage" to social and occupational functionality. Very often autism coexists with mental disability.

The above references to some of the different cases of disability and/or special educational needs that are probable to be found in the environment of a Greek Special

Education School show that a great part of the directors' competences must be related to the acquisition of rich academic and practical knowledge in relative matters. The various cases of the students demand from the director (and proportionally from the teachers) to be fully informed about the academic nature and characteristics of disability and of the scientific research that is conducted in order to understand disability and to deal with its negative effects on student's lives. It is important that the director doesn't only care about administrative and teaching issues, but has also the belief that without proper information about the scientific features of the students' cases, the school will never be in position to meet its goals and visions towards an inclusive education.

2.2. The case of the directors of typical schools with Integration Classes

In Greece, Special Education is integrated as part of the typical education system. The objective of Special Education is to work in such a way so as to support the work of regular education and under the premises of policy of inclusion, to reinforce the skills and the abilities of the students with disability and/or special educational needs. A very important part of Special Education is the institution of "Special Classes" or as is known today "Integration Classes" (after the law 3699/2008) which were established in Greece at the beginning of 80s. Integration Classes have the main objective to reduce the differences and to bring the highest possible interaction between the children with disability and/or special educational needs and children who have no educational problems or special demands. The organization of Integration Classes for the first time in the USA got initiated in the second half of the 20th century and is related with the School of Psycho – Educators of Boston University. At any rate, the Integration Classes are classes within a common educational unit (school) where special education is given to students who are in need of special education support. It is underlined that there are students who are not in need of any severe educational need or the environmental treatment and thus, for them, the appropriate educational environment could not be a Special Educational School. Hence, they might as well take the path of the mainstream school which has a curriculum applicable to them and with special support that can come from Integration Classes and Special Education teachers. At the same time, in the Integration Classes, students with low school performance cannot be accepted when the cause of the problem is another one, like some linguistic or cultural differences, because the latter are not classified as children with special educational needs (Μεσσαριτάκης & Γουδήρας, 2013).

The students of the Integration Classes also belong to the typical class they are in. This indicates that these students shall attend the typical as well as the Integration Class in the typical daily school program. Inevitably, the effective running of the Integration Class couldn't be made without the cooperation and the equal participation of all teachers and educators that teach at the typical and at the Integration Class. This collective approach has as its purpose the diversification of the educational activities and of the learning practices, and that of the appropriate customization of the educational material and environment according to the particular learning and psycho-emotional needs of the each student (Σούλης, 2008).

At the secondary education level, Special Education teachers designing the individualized educational program of each student of the Integration Class are obliged to (according to Special Education legislation, Law 3699/2008):

1. "Cooperate with the teachers of the typical class, according to the lesson they teach (physics, mathematics, Greek language and literature etc) in order to create a link between the typical and the individualized program, which should be compatible in content and methods."Constantly assess the progress of each student in each lesson and re-design the program if it is needed during the school year.

2. Draft the timetable of the weakly and the report of evaluation of the Integration Class of the school year, and it has to be validated by the school director.

3. Assess other students for potential educational needs when so requested by the teachers of the regular classes and approved by the director.

4. In collaboration with the school director, provide information to the parents and legal guardians of the students in your class regarding the procedures they should undergo for them to be at their optimal health.

5. By the cooperation of the other teachers, strengthen the adaptation of the students of the Integration Class in the total school environment, trying to make common working groups and learning activities with the other students.

6. Take care for the personal files of their students being updated on a tactical base and under the guard of protection and full supervision of the director of the school. That files contain the personal and sometimes sensitive data of the students and therefore the access to them is classified only to the special education teachers and the director.

7. Make special education information and recommendations available to everyone involved in the life of the school (the principal, other teachers, parents, students).

8. Seek advice and guidance from the Center of Educational and Counseling Support in dealing with critical issues that might transpire after reporting to the director. That is because, as outlined by Γιγουρτάκη (2019), the role of the school director is of utmost importance in the functioning of the Integration Classes.

This role seems even more important in the case of Secondary Education where several teachers of different specialties serve the Integration Classes, which does not happen in primary education. In any case, the primary obligations of the directors that dictate also the first bunch of their necessary skills are:

1. Ensuring that there is the right and functional equipment and material for the learning process in the Integration Class, including desktops, laptops, projectors, interactive whiteboards, rapid access to the internet, and stationery. In this regard, in general, the director should be in a position to intervene and cover every potential need of an educational nature by creating and keeping stable contact with the teachers of the Integration Class.

2. Maintaining the Integration Classes functional and active at all times, without affecting the work of the teachers, and without engaging them in other activities or duties. The schools and above all the ones with both students with and without disability and/or special educational needs, have to fulfill a big amount of duties and obligations in teaching, educational and administrative level. However, all resources of the Integration Classes (teachers, equipment, etc.) should be withdrawn by the director from his/her programming and kept separate and independent for the purposes of an Inclusive School.

On the other hand, the director of an average school that also has Integration Classes must additionally have competences and skills in order to be apt for his position. The first place among these skills is the fact that the director of such a unit must be also a leader. The term "director" is not equal to the term "leader," since the main distinction is found in the way the human factor is applied and in the qualitative and quantitative features of the individual.

The director is a very learned and experienced person. He/she toils hard and is informed on issues relating to his science and duties. The director respects the system and follows the laws and procedures to the letter and without deviations. He/she is a busy public officer, who has no or not enough free time to speak with the teachers in the school.

Many times, the first priority of the director becomes the administrative work as the work of educational or learning gets underestimated.

This is therefore something that happens so often, particularly in the Greek educational reality, that directors are alienated from school processes and from all the stakeholders of school life. It is clear that he/she is a demanding director who does not like making mistakes or adjusting to diversified needs. Unavoidably, the director loves to give specific orders or instructions about every possible matter under his jurisdiction and he/she tolerates no individual initiatives (Κουτούζης, 2012). While the director in the strict and analytical approach is rather negatively charged, the leader is something different and positive. The leader is a visionary that doesn't seek to perpetuate the order of things, as it is. Thus, the leader encourages innovation and initiative.

Besides, the leader doesn't hesitate to violate the hierarchy, if he/she judges that such an action could be for the benefit of the school, while he/she communicates directly with the stakeholders when needed. To reach the above, the leader is simple and he is a social character identified by openness of character and receptiveness of feedback. Finally, the leader avoids giving negative motives since he/she prefers the positive encouragement and motivation of teachers, students and parents. In that frame, he/she sees himself as a partner and has no problem or hesitation to acknowledge his mistakes. Above all, the leader recognizes the simple fact that he/she cannot do everything alone and that cooperation of all is necessary at all times within the school life (Ανδρής, 2015). In cooperation-based schools, the main principle is the interaction between typical and special education teachers. In Greek reality, this is very often observed, as the teachers of typical education face the teachers of the Integration Classes with negative attitudes and with hostility.

The main cause for that is the lack of briefing and training on Special Education issues which unfortunately is the main rule of the Greek educational system. As a whole, the most prominent finding was the lack of valuing and utility of Special Education approaches by the normal school teachers, who thereby could not justify the existence of Integration Classes within the boundaries of their schools. The director has a vital role towards overcoming that negative situation and reaching the ideal condition of inclusive education where typical students live in harmony and mainly interact creatively with their classmates with disability and/or special educational needs. This is exactly the point in which the director should emerge as a leader. This is deemed necessary, so as to create the right pedagogical and learning climate with work axes such as the axes of teamwork, cooperation, responsibility, trust and participation of all the shareholders in all the processes

of taking decisions. Without doubt, the principal as a leader is the key to success in creating a positive school climate in which human relationships are promoted and the cohesion of all the teachers (of typical and special education) and the students is maintained, creating a collaborative team capable of achieving great educational goals.

As a result, it avoids the impersonal setting typical of the strictly organized bureaucratic schools (where there is no cooperation and communication among the members of the school unit, and the dull climate in which the school work is neglected since individuals do not have a notion of the responsibilities and roles summoned to practice in school society) (Μπαγιάτη, 2019). The feedback is useful to teachers, and continuous feedback offered by the director-leader is also useful because it aids in making the work of teaching effective as the outcomes of the learning process are similarly effective. The leader relies and gives opportunities to the teachers for contribution in the organization and administration of the school, whereas with his/her own behavior and action ensures consistency, continuity and coherence in the work of the school. Thus, he/she builds such a working atmosphere, which on the one hand would assist to the goals of the school unit, and on the other - would encourage each and every teacher to apply their maximum effort, ensuring quality in teaching. Undoubtedly, excluding from the other skills the director should possess, it is important to accentuate that the most effective competence of a director for a typical school with Integration Classes is the quality of being a leader (Carter & Abawi, 2018).

2.3. The Centers for Interdisciplinary Assessment, Consultation and Support

The need to provide special support services to students with disabilities and / or special educational needs has been understood by the Greek education system, which through appropriate and targeted legislative initiatives proceeded to the establishment of corresponding institutions. Such institutions are the "Centers of Educational and Counseling Support", which operate at the capitals of the prefectures. The mission of these Centers is to support the schools of the area of their responsibility, to ensure equal access to education for all students without exception and to defend their harmonious psycho-social development and progress. For the fulfillment of their mission, the Centers are active in the areas of researching educational and psycho-social needs, conducting evaluations, planning and implementing educational, psycho-social interventions and vocational guidance actions, supporting the overall work of school units and conducting training programs to encourage social awareness (Κίτσου, 2015).

Greek legislation dictates the tasks and jurisdictions of the Centers and the duties of all personnel (Ministerial Decision 211076/ΓΔ4/6-12-2018, Greek Government Gazette 5614/B/2018). The first task of the Centers is to diagnose the existence or not of special educational needs of the students and to suggest the appropriate school environment for them (Special Education School, Integration Class in a typical school, etc.). The assessment takes place individually for each student by a team of Special Education teachers and experts of different scientific fields (Special Education philologist, Mathematician, Social Worker, Psychologist, Speech Therapist). The whole process is under the supervision and instructions of the director of the Center. In any case, individual assessment refers to the assessment of students who may have a disability and/or special educational needs or students who face other psychosocial difficulties. The individualized assessment will lead to the suggestion of an individualized educational support plan for each case.

The director of the Center exercises administrative, scientific and pedagogical duties. More precisely, the director:

1. Cooperates with all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, typical and special education schools, local community), promotes the goals of the education system and contributes to providing the necessary support to the entire school community in the area ofcenter's responsibility, with the ultimate goal to ensure equal access to education and professional life for all students.

2. Receives instructions and feedback for his work and duties from superior educational officials such as the Coordinator of Work of Special and Inclusive Education of the Periphery.

3. Supervises and coordinates the work of the staff of the Center and ensures the taking of initiatives and the development of collaborative practices among all its members.

4. Plans, convenes and chairs the meetings of the Teaching and Scientific Staff, which take place at least once in a month.

5. Is responsible for the organization, planning, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the action planning of the Center and the evaluation of its work.

6. Is responsible for the continuous briefing of the staff regarding the educational legislation and its implementation, but also new researches and studies on scientific affairs about Special and Inclusive education.

To correspond to the needs of his/her role, it is evident that the director of a Center of Educational and Counseling Support should have very developed skills and competences (ΚΕΔΔΥ Αχαΐας, 2015), which are:

1. Thorough knowledge of the scientific field of Special Education and Training.

2. Extensive knowledge of all (or at least of the most common) cases of disability and/or special educational needs.

3. Willingness to continuously update his/her knowledge on the above mentioned fields. In that frame, it could be very useful to have a proficient knowledge of foreign languages (especially the English language) in order to have a steady and direct contact with the international bibliography on scientific issues.

4. Competence in coordinating and supporting team work of employees of different scientific fields in order to achieve an interdisciplinary approach of each matter under consideration.

5. Competence in decision making, which would be extremely useful when offering instructions to the personnel concerning the assessment of a student.

6. Extremely developed skills on ICT, without which all his/her efforts will be soon out of date and obsolete.

7. Features of a leader.

8. Adaptability, flexibility and the ability to observe behind what is obvious.

The next, very important but extremely neglected competence of the director has to do with the professional counseling and vocational guidance jurisdiction of the Centers. The mission of the Centers also includes vocational guidance, which is addressed to students, parents, guardians as well as teachers (Achterberg et al., 2009). For students, parents and guardians, career guidance services are provided:

1. at a collective level. The Centers design and implement career education programs in schools, while ensuring stakeholder information on labor market issues and vocational training options. Generally speaking, they take all appropriate action to ensure students' smooth and productive entry into adult life.

2. at an individual level. The teachers of the Centers under the guidance of the director study the world of employment and the labor market in order to be able to personalize its services according to the requirements of each student. With that background, each Center contributes to the development of the personality and professional dynamic of students, especially those who have disability and/or special educational needs. An important part of this effort is the empowerment of students in decision making and the development of characteristics of self-knowledge and confidence.

Vocational guidance is a special field. This is due to the fact that it is intended for every person (regardless of gender, age, disability or other specialty) provided that he/she

wishes to be actively involved in the production process and professional employment. This treaty covers in any case the students with disability and/or special educational needs, whose integration in the labor market in an active and dynamic way is not only a need for society, but at the same time their desire and demand. In any case, the contact of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs with the labor world must be done in a way that is totally compatible with their condition. It should not be forgotten that the medical view of disability, which meant that disability was considered as a disease, led human societies to be developed and organized in such a way so that the deviation from the physical or mental "regularity" was considered a curse and a cause for marginalization. In these societies, it was difficult for students and generally for people with disabilities to find their place and professional role and thus they couldn't keep up with the demands of the exhaustive competition between employees and employers (Briel & Getzel, 2014). However, with the introduction of the social view disability, it becomes clear that people with disabilities are equal members of society, who must enjoy benefits and rights in an equal way as other citizens. These benefits include the right to work and employment. Thus, the person with disability ceases to be a passive member (weight) of society and becomes a factor of active action that is equally and proportionally included in the productive forces of society (Oliver, 2013).

In that frame, the director of a Center of Educational and Vocational Support seems to play a very important role in the process. After all, vocational guidance is a science that comes from the field of social sciences and that has to inspire the director in order to practice it and instruct his/her inferiors with responsibility and active participation (Abberley, 2014). Thus, the director has the duty and obligation to support students with disability and/or special educational needs in order to trace:

1. The basic characteristics of their personality.
2. Their strengths and weaknesses.
3. Their individual interests.
4. Their tendencies, attitudes and values.

Consequently, the director must develop very close cooperation with other experts such as social scientists and psychologists to form the profile of each student. On the other hand, the duties of the director in vocational guidance are particularly demanding and therefore simply academic training is not enough to prepare him/her. According to Τασιόπουλος (2015), it seems that the director of a Center of Educational and Vocational Support should possess specific skills and talents, the main ones of which are:

1. Communication and dialogue skills.

2. Adaptability according to each student's special demands.

3. Willingness to continuously update his scientific knowledge on the matter and to seek reliable information on which he/she bases his aspects and proposals.

4. Objectivity, beyond his own view that is formed under the weight of emotional or other subjective factors.

5. Ability to manage difficult situations and work under pressure.

6. Problem solving skills.

7. Empathy.

In addition, the director along with the other scientists of the Center should investigate the students in order to be able, at a first level, to suggest to them the choice of studying in a suitable educational environment and then to support them in the development of their professional identity. Therefore, the "management" of students with disability and/or special educational needs cannot be performed successfully if the director does not initially possess knowledge of special education and training, which includes knowledge of the basic cases of disability and special educational needs. Furthermore, the approach of these students requires patience and perseverance, as due to their condition they are expected to show a negative mood and lack of trust. Thus, approaching these students requires a long-term effort with ambiguous results (Δελλασούδας, 2004).

In order to develop a complete and efficient approach of a student with a disability and/or special educational needs, the director should follow a systematic approach, working in parallel with the student and his wider environment (social, friendly, family, school). In this context, the director (Τσελεχίδου, 2019):

1. Studies the case of the student and tries to identify the particular characteristics of his personality. In this way, some abilities or strengths of the student may be revealed, which could be used later as pointers for a specific professional direction.

2. Works together with the social workers so as to acquire information of the student's family data and general social history. That condition will make it easy for him/her to identify factors that could prevent the development and evolution of the student's personality.

3. Investigates the case of each student to find out the degree of integration into the social and school environment and its general acceptance by those around it.

That type of investigation would help the director to realize the degree of self-confidence and the existence of the sense of self-acceptance.

4. Intervenes, where and when necessary, in order to eliminate or reduce the factors that act in a harmful way to the evolution and development of the student's personality. At this stage, the director is assisted by other experts and scientists.

5. Tries to empower the student with disability and/or special educational needs through the search for his real desires and aspirations, but also through the cultivation of useful skills such as self-confidence, decision making, dealing with problems and situations under pressure or problem solving. Also, the student should learn to be, as much as possible, adaptable to new data and to be able to manage changes in a dynamic and cool way.

6. Aims to create steady and stable bridges between the student and the labor market by emphasizing in the presentation of professional disciplines related to the student's skills and interests. It is also useful to present emerging industries that may be in demand in the future.

METHODOLOGY

3. Methodology and research design

This chapter will present an analytical overview of the research method and design implemented in the current study. These include but are not limited to: inclusive of purposes, objectives, and research questions; elements, variables, and factors should be studied, developed upon the theoretical foundations advanced in the previous chapter.

This educational research was conducted based on a literature review related to the policy of inclusion, inclusive educational practices while it also addressed the role presented and skills and competences required of directors at Special Education Units in Greece since this is an important issue regarding the encouragement of an integrated educational environment. These may vary from diverse areas in ensuring provision of suitable materials, to working with parents, specialists, and educators in addressing challenges in the areas of staffing, training, curriculum adaptation as well as infrastructure.

Moreover, the study describes the research design and approach and methods of sampling. The used research approach was based on the use of quantitative methods. Further, the used data collection instrument is introduced to include the initial questionnaire draft and addresses the issue of validity and reliability analysis of the questionnaire.

Finally, there is a discussion of the approaches that are applied towards the analysis of the data in this research.

3.1 Defining the research problem

In the context of growing classroom diversity with each passing year, efforts have been made at an international level to redefine schools using contemporary practices inclusive in nature (Bristol, 2015). However, the process of inclusion implies many more transformations not just within the support systems but also in the school culture (UNESCO, 2020). In many countries, these problems do arise during the procedure of implementation of the theoretical framework of inclusion. Lack of material and human resources (Meijer and Watkins, 2019), lack of conditions for education adapted to the needs of an individual because of overcrowded classrooms, demanding schedules, and lack of time (Mieghem et al., 2020), debate about the benefits of inclusive education (Ainscow & Cesar, 2006), and a deficit in specialization and preparation in teaching (Μιχαήλ, 2016), among other problems that have been noted, and each country tries to solve them.

Simultaneously, in Greece, inclusive education is not fully implemented even with a relatively friendly legislative framework (Law 3699/2008) (Fyssa et al., 2014). In the words of Pappas, Papoutsi, and Drigas (2018), Greece does not have proper curricula. Further, studies by Fyssa et al. (2014) find that in Greece, general education teachers regard learners with SEN as the business of the special education teacher in inclusive classes, hence there is very little collaboration, no discourse and no inclusive practices for all pupils. It increases the chances that children with disabilities do not take part in classroom activities and, in result, are isolated. It makes them weaker and dependent on special education teachers (Genova, 2015). Greece, being allocated insufficient logistical resources (Coutsocostas & Alborz, 2010), is unable to overcome these barriers to bring about inclusive education (Fyssa et al., 2014; Genova, 2015; Nteropoulou-Nterou & Slee, 2019; Zoniou-Sideri, Deropoulou-Derou, Karagianni, & Spandagou, 2006).

Soulis et al. (2016) points out that research work done indicates that students sharing the same class with students who have special educational needs have positive views on the matter of inclusion. Thus, contact reduces prejudices and negative attitudes towards diversity. The work of an inclusive character of schools has been based on developing a cooperative school culture in Greek schools (Fyssa et al., 2014). The literature review shows that implementing inclusive education has importance at both theoretical and practical levels, where respect for human rights and social justice is considered (Μιχαήλ, 2016), while from the practice aspect, inclusive education creates positive results for children in the regular class, no matter if their condition is disabled or special needs (Nilholm, 2020).

All teachers in inclusive education have to be ready and with capability of teaching all students. Teachers need good working conditions with the support to adapt their teaching according to the student's needs (UNESCO, 2020). Inclusive education epitomizes a great reform, and as such, the role of the school principal has been highlighted since it is perceived to be central in making inclusion work within contemporary schools (Eisenman et al., 2015). School leaders can promote a shared vision of inclusion (UNESCO, 2020).

Dual roles of a principal are those of care through administrative aspects and enablement of the educational process and culture formation in the school, keeping in mind interests of all children without exception (Young, Winn, and Reedy, 2017). Principals who can understand the need for inculcating inclusion provide in a manner that teachers, parents, and students are nudged to move on the inclusive path (Adams, Olsen, and Ware, 2017; Wang, 2016). For that case, the school structures, practices, and attitudes change to respond

individually to their students' needs, at the same time promoting equality, acceptability of diversity, social justice (Osiname, 2017), and in collaboration with teachers. Therefore, principals' influence is indirect in their students, through the teachers or direct by interacting with children personally (Adams et al., 2017; Roberts and Guera, 2015).

Indeed, it has been realized that educational leadership is directly linked with the enhancement of positive attitudes and perceptions towards students with special educational needs and their incorporation in the same school as all other children (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2012). In this aspect, attitudes and perceptions would seem to be related to a series of factors such as genetic characteristics (gender and age) and academic qualifications (level of training in special education, experience in special education settings) (Almotairi, 2013; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Hadjikakou & Mnasonos, 2012). Other influencing factors include the tenure and experience of the principles, and personal contact with pupils who have special educational needs. Other influencing factors include their tenure as principles in different schools throughout the country (Hadjikakou & Mnasonos, 2012).

This study demonstrates that in conclusion, the lack of research on beliefs and attitudes of principals combined with their critical role in realizing inclusive education has led to designing this study. The study was designed to further investigate high school principal beliefs and attitudes toward implementing protocols of inclusion.

3.2 Objective

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the perception and knowledge of secondary school unit directors regarding protocols and policies for inclusive education, and their relationship with attitudes toward inclusive education, taking into account relevant demographic characteristics, in order to facilitate educational decision-making. More specifically, the objectives of this research are:

1. To determine the knowledge and understanding that secondary school unit directors have about the protocols and policies of inclusive education that they should implement in their schools.
2. To explore the perceptions of school directors, regardless of the level at which they work, regarding the concept of inclusion.
3. To analyse demographic characteristics (such as gender and age) that may be related to directors' knowledge of protocols and policies for inclusive education, attitudes, and perceptions towards inclusive education.

4. To analyse the possible relationship between knowledge of protocols and policies for inclusive education and directors' attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education.

Based on the specific objectives mentioned and considering the literature review, the following research questions are formulated:

- What is the level of knowledge and understanding of directors about the protocols and policies of inclusive education in their secondary schools?
- What are the perceptions of directors regarding the benefits and challenges of inclusive education in the school environment?
- Are there significant differences in the knowledge of protocols and policies of inclusive education among directors based on their demographic characteristics, such as gender and age?
- Are there significant differences in the attitudes and perceptions of directors based on their demographic characteristics, such as gender and age?
- What relationship exists between knowledge of protocols and policies for inclusive education and the attitudes and perceptions of directors of special education units?

3.3 Research variables

According to the formulated objectives and the research problem, the variables were grouped into four dimensions:

- Dimension 1: Demographic and employment characteristics of the directors, composed of 9 variables.
- Dimension 2: Directors' knowledge of the legal framework related to inclusive and special education in Greece, composed of 5 sub-dimensions:
  - Knowledge of conceptual clarification of definitions, with 5 variables.
  - Knowledge of inclusive education models, with 5 variables.
  - Knowledge of international policies on inclusive education, with 5 variables.
  - Knowledge of legislation and inclusion measures in the Greek educational system, with 5 variables.
  - Knowledge of inclusion protocols in Greek schools, with 5 variables.
- Dimension 3: Perceptions of Special Education, Inclusion, and Related Protocols, composed of 2 sub-dimensions:

- o Measurement of the degree of implementation of inclusive education protocols in Greece, with 6 variables.

- o Measurement of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education, with 9 variables.

- Dimension 4: The role of the director in the implementation and application of inclusive education protocols, with 3 sub-dimensions:

  - o Measurement of the role in strengthening and promoting inclusive education, with 4 variables.

  - o Forms of support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, with 6 variables.

  - o Needs, problems, or situations that can be addressed through school management to improve inclusive education, with 11 variables.

As for Dimension 1: Demographic and employment characteristics of the directors, the variables were as follows:

- Gender

- Age

- Type of school unit:

  - o Typical school without Integration Classes. Students with mild learning difficulties and mild educational needs attend the general school unit and follow the school's general curriculum with the support of the classroom teacher.

  - o Typical school with Integration Classes. Integration Classes aim to support students with mild learning difficulties and mild educational needs. Integration Classes are developed in typical educational schools, and the students attending them simultaneously follow the standard educational program.

  - o Special education school. This category includes Special Education and Training Units. These schools are "Special Education and Vocational Training Schools" and "Individual Special Vocational Gymnasiums and Lyceums". Attendance at these school units is only accessible to students with severe or moderate disabilities and/or special educational needs. These units, as implied by their names, tend to have a more vocational character, as they prepare their students for the best

employment prospects by harnessing their tendencies, skills, and desires.

- o Centers for Educational Support and Counseling. These centers play a crucial role in the implementation of Special Education in the Greek education system, as they provide guidelines and support for all other school units in carrying out their tasks. It is essential to note that these centers not only have educational responsibilities regarding students with disabilities and/or special educational needs but also have counseling functions to support their vocational and employment prospects. One center is located in the capital of each Greek prefecture, while in major cities like Athens or Thessaloniki, there are more than one.

- Years of educational service
- Years as a director
- Area of the school unit:
  - o Schools in Cities (>10,000 inhabitants). Schools in urban areas with a population of over 10,000 permanent residents. In urban schools, students have easy access to education and support structures. There are plenty of opportunities that enhance learning, more educational options, and greater teacher staff stability. Despite this, urban schools often have an older teaching staff, generally exist in a less friendly and more demanding environment, negatively affecting the quality of life, and their school-family relationships are more alienated. Additionally, support networks with communities and social partners can be built more quickly.
  - o Schools in Towns (3,000 – 10,000 inhabitants). Schools in semi-urban areas with a population of 3,000 to 10,000 permanent residents. In semi-urban schools, students face different opportunities and challenges, along with various environmental, economic, and social issues. Students grow up in families where the differences in the professional composition of the population are known, as well as the overall development of the areas represented in this group of schools. However, schools in these areas are grouped based on the semi-urban criterion. These different environments can be distinguished by various criteria, which can be spatial, such as the location of areas and the existence of

special spatial formations (borders, natural boundaries, etc.), economic, such as the dominant activities in an area (Λαμπριανίδης, 2000), or social, such as age, class, race (van Dam, Heins & Elbersen, 2002).

- o Schools in Villages (<3,000 inhabitants). Schools in rural areas with a population of up to 3,000 permanent residents. In rural schools, students may have to travel long distances to access education, face frequent teacher turnover, and lack opportunities to facilitate learning. However, rural schools are often located in beautiful natural settings, and the school's relationships with families are closer and more constructive. Support networks with communities and social partners can also be established more quickly.

- Academic training in Special Education.
- Experience in teaching students with disabilities and/or special educational needs.
- Years of experience in teaching students with disabilities and/or special educational needs.

In the context of Dimension 2: Directors' knowledge of the legal framework related to inclusive and special education in Greece, within the sub-dimension:

- Knowledge of the conceptual clarification of definitions, the variables included:
  - o Basis of the inclusive education model.
  - o Inclusive education policy.
  - o Similarity of practices of the terms integration and inclusion as principles of common education in Greece.
  - o Expectation of change in the system regarding inclusion.
  - o Reference to the definition of inclusive education irrespective of physical or mental state.

- Knowledge of inclusive education models, the variables included:
  - o Exclusion of the successful operation of mixed classes through education in separate special structures.
  - o Model of inclusive education in the Greek education system.
  - o Equitable participation of all students in the model of full inclusion in the general school environment, regardless of their characteristics and specific needs.
  - o Negative impact of the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classroom on the academic performance of other students.

- The reason for the existence of special schools according to the model of participation in the same support classes.
- Knowledge of international inclusive education policy, the variables included:
  - Benefit of interaction and coexistence with children with disabilities or special educational needs for typically developing children.
  - Direct impact of the school environment and culture on the acceptance of students with special needs.
  - The 2006 United Nations Convention as the first international legislation on the treatment of people with disabilities.
  - Categorization of children based on their impairment or intelligence in the 1978 Warnock Report.
  - The 1994 Salamanca Statement as a starting point for the push towards the co-education approach.
- Knowledge of legislation and inclusion measures in the Greek education system, the variables included:
  - Enactment of the first legislation on Special Education in Greece in the 1990s.
  - Awareness of human rights issues among students in general education schools and co-education programs in Greece.
  - Failure of the education system to virtually engage all students in educational and social activities of school life.
  - Use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and digital educational material in the learning process as a central theme of co-education policy in Greece.
  - Ratification of the United Nations International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 by law in Greece.
- Knowledge of inclusion protocols in Greek schools, the variables included:
  - Presence of a physiotherapist in an integration class.
  - Similarity of curricula in special and general education school units.
  - Implementation of co-education programs in general education units, whether shared or not.
  - School-based research and identification of students' special educational needs within the Greek education system.
  - Mandatory participation of social workers in the expert group for the diagnostic assessment process of special educational needs.

In the context of Dimension 3: Perceptions about Special Education, Inclusion, and Related Protocols, within the sub-dimension:

- Measurement of the degree of implementation of inclusive education protocols in Greece, the variables included:
    o Path towards strengthening inclusive education.
    o Integration of students into regular classrooms.
    o Preservation of the uniformity of general education.
    o Building bridges between students with and without Special Educational Needs.
    o Most appropriate and effective way to address the needs of a minority of students.
    o Path toward inclusion and expanding future opportunities for supported students.
- Measurement of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education, the variables included:
    o Integration of all students into regular schools.
    o Provision of support to students with special educational needs to meet the requirements of the school context.
    o Attendance of each student to their own curriculum while participating in common activities.
    o Ensuring the presence, participation, and progress of all students in education.
    o Promotion of academic progress of students with formal development.
    o Favoring the academic success of all students with special educational needs.
    o Simplifying the work of the regular classroom teacher.
    o Providing opportunities for equal participation in a common learning environment.
    o Prerequisite for smooth cooperation between a regular teacher and a special educator.

In relation to Dimension 4: The role of the director in the implementation and application of inclusive education protocols, within the sub-dimension:

- The role played in strengthening and promoting inclusive education, the variables included:

- Adequate provision of materials and equipment suitable for the needs of students with special educational needs.
- Provision of necessary facilities for teaching children with special educational needs.
- Support for teachers and the development of cooperation with them.
- Implementation of training initiatives, programs, and seminars for inclusive education.

- Forms of support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the variables included:
  - Cooperation and communication with the parents of students.
  - Cooperation and communication with specialists and school counselors.
  - Extensive cooperation and communication with each student's special educator.
  - Attempts to facilitate the acceptance of students by their classmates.
  - Extensive cooperation with other school units and Educational Support and Advisory Centers.
  - Ongoing assessment of each student's case and proposal of a differentiated curriculum or change of school environment.

- Needs, problems, or situations that can be addressed through school management to improve inclusive education, the variables included:
  - Need for specialized personnel.
  - Need for additional education and training.
  - Need to change the curriculum.
  - Reactions of parents.
  - Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit.
  - Insufficiency of school textbooks.
  - Difficulties of regular education students in adapting to their peers with special educational needs.
  - Inadequacy of teachers to implement inclusive education protocols.
  - Resistance of teachers to cooperate with each other.
  - Stigmatization and marginalization of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs.
  - Lack of time to consult with other teachers and specialists.

Figure 1

Study dimensions and subdimensions
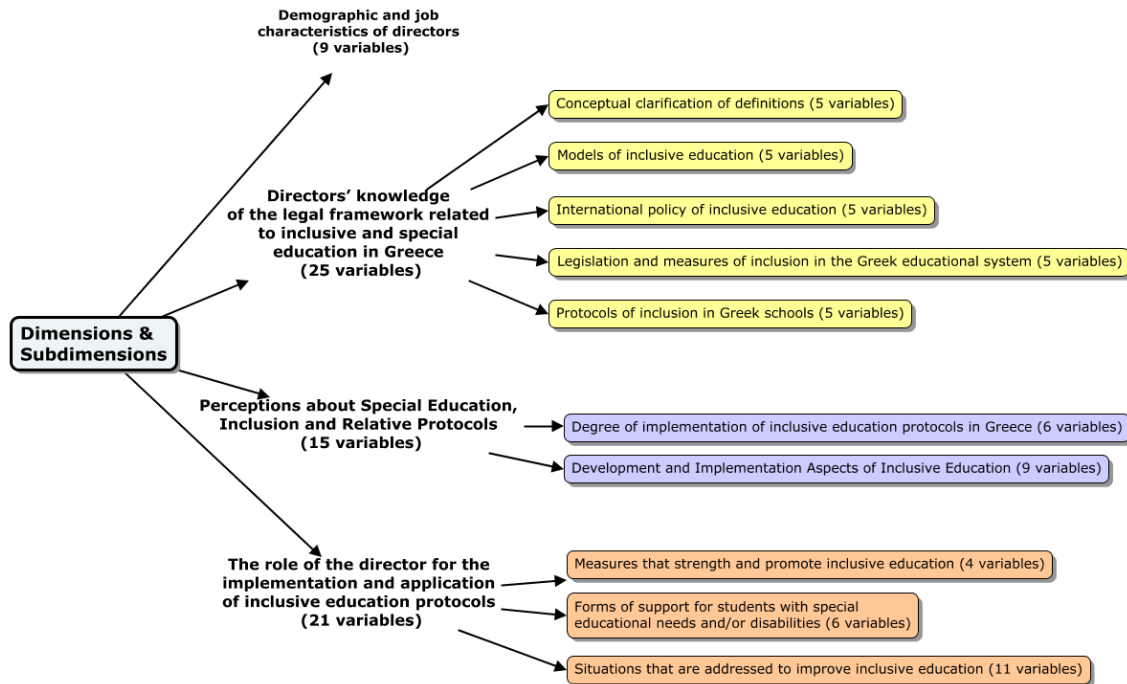
3.4 Research Design

At this point, the identification of the research design used to answer the formulated questions and achieve the study's objectives is carried out. The research design determines the general structure and methodology to be used for data collection, analysis, and presentation (Bisquerra, 2009). To do this, several important aspects need to be taken into account, including the formulated objectives and questions, the nature of the research problem, variables, available resources, the internal and external validity of the study, and ethical considerations.

In this case, a post facto descriptive and correlational research design was chosen, allowing for the description of a situation or phenomenon that has already occurred, without manipulating variables or intervening in the context. This is relevant when the goal is to obtain a detailed understanding of a specific phenomenon as it naturally occurred. As mentioned by Creswell & Creswell (2017), descriptive research focuses on providing an accurate and systematic picture of an event or situation without influencing its outcomes.

On the other hand, a post facto research design involves the observation and data collection after events have already occurred. In this case, the researcher has no control over the independent variables since they have occurred naturally and in a non-manipulated

manner. Ex post facto research seeks to analyze the relationships between variables that have already happened in a natural environment and cannot establish direct causal relationships due to the lack of experimental control. This design is suitable for studying complex phenomena in situations where it is not ethical, practical, or possible to manipulate the variables of interest (Bisquerra, 2009).

Finally, a correlational research design focuses on analyzing the relationship between two or more variables. Unlike experimental research, where variables are manipulated, in the correlational design, variables are measured as they are without intervening in them. The goal is to determine if there is a statistical association between the variables and in what direction this relationship occurs (positive, negative, or null). However, like in ex post facto research, the correlational design does not allow for the establishment of direct causal relationships since the direction of causality or the presence of an unknown variable that influences both cannot be determined (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018).

This research encompassed the following research phases (see Figure 2):

- Phase 1. Identification of the research problem: In this phase, the research problem was defined, and the study's objectives and research questions were formulated.
- Phase 2. Research planning: In this phase, the methodological approach, the target population, as well as the data collection technique that would answer the research questions and its subsequent construction were established.
- Phase 3. Fieldwork: During this phase, information about the phenomenon under study was collected through a questionnaire in digital format, sent via corporate email to secondary school directors.
- Phase 4. Data processing and analysis: Once the information was collected, it was entered into a matrix using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) statistical software. After data cleaning, different statistical tests were applied to answer the formulated objectives and questions.
- Phase 5. Drawing conclusions and preparing the research report: After describing the results, inferences were presented in a clear and structured manner.

Figure 2

Phases of research

Phase 1.
Identification of the
research problem

Phase 2.
Research planning

Phase 3.
Fieldwork

Phase 4.
Data processing
and analysis

Phase 5.
Drawing conclusions and
preparing the research report
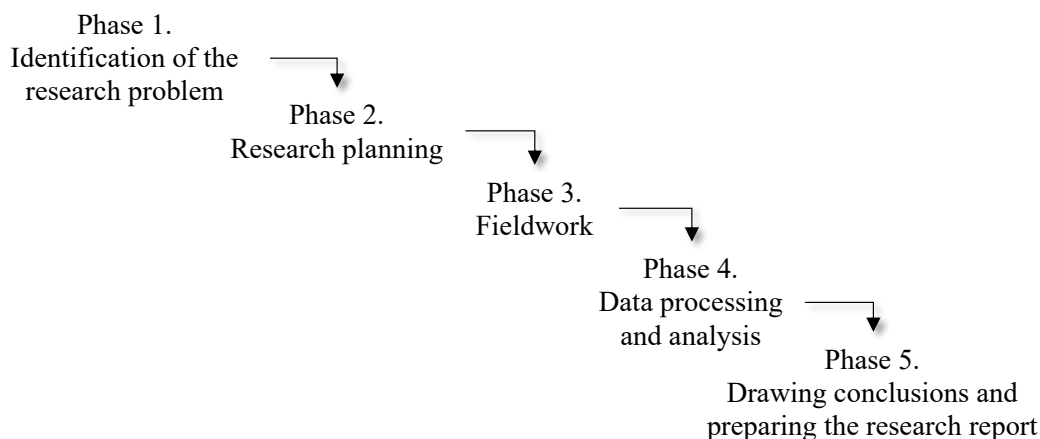
3.5 Population and Sample

The population under study was secondary school directors in Greece (Special Education Schools, Regular Schools with Integration Classes, Educational Support and Guidance Centers). Directors were selected using the simple random sampling method, which is a probabilistic sample in which each sample is randomly selected and has an equal probability of being chosen. This approach aims to ensure that the sample from each group corresponds to the proportion of that group in the general population. This makes the research tool more precise because the sample representation is proportional (Φίλιας, 2005).

Regarding the research sampling frame, the study's population, which is part of the general population, is defined as all directors working in inclusive education schools and units with at least 1 year of experience as educational leaders. Therefore, the entire sample is representative and allows for the generalization of the conclusions drawn from the research and the calculation of the estimation error resulting from generalization (Ζαφειρόπουλος, 2005).

The population of this study consisted of directors working in general, special, and vocational secondary education schools in the regions of Attica and Central Macedonia in Greece. After collecting the names of all directors working in the 1,524 general, special, and vocational secondary education schools in the two largest regions of Greece, Attica and Central Macedonia (7 prefectures: Attica, Thessaloniki, Imathia, Kilkis, Pieria, Chalkidiki, Pella), a list was created with all the members of the enumerated population. The selection of elementary sample observations was achieved using a random number generator, where

each element had an equal probability of being chosen. The target sample consisted of 750 directors, to whom questionnaires were distributed, 420 of whom responded and formed the final sample, with a participation rate of 56%.

The final sample consisted of 56.4% men and 43.6% women, with an average age of 55.81 years (S.D. = 4.094) (see Table 1).

Table 1

Personal characteristics

	Total: 420	
Gender	**f**	**%**
Male	237	56.4
Female	183	43.6
Age (M= 55.81, S.D.= 4.094)	**f**	**%**
20-30	0	0.0
31-40	2	5.0
41-50	60	14.3
≥ 51	358	85.2

84.3% of the school units are regular schools without integration classes, 12.4% of the school units are regular schools with integration classes, 2.4% of the school units are special education schools, and only 1.0% of the school units are Educational Support and Guidance Centers (see Table 2).

Table 2

Type of school unit

	f	**%**
Typical school without Integration Classes	354	84.3
Typical school with Integration Classes	52	12.4
Special Education School	10	2.4
Centers of Educational and Counselling Support	4	1.0
Total	420	100.0

Of all the directors, 1.7% have 6 to 10 years of educational service, 15.7% have 11 to 20 years of educational service, and the majority (82.6%) have more than 21 years of educational service, while there are no directors (0.0%) with 1 to 5 years of educational experience. In addition, 33.1% have 1 to 5 years of experience as directors, 42.6% have 6 to 10 years of experience as directors, 18.2% have 11 to 20 years of experience as directors, and 6.2% have more than 21 years of experience as directors (see Table 3).

Table 3

Teaching and managerial experience

	Total: 420	
Educational service (Age group)	**f**	**%**
1-5	0	0.0
6-10	7	1.7
11-20	66	15.7
≥21	347	82.6
Years as director (Age group)	**f**	**%**
1-5	139	33.1
6-10	179	42.6
11-20	76	18.1
≥21	26	6.2

75.7% of the school units are in cities (> 10,000 inhabitants), 18.1% are in towns (3,000 - 10,000 inhabitants), and 6.2% of the school units are in villages (< 3,000 inhabitants) (see Table 4).

Table 4

Area of the school unit

	f	**%**
City (> 10.000 population)	318	75.7
Town (3.000 – 10.000 population)	76	18.1
Village (< 3.000 population)	26	6.2
Total	420	100.0

Of all the directors, 4.8% have studies in Special Education. Among these, 25% have a master's degree and a seminar in Special Education, 10% have a master's degree in Special Education, 20% have seminars in Special Education of more than 300 hours, 5% have seminars in Special Education of less than 300 hours, and 40% have a degree with a major specialization in Special Education (see Table 5).

Table 5

Educational training in Special Education

	f	**%**
Master degree & Seminar	5	25.0
Master degree	2	10.0
Seminars of more than 300 hours	4	20.0
Seminars of less than 300 hours	1	5.0
Degree with main specialty in special education (Other)	8	40.0
Total	20	100.0

Almost all the directors (95.2%) have no experience in teaching students with disabilities or special educational needs, while 4.8% have experience in teaching students with disabilities or special educational needs (see Table 6).

Table 6

Experience in teaching students with disability or special educational needs

	f	%
No	400	95.2
Yes	20	4.8
Total	420	100.0

Out of these 20 (4.8%), 10% have 1 to 5 years of relevant teaching experience in the education of students with disabilities and/or special educational needs, 50% have 6 to 10 years of relevant teaching experience, and 40% have 11 to 20 years of relevant teaching experience. There are no directors with relevant teaching experience of more than 21 years (see Table 7).

Table 7

Years of teaching students with disability or special educational needs

	f	%
1-5years	2	10.0
6-10years	10	50.0
11-20years	8	40.0
≥21years	0	0.0
Total	20	100.0

3.6 Information Collection Tool

3.6.1. Construction of the First Draft

The subject of the current research is related to the role of special education directors in the implementation of special and inclusive education policies in the Greek education system. To accomplish this task, a questionnaire needs to be developed to investigate various aspects of the multidimensional role of special education unit directors.

The chosen research tool for data collection is a questionnaire, which consists of closed-ended Likert scale questions. In a questionnaire, participants respond to the exact same questions, in the same order. This type of questionnaire is easier to use for statistical analysis as it leaves no room for ambiguous responses, is easily understood by respondents, and is highly effective when targeting participants from different cities (Cohen, et al., 2008).

The questionnaire is structured into four parts (see Appendix I). The first section of the questionnaire aims to explore the demographic data related to the directors. The script for this section is based on the questionnaire developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This is a tool with proven credibility and validity. Stakeholders in this questionnaire include the International Consortium, which includes the U.S. Department of Education, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA - Netherlands and Germany), the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER - Australia), and Statistics Canada (Canada). The latest version of this questionnaire was developed in 2018 and is available on the OECD website. In any case, the first section of that questionnaire is titled "Background Personal Information" and aims to reveal the personal profile of each participant-director, addressing questions about gender, age, education, and professional experience. It should be noted that the questionnaire was exclusively directed to high school directors.

More specifically, the first part pertains to the demographic data of the research participants and includes variables such as gender (male-female), age group (20-30 years, 31-40 years, 41-50 years, and over 51), type of school unit, years of service as educators-teachers, years of service as directors, school area (urban, semi-urban, and rural). Furthermore, in the demographic characteristics, participants are asked to mention their level of academic education (such as a bachelor's degree, doctorate, master's, other education in inclusive or special education, participation in seminars). There are also questions about the function of their school unit and the level of experience they have with students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Regarding this question about the directors' experience, participants were asked to briefly mention the source of this experience. However, it is worth noting that the purpose of this response is not to analyze the answers but to discover that there is real experience derived from real learning environments and interactions with students with special educational needs.

The second section aims to investigate the actual level of knowledge that directors have regarding the legal framework related to inclusive education in Greece and to explore the degree of correlation between their knowledge of the legal framework and their perceptions and abilities concerning protocol implementation. The initial issue surrounding this topic was already mentioned in a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education in Greece and the Hellenic Pedagogical Institute (Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο, 2004). The research's purpose was to comprehensively present special education in Greece in 2004. In particular, the survey aimed to fully record:

A) The population served by special education.

B) The structures of special education and their characteristics.

C) The teachers, directors, and other staff in special education and their characteristics.

D) Information about the bodies involved in special education.

E) Information about the relevant legislation in force.

A critical outcome of the survey was that, due to the complexity of the legal framework, it is nearly impossible for teachers and directors involved in special education to have complete knowledge to perform their tasks adequately. Despite the years that have passed, the legal framework surrounding special education has become even more complex with new laws to facilitate the transition to inclusive education. Therefore, it is crucial to explore directors' knowledge of the current legal framework in force in Greece.

The relevant questions from that survey are used and adapted to the needs of our current research, taking into account the premises of the current legal framework, as described in the theoretical part of the research. In any case, the dependence on the effective and positive performance of a director who truly understands the legal framework for inclusive education is also highlighted in Subban and Sharma's survey (2006), as well as in Khan's study (2007) under the supervision of UNESCO.

Specifically, the second part of the research deals with measuring the actual knowledge that school unit directors have about the legal framework in relation to inclusive education in Greece. The questions aim to explore substantial aspects of the legal framework around inclusive education, without which a lack of knowledge on the director's part would be significant. These aspects include the inclusion model followed in the Greek educational system, the process and tools for diagnosing special educational needs, and the role of integrated classes.

In more detail, this part of the questionnaire includes twenty-five (25) questions (Director's Knowledge Scale - Questions K1 to K25) of the "True," "False," "Don't know" type that measure directors' knowledge about the implementation of coeducational protocols in five (5) different areas through five (5) questions for each relevant area.

The covered areas are:

a. Clarification of conceptual definitions (Questions K1 to K5).

b. Models of inclusive education (Questions K6 to K10).

c. International policy on inclusive education (Questions K11 to K15).

d. Legislation and inclusion measures in the Greek education system (Questions K16 to K20).

e. Inclusion protocols in Greek schools (Questions K21 to K25).

To examine all the topics mentioned above, the use of the "Don't know" option, among others, in the completed questionnaires allows, on the one hand, the elimination of the case of random correct answers from the respondents, and on the other hand, covers all possible remaining answers (except "Correct" and "Incorrect"). This way, it distinguishes real knowledge from any accidental misunderstanding.

The third section of the questionnaire aims to investigate the directors' perceptions of special education, inclusion, and related protocols. The factors examined here are not related to the legal framework, as they concern perceptions of the educational aspects of inclusion and its impact on the proper execution of the school and learning process. Since the subject under consideration has a variety of dimensions, a factor analysis is used to ensure credibility.

Within this framework, the questions involved group the relevant topics being investigated and presented in the second chapter. Additionally, the questions in this section come from Blackie's survey (2010) concerning educators' perceptions of inclusive education in a sample of South African government primary schools. In that research, educators did not view students with disabilities and/or special educational needs as "disabled" but rather as incapable of meeting the demands of a regular classroom adequately. In South Africa, inclusive education is a human rights approach, in which it transforms human values of inclusion into the rights of many excluded students. Furthermore, a useful guide for this section is the questions involved in Shi's research (2020) titled "Teachers' Perspectives on Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities: An Empirical Study in Primary Schools in Beijing". In this study, teachers held positive attitudes toward the concept of inclusion, while in terms of practice, less than half of the teachers in inclusive/integrated schools or regular schools favored an inclusive education environment. It also indicates that practice in inclusive schools shows that support from specialized teachers can effectively enhance the teaching and learning process in inclusive settings and further promote teachers' perceptions of inclusion.

Specifically, the third part of the questionnaire is about researching the attitudes and perceptions of directors toward special education and inclusion. This part includes 2 sub-

dimensions with closed 5-point Likert scale questions. The first Likert scale includes six (6) questions (Director's Perception Subscale - Questions P1 to P6) that pertain to their opinions about special education structures, the existence of integrated classes, and the practice of parallel support. Participating directors will choose answers on the scale: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree. The following Likert scale includes nine (9) questions (Director's Perception Subscale - Questions P7 to P15) that address exploring the importance of inclusive education according to the participants' opinions. The responses are on the scale: Very Little, Little, Average, Much, Very Much.

The fourth section, which is the final section of the questionnaire, aims to focus on the directors themselves and their role in the implementation and application of inclusive education protocols. The questions included in this section aim to explore the directors' perceptions regarding the skills and abilities they must possess to fulfill their responsibilities in promoting inclusive education policies. However, these skills are not recorded as such but are inferred based on the directors' responses to questions that present their duties and initiatives, as well as potential difficulties they may encounter within the school unit environment. This approach is already established in the research by Devecchi and Nevin (2010), which examines the role and importance of leadership for inclusive schools. The researchers conclude that the implementation of inclusive education policies and protocols results from the skills and capabilities of the school unit director and their leadership potential. In the same spirit, you can find the research by Carter and Abawl (2018), which effectively links the director-leader's skills to the provision of quality inclusive education (i.e., achieving the goals of inclusive education).

Specifically, the fourth part, which is the final section of the questionnaire, includes two sub-dimensions with 5-point Likert scale questions (Very Little, Little, Average, Much, Very Much). The first Likert scale includes four (4) questions (Director's Role Subscale - Questions R1 to R4) that pertain to exploring the directors' opinions regarding the existence of certain factors that play a significant and important role in promoting and improving inclusive education. The following Likert scale includes eleven (11) questions (Director's Role Subscale - Questions R6 to R16) that address the extent to which directors believe they may be called upon to face certain situations or problems that can hinder the promotion of inclusive education.

Finally, the research tool includes a question (Question R5) that examines opinions on how directors can manage students with special educational needs within a typical

educational school. In this question, directors have the opportunity to choose more than one option.

In addition to the above, the survey by Bitterova et al. (2014) presents the main results of part of their research related to the competencies of school leaders in the management area, which they divided into four spheres: creating strategies, managing the teaching process, ensuring and managing school development as an institution, and managing the development of human resources. Each of these spheres comprises a large number of different elements: competencies that a successful school leader should have. The results showed that practicing school leaders consider the most significant competencies in the profile of a school leader in the four mentioned areas of the management area: the competence to create motivating strategies based on the school's shared values, the competence to create and develop an effective learning environment for students, the competence to clearly define, distribute, and delegate responsibilities and tasks, and the competence to lead and control colleagues, respectively.

We should also add that a critical aid in forming our questionnaire is the recent survey by Lambrecht et al. (2020), which considers the case of Germany. The survey has a highly specialized focus related to Individualized Educational Planning (IEP) and its relationship with school leadership, as little is known about the relationship between school leadership, the provision of structures for collaboration, and the implementation of the IEP in an inclusive context. Despite the specialization of the topic (the survey investigates the impact of transformative and instructional leadership, which are not mentioned as such in our theoretical review), the core theme serves as a premise for our questionnaire, as it addresses issues such as the importance of cooperation and collaboration and initiatives that promote it, as well as the connection between the implementation of inclusive policies-protocols and the role of the school leader.

3.6.2. Analysis of Questionnaire Validity and Reliability

The pilot study, conducted as part of the research process, aimed to confirm the accuracy and completeness of these questions, mainly extracted or possibly appropriately modified - verbally, syntactically, semantically. The ultimate goal was to eliminate emerging questions, clarify the formulated questions, and resolve any unclear points (according to the respondents) in the questionnaire.

The validity of a study is directly related to the research tool used. A tool is considered valid when it can represent the theoretical concept for which it was constructed and reliable when it produces consistent results in repeated measurements under the same conditions and with the same participants. Consequently, the pilot application of the questionnaire to check for measurement errors serves as an indicator of reliability and validity. It verifies the content validity, the practicality of the questionnaire, and the assurance that it measures precisely what it was constructed for (Νόβα-Καλτσούνη, 2006).

To ensure validity and the extent to which the measuring scale captures the totality of what is required, the following actions were taken:

o A theoretical framework was established, including relevant data related to the subject under study.

o From all these data, the most relevant data related to the research purpose were selected.

o The selected questions attempted to measure and record all dimensions of the research subject (Cohen, et al., 2008).

Furthermore, the selection of an appropriate sample ensures validity. In this study, the representativeness of the sample, as well as its selection based on probability theory, both protect against bias, allowing for reliable conclusions for the population in question, and allow for generalization, ensuring external validity. In addition, research validity is also ensured through the triangulation method used to obtain the most objective and reliable results possible. The examination and use of multiple sources related to this subject, in combination with a literature review, the application of all stages of research, and justification of choices, provide credibility and validity to the present study (Βαμβούκας, 2010).

The questionnaire is based on the theoretical background and on questionnaires studying issues related to the opinions and perceptions of directors and teachers. Therefore, in relation to issues of validity and reliability, during the construction of the research, efforts were made to ensure the content validity of the research instrument (questionnaire). Moreover, an attempt was made to comprehensively examine the variable under consideration from each dimension. Thus, the study of directors' knowledge about inclusion and the implementation of inclusive education protocols was achieved through the questionnaire and the established knowledge scale, covering topics in five (5) interrelated areas: Conceptual clarification of definitions, Models of inclusive education, International policy of inclusive education, Legislation and inclusion measures in the Greek educational

system, and Protocols of inclusion in Greek schools. Simultaneously, the study of directors' perceptions regarding issues related to special education, inclusion, and related protocols was achieved through 2 closed 5-point Likert scale questions. Finally, the study of the role of directors in matters related to the implementation of inclusive education protocols was achieved through Likert scale questions and a closed question, where directors had the opportunity to choose more than one option.

In terms of the procedural approach to directors, contact was made through mail or telephone using the email addresses and phone numbers of their school units (all this data is available on each school's website).

For the questionnaire's implementation, digital support was chosen using Google Forms, ensuring voluntary participation. In any case, comprehensive information about the research purpose and the individual conducting the research is provided. Clear instructions for completing the questionnaire correctly and the required time for completion are also given. The questionnaires' information letter provides guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity, informing participants that their responses will be used exclusively for research purposes, while anyone interested can be informed about the study's results.

In the pilot study, a sample of seventy-five (75) selected directors completed the electronic pilot questionnaire after a phone call with them. After providing clarifications to the directors regarding the conditions, procedure, feasibility, and questionnaire requirements, they responded and returned the questionnaires immediately. This way, it was ensured that all questions in the questionnaires were fully answered after the mentioned clarifications and question resolutions. In addition, all participants in the sample completed the questionnaires.

The pilot sample was comprised of 58.7% males and 41.3% females, with an average age of 55.19 (S.D.=4.983). Of the participants, 27.3% work in Special Education schools, 63.6% in regular schools with Integration Classes, and 9.1% in Educational Support and Advisory Centers. When it comes to years of teaching experience, 4.0% had 6 to 10 years of experience, 20.0% had 11 to 20 years, and the majority, 76.0%, had over 21 years of experience. As for years in a director's role, 34.7% had been in this position for 1 to 5 years, 37.3% for 11 to 20 years, and a minority had been directors for more than 21 years. Regarding the location of their school units, 81.3% were in urban areas (>10,000 population), 14.7% in semi-urban (3,000 – 10,000 population), and 4.0% in rural areas (< 3,000 population).

Regarding experience in teaching students with disabilities, 92.0% of the directors lacked experience in teaching students with disabilities, with only 8.0% having such experience. Among this latter group, 1.3% had experience in this area for 1 to 5 years, the same percentage claimed to have 6 to 10 years of experience, and 5.3% had experience with this type of students for 11 to 20 years.

To assess the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, two approaches were taken. First, an Internal Consistency Analysis was conducted. This test helps verify the significance of the questionnaire's components by using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (Del Rincón et al., 1995). Second, an analysis of item discrimination was performed using a Student's t-test between the means of groups scoring low and those scoring high (García, Gil, & Rodríguez, 1995). Both tests were applied to the sections of the questionnaire containing scalar items, the third and fourth sections. This way, the homogeneity of the 29 five-point Likert scale questions was evaluated.

The reliability of the questionnaire's scales was assessed using the statistical measure Cronbach's Alpha, with a value above 0.7 considered a criterion for high reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein 1994). The value for the entire set of items was 0.813, indicating a high level of reliability. The analysis performed on the different sub-dimensions composed of scalar questions showed values exceeding 0.897 (see Table 8).

Table 8

Alpha coefficient of the questionnaire and according to its dimensions and subdimensions

Subdimensions	Questions interval	Cronbach's alpha
Perception of the implementation of inclusive education protocols	P1 a P6	.974
Perception of the importance of inclusive education	P7 a P15	.925
Role of the director in factors that play a significant and important role in promoting and enhancing inclusive education	R1 a R4	.897
Role of the director in situations or issues that can hinder the promotion of inclusive education	R6 a R16	.937

Regarding the behavior of the items, it is observed that the first six elements exhibit Cronbach's Alpha values above the set's average, starting from .849. Therefore, these items should be reviewed (see Table 9).

Table 9

Behavior of the scalar items of the instrument

	Scale average if the item has been deleted	Scale variance if the element has been deleted	Total element correlation corrected	Cronbach's alpha if the element has been deleted
P1. Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education	92.12	185.702	-.890	.852

	Scale average if the item has been deleted	Scale variance if the element has been deleted	Total element correlation corrected	Cronbach's alpha if the element has been deleted
P2. Help students integrate into typical classes	92.08	190.777	-.911	.859
P3. Preserve the uniformity of general education	92.11	184.259	-.835	.851
P4. Create borders among students with and without Special Educational Needs	92.32	188.031	-.861	.856
P5. Are the most appropriate and effective way of addressing the needs of a minority of students	92.27	185.982	-.832	.853
P6. Lead to the marginalization and limitation of subsequent opportunities in the lives of the students supported by them	92.35	183.040	-.812	.849
P7. Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools	91.47	148.523	.692	.800
P8. It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context	91.16	151.055	.652	.803
P9. Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, without engaging in common activities	91.99	140.581	.781	.790
P10. Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education	91.13	150.820	.647	.802
P11. Prevents the academic progress of students of formal development	91.96	137.606	.788	.787
P12. Does not favor the academic success of all students with special educational needs	91.13	149.928	.796	.801
P13. Complicates the work of the typical class teacher	92.63	133.156	.865	.781
P14. Provides opportunities for equal participation in a common learning context	91.44	144.898	.818	.795
P15. It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator	90.96	146.985	.648	.798
R1. Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are adequately covered	92.37	131.724	.867	.780
R2. Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs	92.31	131.756	.876	.780
R3. Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them	90.93	147.279	.627	.799
R4. Implementation of training initiatives, programs and seminars for inclusive education	91.44	144.898	.818	.795
R6. Need for staffing with specialized staff	91.16	151.055	.652	.803
R7. Need for further education and training	92.87	135.982	.666	.790
R8. Need to change the curriculum	92.32	136.599	.762	.787
R9. Reactionsfromparents	92.87	136.874	.658	.790

	Scale average if the item has been deleted	Scale variance if the element has been deleted	Total element correlation corrected	Cronbach's alpha if the element has been deleted
R10. Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit	92.51	132.199	.869	.780
R11. Insufficiency of school textbooks	92.39	132.538	.835	.782
R12. Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs	91.96	137.606	.788	.787
R13. Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols	93.12	137.080	.645	.791
R14. Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another	92.63	133.156	.865	.781
R15. Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs	92.24	139.050	.743	.790

To verify the discriminatory power of each item, an analysis was applied, allowing differentiation between high and low scores that subjects obtain in the test (García, Gil, and Rodríguez, 1995). This was done by selecting the scalar items with variations from 1 to 5, and the total sum was regrouped into three groups (Low, Medium, and High):

1 = Low Group (minimum value, 33rd percentile): (76, 88)

2 = Medium Group (34th percentile, 66th percentile): (89, 97)

3 = High Group (67th percentile, maximum value): (98, 121)

The Student's t-test for independent samples allowed establishing the existence or absence of statistical differences (n.s. = 0.05) between the groups obtaining low and high scores on the items, resulting in values of p below 0.05 for all 25 elements, indicating a high item discriminatory power (see Table 10).

Table 10

Power of discrimination of the items of the dimension Evaluation of the Emotions, Attitudes and Concerns of teachers about inclusive education

	Medium low	Medium high	t	P
P1. Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education	2.04	4.12	8.741	.000
P2. Help students integrate into typical classes	1.70	4.32	11.331	.000
P3. Preserve the uniformity of general education	2.09	4.04	7.676	.000
P4. Create borders among students with and without Special Educational Needs	1.74	4.16	9.624	.000
P5. Are the most appropriate and effective way of addressing the needs of a minority of students	1.91	4.12	9.386	.000
P6. Lead to the marginalization and limitation of subsequent opportunities in the lives of the students supported by them	1.96	3.96	8.598	.000
P7. Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools	3.32	4.35	-6.782	.000

P8. It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context	3.92	4.61	-5.843	.000
P9. Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, without engaging in common activities	2.56	4.3	-8.185	.000
P10. Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education	3.92	4.57	-4.463	.000
P11. Prevents the academic progress of students of formal development	2.20	4.39	-9.625	.000
P12. Does not favor the academic success of all students with special educational needs	3.84	4.65	-6.439	.000
P13. Complicates the work of the typical class teacher	1.56	3.96	-9.005	.000
P14. Provides opportunities for equal participation in a common learning context	3.24	4.57	-8.252	.000
P15. It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator	3.56	4.91	-9.440	.000
R1. Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are adequately covered	1.72	4.52	-15.177	.000
R2. Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs	1.72	4.52	-15.177	.000
R3. Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them	3.60	4.91	-8.546	.000
R4. Implementation of training initiatives, programs and seminars for inclusive education	3.24	4.57	-8.252	.000
R6. Need for staffing with specialized staff	3.92	4.61	-5.843	.000
R7. Need for further education and training	1.60	3.78	-6.766	.000
R8. Need to change the curriculum	1.88	4.09	-9.386	.000
R9. Reactions from parents	1.64	3.7	-6.229	.000
R10. Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit	1.68	4.3	-11.331	.000
R11. Insufficiency of school textbooks	1.68	4.3	-11.331	.000
R12. Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs	2.20	4.39	-9.625	.000
R13. Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols	1.48	3.48	-5.755	.000
R14. Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another	1.56	3.96	-9.005	.000
R15. Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs	2.04	4.04	-8.598	.000

Given the observations that emerged from the pilot study conducted, the following corrections were considered necessary:

1. Some multiple-choice questions were reformulated or additional options were added regarding the type of School Unit (Part A, Demographic Data - question 3 of the final questionnaire) and the area of the School Unit (Part A, Demographic Data - question 6 of the final questionnaire). These modifications were made to enhance semantic coherence and the flow of responses.

2. Questions were added or modified, along with the language of questions, regarding the directors' knowledge about inclusion protocols and their implementation (Part B, Directors' Knowledge of the Legal Framework for Inclusive and Special Education in Greece - final questions 1-25 of the questionnaire), as well as the type of responses to these questions (yes, no, I don't know). The modifications were mainly aimed at exploring the directors' level of knowledge more comprehensively in the following five (5) interconnected areas: Conceptual Clarification of Definitions, Models of Inclusive Education, International Policy of Inclusive Education,

Legislation and Measures of Inclusion in the Greek Educational System, and Protocols of Inclusion in Greek Schools.

3. Negative questions were reformulated using the positive or neutral version of the statement (Part 3, Perceptions of Special Education, Inclusion, and Related Protocols - questions 1 and 2 of the final questionnaire). The questions were related to the extent to which directors believe that Greece's inclusive education protocols build bridges between students with and without Special Educational Needs or lead to integration and further opportunities in the lives of the students they support. Additionally, the extent to which directors believe that inclusive education argues for each student to follow their own curriculum while participating in common activities, promotes the academic progress of formally developing students, favors the academic success of all students with special educational needs, or facilitates the work of the typical class teacher. The modifications were primarily made to improve understanding and enhance the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

4. A question was added to the Likert scale questions about the needs, problems, or situations that directors believe they will be required to address as school directors to improve inclusive education (Part D, The Role of the Director in the Implementation and Application of Inclusive Education Protocols - question 3 of the final questionnaire). The question pertains to the lack of time for consultation with other teachers and specialists that directors face, especially in the current period, with their workload increasing significantly.

Following the mentioned changes, the final form of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix II.

In summary, the key steps considered to ensure the content validity of the questionnaire are:

o Literature review.
o Theoretical foundations.
o Initial questionnaire.
o Pilot study (analysis may lead to the rejection or modification of some questions).
o Reformulation of some questionnaire questions (after the pilot survey).

3.7 Data analysis strategies

Data analysis allows the researcher to process, interpret, and understand the collected data, enabling them to address the research questions and objectives.

For this purpose, during the research process, data analysis was carried out using the statistical software SPSS, version 28 for Mac. Various data collection methods were employed, including questionnaire development and implementation of the final instrument. Data was initially organized into a matrix, followed by a data cleansing process to identify and rectify any anomalies that may have occurred during data collection.

In the questionnaire construction process, internal consistency was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and discrimination coefficient calculations.

On the other hand, once the data were collected using the final questionnaire, the normality of the sample was assessed by subjecting the data to several tests: skewness coefficient, kurtosis, and the goodness of fit of the statistical model using the chi-square test.

Given the nature of the collected information and to address the first of the specific objectives, the data was treated by classifying correct answers with 1 point, while incorrect answers, "I don't know," or unanswered questions were scored as 0 points. Consequently, the total score for knowledge about the implementation of co-educational protocols was calculated cumulatively and converted into percentages for each domain, as well as for the overall knowledge scale (a higher score and, by extension, higher percentages indicate greater knowledge). After summing up the data, the general knowledge score ranged from 0 to 25. Individuals who scored from 0 to 8 were classified as having low knowledge, those scoring from 9 to 17 as having moderate knowledge, and those scoring from 18 to 25 as having a high knowledge of the legal framework related to inclusive and special education in Greece. This allowed for descriptive analysis (frequencies and percentages) of each element, by sub-dimensions.

Subsequently, to address the second formulated objective, a descriptive analysis was carried out (frequencies, percentages, measures of central tendency (mean), and dispersion and variability (standard deviation)) for each of the elements within the remaining dimensions, broken down by the sub-dimensions that constitute them.

Based on these initial results and to achieve the third objective, a comparative and inferential study was conducted using significance tests. This included the Student's t-test for the Gender variable, analysis of variance (ANOVA) for the Age Range variable, as well

as analysis through cross-tabulation and the Chi-square coefficient for the various sub-dimensions regarding the directors' knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies in their secondary schools. This analysis involved the calculation of new variables that grouped the elements within each sub-dimension.

To achieve the fourth specific objective, variables were calculated that represented the aggregate of elements from the sub-dimensions of Directors' Attitudes and Perceptions of the Special Education School Unit. These variables included: Perceptions of the Implementation of Inclusive Education Protocols, Perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education, Role of the Principal in Strengthening and Promoting Inclusive Education, and Needs, Problems, or Situations Addressed by School Management to Improve Inclusive Education. Additionally, a global knowledge variable was computed.

Finally, a correlational study was conducted between the level of knowledge and the new variables representing directors' attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education through ANOVA analysis. Furthermore, a correlation test was performed among the dimensions of Knowledge of Conceptual Clarification of Definitions, Knowledge of Models of Inclusive Education, Knowledge of International Policy of Inclusive Education, Knowledge of Legislation and Measures of Inclusion in the Greek Educational System, Knowledge of Protocols of Inclusion in Greek Schools, Perceptions of the Implementation of Inclusive Education Protocols, Perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education, Role of the Principal in Strengthening and Promoting Inclusive Education, and Needs, Problems, or Situations Addressed by School Management to Improve Inclusive Education.

RESULT

In this chapter, the study's findings are presented. The results are organized according to the objectives and research questions and are based on a quantitative analysis of the data obtained. The questionnaire used for data collection focuses on directors' knowledge and understanding of inclusive education protocols and policies in secondary schools, as well as directors' perceptions of the concept of inclusion.

Additionally, a comparative study is conducted to examine the knowledge about inclusive education protocols and policies, perceptions, and attitudes of principals toward inclusive education.

Finally, a correlation study is performed to explore the relationship between knowledge about inclusive education protocols and policies and the attitudes and perceptions of directors regarding inclusive education.

Before conducting data analysis, it was ensured that the scale variables followed a normal distribution. The values obtained for skewness (<3.00) and kurtosis (<8.00) coefficients indicate the univariate normality of the collected data (Thode, 2002) across the various elements included in the questionnaire dimensions. Furthermore, the goodness of fit of the statistical model underlying the observed and desired observations has been assessed, assuming a discrete nature in the scale values through the chi-square test (n.s.=0.05) (Rao & Scott, 1981). The test has proven to be significant for all components of each dimension, indicating that the collected data are distributed along a normalized continuum of observations and can be generalized to the reference population (see Annex 3).

4.1. Knowledge and understanding of directors regarding the protocols and policies of inclusive education in secondary schools

In this section, a general overview of the directors' level of knowledge and understanding regarding the legal framework (protocols and policies) of inclusive and special education in secondary education schools in Greece is provided, followed by an examination of the aspects that are better understood and those that are less understood, in response to the following research question: What is the level of knowledge and understanding of the directors regarding the protocols and policies of educational inclusion in their secondary schools?

More specifically, regarding directors' knowledge of definitions related to inclusive education (Conceptual clarification of definitions), the percentages of correct answers to the corresponding questions are as follows: 96.2% of directors correctly answered that the inclusive education model is based on the principles of democratic school, 63.3% answered correctly that inclusive education is not a national (Greek) educational policy. However, nearly 25.7% answered correctly that the definition "inclusive education" refers to the education of all children together in the same school environment, regardless of physical or mental status. 23.8% answered correctly that the terms "integration" and "inclusion", which Greece has adopted as principles of common education, do not reflect the same practices. Only 12.1% correctly answered that for inclusion, the system is expected to change, not the child, as shown in Table 11 (Questions K1 to K5).

Table 11

Directors' knowledge of definitions related to inclusive education

	False		True	
	f	%	f	%
1.1 Inclusive education is a national (Greek) educational policy	154	36.7	266	63.3
1.2 The inclusive education model is based on the principles of the democratic school	16	3.8	404	96.2
1.3 The term "integration" and the term "inclusion" that Greece has adopted as principles of common education reflect the same practices	320	76.2	100	23.8
1.4 The definition "inclusive education" refers to the education of all children together, in the same school environment, regardless of physical or mental status	312	74.3	108	25.7
1.5 For inclusion the system is expected to change, not the child	369	87.9	51	12.1

Regarding directors' knowledge of inclusive education models, the percentages of correct answers to the corresponding questions are as follows: 46.7% of directors correctly answered that the full inclusion model is not the model of inclusive education applied in the Greek educational system, 31.7% answered correctly that full inclusion model proposes the equal participation of all pupils in the general school setting without regard to their particular characteristics and needs. However, nearly 23.1% answered correctly that the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classroom does not have a negative impact on the academic performance of other students. 14.5% answered correctly that (successful) education in separate special structures does not preclude the successful operation of co-educational classes. Only 6.0% correctly answered that according to the model of participation in the same class, special schools have no reason to exist except for support classes, as shown in Table 12 (Questions K6 to K10).

Table 12

Directors' knowledge of Inclusive Education Models

	False		True	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**
2.1 Full inclusion model proposes the equal participation of all pupils in the general school setting without regard to their particular characteristics and needs	287	68.3	133	31.7
2.2. According to the model of participation in the same class, special schools have no reason to exist except support classes	395	94.0	25	6.0
2.3. The full inclusion model is the model of inclusive education that is applied in the Greek educational system	224	53.3	196	46.7
2.4. The inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classroom has a negative impact on the academic performance of other students	323	76.9	97	23.1
2.5. (Successful) Education in separate special structures precludes the successful operation of co-educational classes	359	85.5	61	14.5

Regarding directors' knowledge of international inclusive education policy, the percentages of correct answers to the corresponding questions are as follows: 33.3% of directors correctly answered that the school environment and culture can directly impact the acceptance of pupils with special needs. 28.1% answered correctly that according to the 1978 Warnock Report, children cannot be categorized based on their disabilities or intelligence. 25.0% answered correctly that typically developing students benefit from interacting and coexisting with children with disabilities or special educational needs. 21.9% answered correctly that the Salamanca Declaration of 1994 was the starting point for promoting the co-education approach. Only 13.1% correctly answered that the 2006 UN Convention is the first international legislation on the treatment of people with disabilities, as shown in Table 13 (Questions K11 to K15).

Table 13

Directors' knowledge of international inclusive education policy

	False		True	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**
3.1. Typically developing pupils benefit from interaction and coexistence with children with disabilities or special educational needs	315	75.0	105	25.0
3.2. The environment and culture of the school setting can have a direct impact on the acceptance of pupils with special needs	280	66.7	140	33.3
3.3. The 2006 UN Convention is the first international legislation on the treatment of people with disabilities	365	86.9	55	13.1
3.4. The Salamanca Declaration of 1994 was the starting point to give impetus to the co-education approach	328	78.1	92	21.9
3.5. According to the 1978 Warnock Report, children are categorized according to their deficiency or intelligence	302	71.9	118	28.1

Regarding directors' knowledge of legislation and inclusion measures in the Greek educational system, the percentages of correct answers to the corresponding questions are as follows: 60.0% of directors correctly answered that the aim of co-education programs in Greece is to raise awareness of human rights issues among students in general education schools, 26.9% answered correctly that the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and digital educational material in the learning process is a central issue of co-education policy in Greece. However, nearly 25.7% answered correctly that the first legislation on Special Education in Greece was not enacted in the 1990s. Only 19.5% answered correctly that the UN International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 has been ratified by law in Greece. 18.8% correctly answered that the educational system has failed to involve all students virtually in the educational and social activities of school life, as shown in Table 14 (Questions K16 to K20).

Table 14

Directors' Knowledge of Legislation and Inclusion Measures in the Greek Educational System

	False		True	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**
4.1. The aim of co-education programs in Greece is to raise awareness of human rights issues among students in general education schools	168	40.0	252	60.0
4.2. The first legislation on Special Education in Greece was enacted in the 1990s	312	74.3	108	25.7
4.3. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and digital educational material in the learning process is a central issue of co-education policy in Greece	307	73.1	113	26.9
4.4. The educational system has failed to involve all students virtually in the educational and social activities of school life	341	81.2	79	18.8
4.5. The UN International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 has been ratified by law in Greece	338	80.5	82	19.5

Regarding directors' knowledge of Inclusion Protocols in Greek schools, the percentages of correct answers to the corresponding questions are as follows: 85.2% of directors correctly answered that special education school units do not have the same curricula as the "general" education schools, 52.6% answered correctly that in an integration class, there is not always a physicist. However, nearly 50.7% answered correctly that the diagnostic procedure for the assessment of special educational needs is performed by an expert panel that consists obligatory of social workers. 42.6% answered correctly that the investigation and identification of the special educational needs of students within the Greek educational system do not take place in every school. Only 18.1% correctly answered that co-education programs can be implemented with co-located or non-co-located units of general education, as shown in Table 15 (Questions K21 to K25).

Table 15

Directors' Knowledge of Inclusion Protocols in Greek Schools

	False		True	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**
5.1. Special education school units have the same curricula as the "general" education schools	62	14.8	358	85.2
5.2. The investigation and identification of the special educational needs of the students within the Greek educational system takes place in every school	241	57.4	179	42.6
5.3. The diagnostic procedure for the assessment of special educational needs is performed by an expert panel that consists obligatory of Social workers	207	49.3	213	50.7
5.4. In an integration class, there is always a physicist	199	47.4	221	52.6
5.5. Co-education programs can be implemented with co-located or non-co-located units of general education	344	81.9	76	18.1

In summary, as revealed from the above description, 71.0% of the directors have a low level of knowledge regarding inclusion protocols and policies in secondary education schools, 14.5% have a moderate level of knowledge, and the remaining 14.5% have a high level of knowledge.

Table 16

Levels of knowledge about Educational inclusion protocols and policies in their secondary schools

	f	**%**
Low	298	71.0
Moderate	61	14.5
High	61	14.5
Total	420	100.0

4.2. Perceptions of School Directors Regarding the Concept of Inclusion

In this section, a general overview of the perceptions of school directors regarding the benefits and challenges of education within the framework of inclusion in the school environment is provided, regardless of the level at which they work, as well as the role of directors in implementing inclusion protocols. This is followed by an examination of those aspects that tend to exhibit the highest or lowest values or display a variety of opinions. In connection with the following research question: What are the perceptions of school principals regarding the benefits and challenges of inclusive education in the school environment?

More specifically, concerning the perceptions of school directors regarding the degree of implementation of inclusive education protocols in Greece, there is diversity. The aspects that concern directors the most are:

- The extent to which they believe that Greece's inclusive education protocols help students integrate into typical classes (M=3.49, S.D.=1.151).
- The extent to which these protocols serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education (M=3.42, S.D.=1.032).

The aspect that maintains the lowest value is the perception that Greece's inclusive education protocols build bridges among students with and without Special Educational Needs (M=3.14, S.D.=1.139), as shown in Table 17.

Table 17

Distribution of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation about directors' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education protocols

	Totally Disagree		Disagree		Not Agree or Disagree		Agree		Totally Agree		M	S.D.	N
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
P1. Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education	33	7.9	39	9.3	100	23.8	214	51	34	8.1	3.42	1.032	420
P2. Help students integrate into typical classes	49	11.7	30	7.1	55	13.1	238	56.7	48	11.4	3.49	1.151	420
P3. Preserve the uniformity of general education	30	7.1	36	8.6	140	33.3	181	43.1	33	7.9	3.36	0.995	420
P4. Building bridges between students with and without Special Educational Needs	45	10.7	75	17.9	114	27.1	149	35.5	37	8.8	3.14	1.139	420
P5. Are the most appropriate and effective way of addressing the needs of a minority of students	34	8.1	56	13.3	112	26.7	180	42.9	38	9	3.31	1.073	420
P6. Lead to the integration and expansion of subsequent opportunities in the lives of the students supported by them	28	6.7	75	17.9	132	31.4	158	37.6	27	6.4	3.19	1.022	420

Regarding the perceptions of school directors regarding the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education, the aspects that concern directors the most are the extent to which they believe:

- Inclusive education presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator (M=4.19, S.D.=0.779).
- Inclusive education favors the academic success of all students with special educational needs (M=4.11, S.D.=0.484).
- Inclusive education ensures the presence, participation, and progress of all students in education (M=4.08, S.D.=0.490).

- Inclusive education refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs to meet the requirements of the school context (M=4.06, S.D.=0.472).

The aspect that maintains the lowest value is the perception that inclusive education simplifies the work of the typical class teacher (M=2.45, S.D.=1.097), as shown in Table 18.

Table 18

Distribution of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation about directors' perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education

	Totally Disagree		Disagree		Not Agree or Disagree		Agree		Totally Agree		M	S.D.	N
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
P7. Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools	0	0.0	10	2.4	156	37.1	215	51.2	39	9.3	3.67	0.674	420
P8. It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context	0	0.0	4	1	22	5.2	337	80.2	57	13.6	4.06	0.472	420
P9. Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, while at the same time engaging in common activities	0	0.0	104	24.8	221	52.6	48	11.4	47	11.2	3.09	0.896	420
P10. Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education	0	0.0	0	0.0	35	8.3	317	75.5	68	16.2	4.08	0.490	420
P11. Promotes the academic progress of students of formal development	16	3.8	154	36.7	108	25.7	88	21	54	12.9	3.02	1.116	420
P12. Favors the academic success of all students with special educational needs	0	0.0	2	0.5	23	5.5	323	76.9	72	17.1	4.11	0.484	420
P13. Simplifies the work of the typical class teacher	79	18.8	159	37.9	131	31.2	16	3.8	35	8.3	2.45	1.097	420
P14, Provides opportunities for equal participation in a common learning context	0	0.0	8	1.9	144	34.3	210	50	58	13.8	3.76	0.707	420
P15. It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator	0	0.0	10	2.4	65	15.5	181	43.1	164	39	4.19	0.779	420

In terms of the role of the directors in the implementation and application of inclusive education protocols, the aspects of greatest concern to the directors regarding the measures that contribute to strengthening and promoting inclusive education include:

- Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them (M=4.24, S.D.=0.798).
- Implementing training initiatives, programs, and seminars for inclusive education (M=4.17, S.D.=0.549).

The aspects of least concern to the directors are:

- Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs (M=2.8, S.D.=1.208).
- Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment to adequately meet the needs of students with special educational needs (M=2.68, S.D.=1.194), as shown in Table 19.

Table 19

Distribution of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation about role of the principal in strengthening and promoting inclusive education.

	Very Little		Little		Average		Much		Very Much		M	S.D.	N
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
R1. Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are adequately covered	40	9.5	209	49.8	74	17.6	39	9.3	58	13.8	2.68	1.194	420
R2. Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs	35	8.3	188	44.8	88	21.0	45	10.7	64	15.2	2.8	1.208	420
R3. Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them	0	0.0	10	2.4	65	15.5	159	37.9	186	44.3	4.24	0.798	420
R4. Implementation of training initiatives, programs and seminars for inclusive education	0	0.0	4	1.0	22	5.2	294	70.0	100	23.8	4.17	0.549	420

When it comes to the role of the directors in the implementation and application of inclusive education protocols, the aspects of most concern to the directors regarding the needs, problems, or situations that can be addressed through school management to improve inclusive education include:

- Lack of time for consulting with other teachers and specialists (M=4.26, S.D.=0.770).
- The need for staffing with specialized staff (M=4.13, S.D.=0.526).
- Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another (M=4.11, S.D.=1.013).
- Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols (M=4.01, S.D.=0.604).

The aspects of least concern to the directors are:

- Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs (M=2.86, S.D.=1.157).

- Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs (M=2.72, S.D.=1.278).
- Need to change the curriculum (M=2.72, S.D.=1.235).
- Insufficiency of school textbooks (M=2.64, S.D.=1.196).
- Reactions from parents (M=2.62, S.D.=1.322).
- Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit (M=2.58, S.D.=1.282), as shown in Table 20.

Table 20

Distribution of frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation about needs, problems or situations that can be addressed from school management to improve inclusive education

	Very Little		Little		Average		Much		Very Much		M	S.D.	N
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
R6. Need for staffing with specialized staff	0	0.0	14	3.3	67	16.0	267	63.6	72	17.1	4.13	0.526	420
R7. Need for further education and training	48	11.4	193	46.0	66	15.7	55	13.1	58	13.8	3.95	0.680	420
R8. Need to change the curriculum	88	21.0	153	36.4	66	15.7	55	13.1	58	13.8	2.72	1.235	420
R9. Reactions from parents	80	19.0	172	41.0	71	16.9	39	9.3	58	13.8	2.62	1.322	420
R10. Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit	48	11.4	208	49.5	63	15.0	50	11.9	51	12.1	2.58	1.282	420
R11. Insufficiency of school textbooks	63	15.0	166	39.5	76	18.1	54	12.9	61	14.5	2.64	1.196	420
R12. Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs	0	0.0	7	1.7	53	12.6	288	68.6	72	17.1	2.72	1.278	420
R13. Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols	4	1.0	40	9.5	50	11.9	137	32.6	189	45.0	4.01	0.604	420
R14. Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another	38	9.0	145	34.5	130	31.0	52	12.4	55	13.1	4.11	1.013	420
R15. Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs	0	0.0	8	1.9	60	14.3	168	40.0	184	43.8	2.86	1.157	420
R16. Lack of time for consulting with other teachers and specialists	40	9.5	209	49.8	74	17.6	39	9.3	58	13.8	4.26	0.770	420

Regarding the forms of support provided by directors for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, 28.9% of directors opt for extensive cooperation and communication with the special educator of each student, while 26.4% choose to cooperate and communicate with the parents of the students. However, nearly 18.9% prefer to cooperate and communicate with specialists and school counselors, and 16.1% focus on facilitating the acceptance of the students by their classmates. Only 8.5% engage in

extensive cooperation with other school units and the Centers of Educational and Counseling Support, and merely 1.2% conduct a continuous evaluation of each student's case and propose a differentiated curriculum or a change in the school environment, as shown in Table 21.

Table 21

Distribution of frequencies and percentages about Forms of support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities

	f	%
R5.1. Cooperation and communication with the parents of the students	363	26.4
R5.2. Cooperation and communication with specialists and school counselors	259	18.9
R5.3. Extensive cooperation and communication with the special educator of each student	397	28.9
R5.4. Attempts to facilitate the acceptance of the students from his/her classmates	221	16.1
R5.5. Extensive cooperation with other school units and the Centers of Educational and Counseling Support	117	8.5
R5.6. Constant evaluation of each student's case and proposal of a differentiated curriculum or change of school environment	17	1.2

4.3. Comparative Study of Knowledge of Inclusive Education Protocols and Policies, Perceptions, and Attitudes of School Directors toward Inclusive Education

In this section, a comparative study and analysis aim to relate the demographic characteristics (such as gender and age) of secondary education school directors to their knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies, as well as their attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education. To explore these relationships, the following research questions were addressed: Are there significant differences in the knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies among directors based on their demographic characteristics, such as gender and age? Are there significant differences in the attitudes and perceptions of the directors based on their demographic characteristics, such as gender and age?

Regarding the potential relationships between variable "general knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies among directors" as well as all sub-dimensions of knowledge and gender variable, the results of the independent samples t-test (n.s.=0.05), indicate statistically significant differences in the general knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies among directors when considering the gender variable ($t=-4.302$, $p=0.000$). Women outperform men in all sub-dimensions of the study. More specifically, these differences are observed in the sub-dimension of knowledge of conceptual clarification of definitions ($t=-2.635$, $p=0.004$), knowledge of models of inclusive education

(t=-2.205, p=0.014), knowledge of international policy of inclusive education (t=-5.788, p=0.000), knowledge of legislation and measures of inclusion in the Greek educational system (t=-4.513, p=0.000), and knowledge of protocols of inclusion in Greek schools (t=-7.900, p=0.000), as presented in Table 22.

Table 22

Comparison of means of knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies based on the variable Gender

| | Gender | | | | | |
| | Male (n=237) | | Female (n=183) | | | |
	M	**S.D.**	**M**	**S.D.**	**t**	**p**
General knowledge of the legal framework	1.30	0.644	1.61	0.803	-4.302	.000
Knowledge of Conceptual clarification of definitions	2.06	1.228	2.40	1.379	-2.635	.004
Knowledge of Models of inclusive education	1.08	1.418	1.40	1.583	-2.205	.014
Knowledge of International policy of inclusive education	0.88	1.253	1.64	1.402	-5.788	.000
Knowledge of Legislation and measures of inclusion in the Greek educational system	1.24	1.327	1.85	1.420	-4.513	.000
Knowledge of Protocols of inclusion in Greek schools	2.08	1.373	3.03	1.109	-7.900	.000

Regarding the potential relationships between the variable "general knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies among directors," as well as all sub-dimensions of knowledge and the Age Range variable, the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrate that there are statistically significant differences in terms of the knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies among directors (see Table 23), as confirmed by the Scheffé post hoc test between the following groups:

- General knowledge of the legal framework: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=1.774, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.407, p=0.000) possess greater knowledge than those aged 51 years or older (F=187.495, p=0.000).

- Knowledge of conceptual clarification of definitions: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.662, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.529, p=0.000) possess greater knowledge than those aged 51 years or older (F=188.523, p=0.000).

- Knowledge of models of inclusive education: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=3.240, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=3.107, p=0.000) possess greater knowledge than those aged 51 years or older (F=247.896, p=0.000).

- Knowledge of international policy of inclusive education: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.606, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.156, p=0.000) possess greater knowledge than those aged 51 years or older (F=96.417, p=0.000).

- Knowledge of legislation and measures of inclusion in the Greek educational system: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.793, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.027, p=0.000) possess greater knowledge than those aged 51 years or older (F=78.008, p=0.000).

- Knowledge of protocols of inclusion in Greek schools: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.226, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.460, p=0.000) possess greater knowledge than those aged 51 years or older (F=37.982, p=0.000).

Table 23

Comparison of means about knowledge of protocols and policies of inclusive education according to the Age Range variable

	Age	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
General knowledge of the legal framework	31-40	3.00	0.000	2	187.495	.000	31-40; ≥ 51/ 1.774 (.000)
	41-50	2.63	0.486	60			41-50; ≥ 51/ 1.407 (.000)
	≥ 51	1.23	0.541	358			
Knowledge of Conceptual clarification of definitions	31-40	4.50	0.707	2	188.523	.000	31-40; ≥ 51/ 2.662 (.000)
	41-50	4.37	0.688	60			41-50; ≥ 51/ 2.529 (.000)
	≥ 51	1.84	0.985	358			
Knowledge of Models of inclusive education	31-40	4.00	1.414	2	247.896	.000	31-40; ≥ 51/ 3.240 (.000)
	41-50	3.87	0.791	60			41-50; ≥ 51/ 3.107 (.000)
	≥ 51	0.76	1.047	358			
Knowledge of International policy of inclusive education	31-40	3.50	0.707	2	96.417	.000	31-40; ≥ 51/ 2.606 (.000)
	41-50	3.05	0.790	60			41-50; ≥ 51/ 2.156 (.000)
	≥ 51	0.89	1.186	358			
Knowledge of Legislation and measures of inclusion in the Greek educational system	31-40	4.00	0.000	2	78.008	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.793 (.000)
	41-50	3.23	0.998	60			41-50; ≥ 51/ 2.027 (.000)
	≥ 51	1.21	1.228	358			
Knowledge of Protocols of inclusion in Greek schools	31-40	4.50	0.707	2	37.982	.000	31-40; ≥ 51/ 2.226 (.000)
	41-50	3.73	0.880	60			41-50; ≥ 51/ 1.460 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.27	1.296	358			

Regarding the potential relationships between all sub-dimensions of directors' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education protocols and gender variable, the results of the independent samples t-test (n.s.=0.05), show statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education protocols among directors are observed when considering the gender variable in all of the six elements (see Table 24). Men outperform women in all sub-dimensions of the study. More specifically, these differences are found in the sub-dimension where inclusive education protocols:

- Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education (t=7.869, p=0.000),

- Help students integrate into typical classes (t=7.556, p=0.000),

- preserve the uniformity of general education (t=6.740, p=0.000),

- Build bridges among students with and without Special Educational Needs (t=14.056, p=0.000),

- Are the most appropriate and effective way of addressing the needs of a minority of students (t=11.101, p=0.000), and

- Lead to the integration and expansion of subsequent opportunities in the lives of the students supported by them (t=14.210, p=0.000).

Table 24

Comparison of means about directors' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education protocols according to the variable Gender

	Gender					
	Male (n=237)		Female(n=183)			
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	t	p
P1. Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education	3.75	0.980	3.00	0.943	7.869	.000
P2. Help students integrate into typical classes	3.85	0.984	3.03	1.188	7.556	.000
P3. Preserve the uniformity of general education	3.63	0.972	3.01	0.911	6.740	.000
P4. Building bridges between students with and without Special Educational Needs	3.70	1.015	2.40	0.832	14.056	.000
P5. Are the most appropriate and effective way of addressing the needs of a minority of students	3.76	0.997	2.73	0.870	11.101	.000
P6. Lead to the integration and expansion of subsequent opportunities in the lives of the students supported by them	3.70	0.891	2.53	0.769	14.210	.000

Regarding the potential relationships between all sub-dimensions of directors' perceptions of various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education and the gender variable, the results of the independent samples t-test (n.s.=0.05) show statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education among directors when considering the gender variable in all of the nine elements (see Table 25). Women outperform men in all sub-dimensions of the study. More specifically, these differences are found in the sub-dimension where inclusive education:

- Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools (t=-7.652, p=0.000),

- It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context (t=-3.595, p=0.000),

- Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, while at the same time engaging in common activities (t=-7.566, p=0.000),

- Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education (t=-1.941, p=0.026),

- Promotes the academic progress of students of formal development (t=-10.957, p=0.000),

- Favors the academic success of all students with special educational needs (t=-5.392, p=0.000),

- Simplifies the work of the typical class teacher (t=-8.970, p=0.000),

- Provides opportunities for equal participation in a common learning context (t=-6.231, p=0.000), and

- It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator (t=-11.722, p=0.000).

Table 25

Comparison of means about directors' perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education according to the variable Gender

| | Gender | | | | | |
| | Male (n=237) | | Female (n=183) | | | |
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	t	p
P7. Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools	3.47	0.654	3.94	0.604	-7.652	.000
P8. It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context	3.99	0.441	4.16	0.494	-3.595	.000
P9. Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, while at the same time engaging in common activities	2.81	0.802	3.45	0.887	-7.566	.000
P10. Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education	4.04	0.515	4.13	0.450	-1.941	.026
P11. Promotes the academic progress of students of formal development	2.56	0.992	3.62	0.975	-10.957	.000
P12. Favors the academic success of all students with special educational needs	4.00	0.487	4.25	0.444	-5.392	.000
P13. Simplifies the work of the typical class teacher	2.06	1.025	2.95	0.979	-8.970	.000
P14. Provides opportunities for equal participation in a common learning context	3.58	0.701	3.99	0.646	-6.231	.000
P15. It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator	3.85	0.749	4.63	0.568	-11.722	.000

Regarding the potential relationships between all sub-dimensions of the role of the principal in strengthening and promoting inclusive education and the gender variable, the results of the independent samples t-test (n.s.=0.05) observed statistically significant differences regarding the role of the principal in strengthening and promoting inclusive

education among directors when considering the gender variable in all of the four elements (see Table 26). Men outperform women in all sub-dimensions of the study. More specifically, these differences are found in the sub-dimension of director's role:

- Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are adequately covered (t=-6.322, p=0.000),

- Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs (t=-7.740, p=0.000),

- Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them (t=-14.004, p=0.000), and

- Implementation of training initiatives, programs and seminars for inclusive education (t=-6.309, p=0.000).

Table 26

Comparison of means regarding the Role of the principal in strengthening and promoting inclusive education according to the variable Gender

	Gender					
	Male (n=237)		Female (n=183)			
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	t	P
R1. Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are adequately covered	2.37	1.080	3.09	1.215	-6.322	.000
R2. Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs	2.42	1.077	3.29	1.194	-7.740	.000
R3. Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them	3.86	0.757	4.74	0.531	-14.004	.000
R4. Implementation of training initiatives, programs and seminars for inclusive education	4.02	0.473	4.36	0.583	-6.309	.000

Regarding the potential relationships between all sub-dimensions of the needs, problems or situations that can be addressed through school management to improve inclusive education and the gender variable, the results of the independent samples t-test (n.s.=0.05), observed statistically significant differences in the needs, problems or situations that can be addressed through school management to improve inclusive education among directors when considering the gender variable in all of the eleven elements (see Table 27). Women outperform men in all sub-dimensions of the study. More specifically, these differences are found in the sub-dimension of inclusive education enhancement:

- Need for staffing with specialized staff (t=-4.910, p=0.000),

- Need for further education and training (t=-6.865, p=0.000),

- Need to change the curriculum (t=-8.787, p=0.000),

- Reactions from parents (t=-9.796, p=0.000),

- Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit (t=-7.621, p=0.000),

- Insufficiency of school textbooks (t=-9.546, p=0.000),

- Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs (t=-8.067, p=0.000),

- Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols (t=-5.469, p=0.000),

- Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another (t=-10.590, p=0.000),

- Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs (t=-12.664, p=0.000), and

- Lack of time for consulting with other teachers and specialists (t=-9.582, p=0.000).

Table 27

Comparison of means in the Needs, problems or situations that can be addressed through school management to improve inclusive education according to the variable Gender

| | Gender | | | | | |
| | Male (n=237) | | Female (n=183) | | | |
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	t	p
R6. Need for staffing with specialized staff	4.02	0.473	4.27	0.556	-4.910	.000
R7. Need for further education and training	3.76	0.670	4.19	0.613	-6.865	.000
R8. Need to change the curriculum	2.29	1.140	3.27	1.130	-8.787	.000
R9. Reactions from parents	2.12	1.241	3.27	1.130	-9.796	.000
R10. Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit	2.19	1.193	3.09	1.215	-7.621	.000
R11. Insufficiency of school textbooks	2.19	1.038	3.22	1.137	-9.546	.000
R12. Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs	2.31	1.219	3.26	1.151	-8.067	.000
R13. Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols	3.87	0.561	4.19	0.613	-5.469	.000
R14. Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another	3.73	1.099	4.61	0.590	-10.590	.000
R15. Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs	2.32	1.066	3.55	0.868	-12.664	.000
R16. Lack of time for consulting with other teachers and specialists	3.97	0.783	4.63	0.568	-9.582	.000

In order to determine if there is a significant association between the gender variable and the various forms of support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the Chi-square (χ^2) statistical test was applied, and the results indicate its existence in four of the six elements (see Table 28). These associations are observed in item R5.1. cooperation and communication with the parents of the students ($\chi^2=11.565$, p=.000), where men (53.2%) identify it to a greater extent than women (46.8%); in item R5.3. extensive cooperation and communication with the special educator of each student ($\chi^2=6.783$, p=.009), with men (54.9%) identifying it more than women (45.1%); item R5.4. attempts to facilitate the acceptance of the students from his/her classmates ($\chi^2=52.336$, p=.000), where women (60.2%) identify it to a greater extent than men (39.8%); and item R5.5. extensive cooperation with other school units and the Centers of Educational and Counseling Support ($\chi^2=8.170$, p=.009), with women (54.7%) identifying it more than men (45.3%).

Table 28

Comparison Forms of Support for Students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities according to the variable Gender

	Gender							
	Male (n=237)		Female (n=183)		Total			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	χ^2	p
R5.1. Cooperation and communication with the parents of the students	193	53.2	170	46.8	363	100	11.565	.000
R5.2. Cooperation and communication with specialists and school counselors	114	55.6	115	44.4	259	100	0.189	.663
R5.3. Extensive cooperation and communication with the special educator of each student	218	54.9	179	45.1	397	100	6.783	.009
R5.4. Attempts to facilitate the acceptance of the students from his/her classmates	88	39.8	133	60.2	221	100	52.336	.000
R5.5. Extensive cooperation with other school units and the Centers of Educational and Counseling Support	53	45.3	64	54.7	117	100	8.170	.004
R5.6. Constant evaluation of each student's case and proposal of a differentiated curriculum or change of school environment	9	52.9	8	47.1	17	100	0.088	.767

In order to determine if there is a significant association between the Age Range variable and the directors' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education protocols, the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrate that there are statistically significant differences in terms of directors' perceptions concerning the implementation of inclusive education protocols (see Table 29), as confirmed by the Scheffé post hoc test between the following groups:

- Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education: Directors aged 51 years or older (F=94.671, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.659, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.576, p=0.000).

- Help students integrate into typical classes: Directors aged 51 years or older (F=139.547, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.293, p=0.002) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.043, p=0.000).

- Knowledge of models of inclusive education: Directors aged 51 years or older (F=67.859, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.561, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.328, p=0.000).

- Knowledge of international policy of inclusive education: Directors aged 51 years or older (F=56.177, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.355, p=0.005) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.438, p=0.000).

- Knowledge of legislation and measures of inclusion in the Greek educational system: Directors aged 51 years or older (F=72.673, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.539, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.489, p=0.000).

- Knowledge of protocols of inclusion in Greek schools: Directors aged 51 years or older (F=60.653, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=1.894, p=0.013) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.344, p=0.000).

Table 29

Comparison of means about directors' perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education protocols according to the variable Age range

	Age	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
P1. Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education	31-40	1.00	0.000	2	94.671	.000	≥51; 31-40 / 2.659 (.000)
	41-50	2.08	0.671	60			≥51; 41-50 / 1.576 (.000)
	≥ 51	3.66	0.886	358			
P2. Help students integrate into typical classes	31-40	1.50	0.707	2	139.547	.000	≥51; 31-40 / 2.293 (.002)
	41-50	1.75	0.856	60			≥51; 41-50 / 2.043 (.000)
	≥ 51	3.79	0.899	358			
P3. Preserve the uniformity of general education	31-40	1.00	0.000	2	67.859	.000	≥51; 31-40 / 2.561 (.000)
	41-50	2.23	0.647	60			≥51; 31-40 / 1.328 (.000)
	≥ 51	3.56	0.898	358			
P4. Building bridges between students with and without Special Educational Needs	31-40	1.00	0.000	2	56.177	.000	≥51; 31-40 / 2.355 (.005)
	41-50	1.92	0.809	60			≥51; 31-40 / 1.438 (.000)
	≥ 51	3.35	1.045	358			
P5. Are the most appropriate and	31-40	1.00	0.000	2	72.673	.000	≥51; 31-40 / 2.539 (.000)

	Age	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
effective way of addressing the needs of a minority of students	41-50	2.05	0.699	60			≥51; 31-40 / 1.489 (.000)
	≥ 51	3.54	0.960	358			
P6. Lead to the integration and expansion of subsequent opportunities in the lives of the students supported by them	31-40	1.50	0.707	2	60.653	.000	≥51; 31-40 / 1.894 (.013)
	41-50	2.05	0.746	60			≥51; 31-40 / 1.344 (.000)
	≥ 51	3.39	0.925	358			

In order to determine if there is a significant association between the Age Range variable and the directors' perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education, the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrate that there are statistically significant differences in terms of directors' perceptions concerning the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education (see Table 30), as confirmed by the Scheffé post hoc test between the following groups:

- Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools: Directors aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.538, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=17.979, p=0.000).

- It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=0.992, p=0.009) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.358, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=20.519, p=0.000).

- Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, while at the same time engaging in common activities: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.098, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.248, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=73.062, p=0.000).

- Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=0.975, p=0.015) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.342, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=17.318, p=0.000).

- Promotes the academic progress of students of formal development: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.212, p=0.006) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.579, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=73.479, p=0.000).

- Favors the academic success of all students with special educational needs: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=0.958, p=0.013) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.425, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=25.968, p=0.000).

- Simplifies the work of the typical class teacher: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.229, p=0.008) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.179, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=39.275, p=0.000).

- Provides opportunities for equal participation in a common learning context: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=1.377, p=0.009) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.894, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=55.768, p=0.000).

- It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator: Directors aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.855, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=37.692, p=0.000).

Table 30

Comparison of means about directors' perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education according to the variable Age range

	Age	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
P7. Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools	31-40	4.00	0.000	2	17.979	.000	41-50; ≥ 51 / 0.538 (.000)
	41-50	4.13	0.596	60			
	≥ 51	3.59	0.657	358			
P8. It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	20.519	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 0.992 (.009)
	41-50	4.37	0.823	60			41-50; ≥ 51 / 0.358 (.000)
	≥ 51	4.01	0.355	358			
P9. Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, while at the same time engaging in common activities	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	73.062	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.098 (.000)
	41-50	4.15	0.820	60			41-50; ≥ 51 / 1.248 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.90	0.766	358			
P10. Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	17.318	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 0.975 (.015)
	41-50	4.37	0.581	60			41-50; ≥ 51 / 0.342 (.000)
	≥ 51	4.03	0.451	358			
P11. Promotes the academic progress of students of formal development	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	73.479	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.212 (.006)
	41-50	4.37	0.637	60			41-50; ≥ 51 / 1.579 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.79	1.007	358			
P12. Favors the academic success of all students with special educational needs	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	25.968	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 0.958 (.013)
	41-50	4.47	0.676	60			41-50; ≥ 51 / 0.425 (.000)
	≥ 51	4.04	0.411	358			
P13. Simplifies the work of the typical class teacher	31-40	4.50	0.707	2	39.275	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.229 (.008)
	41-50	3.45	1.064	60			41-50; ≥ 51 / 1.179 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.27	1.000	358			
P14. Provides opportunities for	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	55.768	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 1.377 (.009)

	Age	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
equal participation in a common learning context	41-50	4.52	0.504	60			41-50; ≥ 51 / 0.894 (.000)
	≥ 51	3.62	0.648	358			
P15. It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	37.692	.000	41-50; ≥ 51 / 0.855 (.000)
	41-50	4.92	0.279	60			
	≥ 51	4.06	0.768	358			

In order to determine if there is a significant association between the Age Range variable and the role of the principal to strengthen and promote inclusive education, the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrate that there are statistically significant differences in terms of directors' perceptions concerning the role of the principal to strengthen and promote inclusive education(see Table 31), as confirmed by the Scheffé post hoc test between the following groups:

- Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are adequately covered: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.620, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.020, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=122.040, p=0.000).

- Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.489, p=0.002) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.922, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=100.969, p=0.000).

- Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them: Directors aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.852, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=35.147, p=0.000).

- Implementation of training initiatives. programs and seminars for inclusive education: Directors aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.452, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=21.692, p=0.000).

Table 31

Comparison of means about Comparison of means about Role of the principal to strengthen and promote inclusive education according to the variable Age range

	Age	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
R1. Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	122.040	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.620 (.000)
	41-50	4.40	0.669	60			41-50; ≥ 51 / 2.020 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.38	0.991	358			

	Age	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
adequately covered							
R2. Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	100.969	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.489 (.002)
	41-50	4.43	0.621	60			41-50; ≥ 51 / 1.922 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.51	1.044	358			
R3. Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	35.147	.000	41-50; ≥ 51 / 0.852 (.000)
	41-50	4.97	0.181	60			
	≥ 51	4.11	0.796	358			
R4. Implementation of training initiatives. programs and seminars for inclusive education	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	21.692	.000	41-50; ≥ 51 /0.452 (.000)
	41-50	4.55	0.832	60			
	≥ 51	4.10	0.454	358			

In order to determine if there is a significant association between the Age Range variable and the needs, problems or situations that can be addressed from school management to improve inclusive education, the results of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrate that there are statistically significant differences in terms of directors' perceptions concerning the needs, problems or situations that can be addressed from school management to improve inclusive education(see Table 32), as confirmed by the Scheffé post hoc test between the following groups:

- Need for staffing with specialized staff: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=0.944, p=0. 027) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.494, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=28.826, p=0.000).

- Need for further education and training: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=1.137, p=0. 049) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.537, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=20.116, p=0.000).

- Need to change the curriculum: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.609, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.209, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=144.206, p=0.000).

- Reactions from parents: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.721, p=0.001) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.321, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=135.146, p=0.000).

- Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.740, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.140, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=116.794, p=0.000).

- Insufficiency of school textbooks: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.668, p=0.000) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.051, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=127.561, p=0.000).

- Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=2.587, p=0. 002) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=2.087, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=108.532, p=0.000).

- Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=1.059, p=0. 037) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.459, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=18.999, p=0.000).

- Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another: Directors aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.984, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=28.259, p=0.000).

- Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs: Directors aged 31 to 41 years (I-J=1.888, p=0. 028) and those aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=1.672, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=75.455, p=0.000).

- Lack of time for consulting with other teachers and specialists: Directors aged 41 to 50 years (I-J=0.774, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those aged 51 years or older (F=30.757, p=0.000).

Table 32

Comparison of means about Needs, problems or situations that can be addressed from school management to improve inclusive education according to the variable Age range

	Age	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
R6. Need for staffing with specialized staff	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	28.826	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 0.944 (.027)
	41-50	4.55	0.832	60			41-50; ≥ 51 /0.494 (.000)
	≥ 51	4.06	0.413	358			
R7. Need for further education and training	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	20.116	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 1.137 (.049)
	41-50	4.40	0.827	60			41-50; ≥ 51 /0.537 (.000)
	≥ 51	3.86	0.618	358			
R8. Need to change the curriculum	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	144.206	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.609 (.000)
	41-50	4.60	0.527	60			41-50; ≥ 51 /2.209 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.39	1.006	358			
R9. Reactions from parents	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	135.146	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.721 (.001)
	41-50	4.60	0.527	60			41-50; ≥ 51 /2.321 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.28	1.095	358			
R10. Lack of necessary	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	116.794	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.740 (.000)

	Age	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
infrastructure and equipment in the school unit	41-50	4.40	0.669	60			41-50; ≥ 51 /2.140 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.26	1.078	358			
R11. Insufficiency of school textbooks	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	127.561	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.668 (.000)
	41-50	4.38	0.715	60			41-50; ≥ 51 /2.051 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.33	0.978	358			
R12. Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	108.532	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 2.587 (.002)
	41-50	4.50	0.537	60			41-50; ≥ 51 /2.087 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.41	1.101	358			
R13. Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	18.999	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 1.059 (.037)
	41-50	4.40	0.827	60			41-50; ≥ 51 /0.459 (.000)
	≥ 51	3.94	0.529	358			
R14. Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	28.259	.000	41-50; ≥ 51 /0.984 (.000)
	41-50	4.95	0.220	60			
	≥ 51	3.97	1.026	358			
R15. Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs	31-40	4.50	0.707	2	75.455	.000	31-40; ≥ 51 / 1.888 (.028)
	41-50	4.28	0.865	60			41-50; ≥ 51 /1.672 (.000)
	≥ 51	2.61	1.014	358			
R16. Lack of time for consulting with other teachers and specialists	31-40	5.00	0.000	2	30.757	.000	41-50; ≥ 51 /0.774 (.000)
	41-50	4.92	0.279	60			
	≥ 51	4.14	0.770	358			

In order to determine if there is a significant association between the Age Range variable and the various forms of support for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the Chi-square (χ^2) statistical test was applied, and the results indicate its existence in three of the six elements (see Table 33). These associations are observed in item R5.1. cooperation and communication with the parents of the students (χ^2=11.422, p=.003), where directors aged 51 years or older (82.9%) identify it to a greater extent than those aged 41 to 50 years (16.5%) and those aged 31 to 41 years (0.6%) item R5.4. attempts to facilitate the acceptance of the students from his/her classmates (χ^2=61.115, p=.000), where directors aged 51 years or older (72.4%) identify it to a greater extent than those aged 41 to 50 years (26.7%) and those aged 31 to 41 years (0.9%) and item R5.5. extensive cooperation with other school units and the Centers of Educational and Counseling Support (χ^2=58.646, p=.000), where, also, directors aged 51 years or older (64.1%) identify it to a greater extent than those aged 41 to 50 years (34.2%) and those aged 31 to 41 years (1.7%).

Table 33

Comparison Forms of Support for Students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities according to the variable Age range

	31-40		41-50		≥ 51		Total		χ²	p
Age range	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**		
R5.1. Cooperation and communication with the parents of the students	2	0.6	60	16.5	301	82.9	363	100	11.422	.003
R5.2. Cooperation and communication with specialists and school counselors	2	0.8	43	16.6	214	82.6	259	100	4.322	.115
R5.3. Extensive cooperation and communication with the special educator of each student	2	0.5	60	15.1	335	84.4	397	100	4.214	.112
R5.4. Attempts to facilitate the acceptance of the students from his/her classmates	2	0.9	59	26.7	160	72.4	221	100	61.115	.000
R5.5. Extensive cooperation with other school units and the Centers of Educational and Counseling Support	2	1.7	40	34.2	75	64.1	117	100	58.646	.000
R5.6. Constant evaluation of each student's case and proposal of a differentiated curriculum or change of school environment	0	0.0	1	5.9	16	94.1	17	100	1.124	.570

4.4. Correlational Study between Knowledge of Inclusive Education Protocols and Policies and Principals' Attitudes and Perceptions Towards Inclusive Education

In this section, a comparative study and analysis aim to examine the potential connection between directors' knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies and their attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education. Additionally, to enhance the understanding of inclusive education protocols and policies and principals' attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education, an exploration of the potential connections across different dimensions was pursued. As previously mentioned, this involved working with the variables representing the elements within each dimension and sub-dimension of the study, where mean and standard deviation calculations were performed. Specifically, the research question guiding this exploration is: What is the relationship between the knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies and the attitudes and perceptions of directors of special education school units?

The Levels of knowledge variable analysis results, as determined by the analysis of variance (ANOVA), reveal statistically significant differences in the attitudes and perceptions of directors from special education school units (refer to Table 34). This has been validated by the Scheffé post hoc test, which identifies variations among the following groups:

- Perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education protocols (F=536.422, p=0.000): Directors with a low level of knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies attach greater significance to this than those with a moderate level of knowledge (I-J=1.044, p=0.000) and those with a high level of knowledge (I-J=2.309, p=0.000). Additionally, directors with a moderate level of knowledge of attach greater significance to this than those with a high level of knowledge (I-J=1.265, p=0.000).

- Perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education (F=366.208, p=0.000): Directors with a moderate level of knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies attach greater significance to this than those with a low level of knowledge (I-J=0.371, p=0.000). Additionally, directors with a high level of knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies attach greater significance to this than those with a moderate level of knowledge (I-J=0.978, p=0.000) and those with a low level of knowledge (I-J=1.349, p=0.000).

- Role of the principal to strengthen and promote inclusive education: Directors with a high level of knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies (I-J=1.780, p=0.000) and those with a moderate level of knowledge (I-J=0.854, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those with a low level of knowledge (F=390.891, p=0.000).

- Needs, problems or situations that can be addressed from school management to improve inclusive education: Directors with a high level of knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies(I-J=1.946, p=0.000) and those with a moderate level of knowledge (I-J=0.948, p=0.000) attach greater significance to this than those with a low level of knowledge (F=533.741, p=0.000).

Table 34

Comparison of means about the attitudes and perceptions of directors of special education school unit according to the variable Levels of knowledge

	knowledge Levels	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
Perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education protocols	Low	3.81	0.528	298	536.422	.000	Low-Mod/ 1.044 (.000)
	Moderate	2.76	0.487	61			Low-High / 2.309 (.000)
	High	1.50	0.525	61			Mod-High / 1.265 (.000)
Perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive	Low	3.35	0.345	298	366.208	.000	Mod-Low / 0.371 (.000)
	Moderate	3.72	0.392	61			High-Low / 1.349 (.000)
	High	4.70	0.378	61			High-Mod / 0.978 (.000)

	knowledge Levels	M	S.D.	N	F	p	Groups/ I-J (p)
education							
Role of the principal to strengthen and promote inclusive education	Low	3.09	0.495	298	390.891	.000	Mod-Low / 0.854 (.000)
	Moderate	3.94	0.515	61			High-Low / 1.780 (.000)
	High	4.87	0.301	61			
Needs, problems or situations that can be addressed from school management to improve inclusive education	Low	2.91	0.471	298	533.741	.000	Mod-Low / 0.948 (.000)
	Moderate	3.86	0.464	61			High-Low / 1.946 (.000)
	High	4.85	0.252	61			

In order to know if there is a relationship between the different knowledge of the directors and the perceptions about the aspects that influence inclusive education, Pearson's correlation index and its respective level of significance were calculated (see table 35).The results reveal that there is a relationship between the set variables studied, most of them presenting a very high and high intensity.

On one hand, a negative relationship is evidenced between the variable "Perceptions of the implementation of protocols for inclusive education" and knowledge variables. Specifically, with very high intensity with the variables "Knowledge of the international policy of inclusive education" (r=-.801, p=.000) and "Knowledge of legislation and measures of inclusion in the Greek educational system" (r=-.803, p=.000), and with high intensity with the variables "Knowledge of the conceptual clarification of definitions" (r=-.754, p=.000), "Knowledge of models of inclusive education" (r=-.789, p=.000), and "Knowledge of protocols of inclusion in Greek schools" (r=-.639, p=.000). This implies that the higher the directors' knowledge, the lower the values they have for the perceptions that teachers have about the implementation of protocols for inclusive education in Greece.

Regarding the relationship between perceptions of various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education and the level of knowledge, these are positive, with high intensity with the variables "Knowledge of the conceptual clarification of definitions" (r=.741, p=.000), "Knowledge of models of inclusive education" (r=.736, p=.000), "Knowledge of the international policy of inclusive education" (r=.767, p=.000), "Knowledge of legislation and measures of inclusion in the Greek educational system" (r=.718, p=.000), and moderate with the variable "Knowledge of protocols of inclusion in Greek schools" (r=.575, p=.000). This reveals that higher knowledge levels lead to higher levels of perceptions of various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education.

The relationship between the directors' conception of the principal's role in strengthening and promoting inclusive education and different knowledge about the legal framework related to inclusive and special education in Greece is positive and of high intensity: "Knowledge of the conceptual clarification of definitions" with a value of r=.734 (p=.000), "Knowledge of models of inclusive education" with a value of r=.758 (p=.000), "Knowledge of the international policy of inclusive education" with a value of r=.740 (p=.000), "Knowledge of legislation and measures of inclusion in the Greek educational system" with a value of r=.743 (p=.000), and "Knowledge of protocols of inclusion in Greek schools" with a value of r=.609 (p=.000). This indicates that the higher the knowledge, the higher the level of appreciation for this role.

Finally, the relationship is positive and of high intensity between the variable "Role of the principal in addressing needs, problems, or situations that can be managed through school administration to improve inclusive education" and knowledge variables: "Knowledge of the conceptual clarification of definitions" with a value of r=.762 (p=.000), "Knowledge of models of inclusive education" with a value of r=.790 (p=.000), "Knowledge of the international policy of inclusive education" with a value of r=.783 (p=.000), "Knowledge of legislation and measures of inclusion in the Greek educational system" with a value of r=.776 (p=.000), and "Knowledge of protocols of inclusion in Greek schools" with a value of r=.637 (p=.000). This indicates that higher knowledge leads to a higher appreciation of the principal's role in addressing needs, problems, or situations that can be managed through school administration to improve inclusive education.

Table 35

Correlation between subdimensions Knowledge of protocols and policies of inclusive education, the attitudes and perceptions of directors of special education school unit

		Conceptual clarification of definitions	Models of inclusive education	International policy of inclusive education	Legislation and measures of inclusion	Protocols of inclusion in Greek schools
Perceptions of the implementation of inclusive education protocols	r	-.754**	-.789**	-.801**	-.803**	-.639**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Perceptions of the various aspects or components related to the development and implementation of inclusive education	r	.741**	.736**	.767**	.718**	.575**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Role of the principal to strengthen and promote inclusive education	r	.734**	.758**	.740**	.743**	.609**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Role of the principal in addressing needs, problems, or situations that can be managed through school administration to enhance inclusive education	r	.762**	.790**	.783**	.776**	.637**
	p	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

*Note.*** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (bilateral).

CONCLUSION

This chapter presents in a descriptive way the conclusions of the study carried out based on the objectives that underpin the research. First, the inferences extracted at a general level are shown, and then the limitations of the study are analyzed, to give way to the approach of future lines of research.

The aim of this study was to examine the perception and knowledge of secondary school principals about inclusive education protocols and policies, and their relationship with attitudes towards inclusive education, considering relevant demographic characteristics, to facilitate educational decision-making. To this end, we wanted to determine the knowledge and understanding of the principals of secondary school units about the protocols and policies of inclusive education that they are required to implement; to explore the perceptions of the principals of schools toward the concept of educational inclusion; to analyze demographic characteristics such as gender and age that can influence knowledge, the attitudes and perceptions of directors on inclusive education and to examine any potential relationship between directors' knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies and their attitudes and perceptions toward inclusive education.

5.1 General conclusions

Regarding the main objective of the research, our findings have been enlightening in various aspects. First, to us it became clear that there is a varied level of awareness and understanding of the directors about the protocols for inclusive education. While some are well-informed and functional while implementing these policies, others seem to have a rather shallow understanding making it even harder for them to display the intended impact of such policies in real-life scenarios. Many of the studies underline the primary importance of leadership awareness, appreciation, and understanding for the effective implementation of the policies and practices of inclusive education.

The subsequent studies contribute to a deeper understanding of the critical role of leadership awareness in the effective implementation of inclusive education policies and practices. According to Dar et al. (2022), school leadership is crucial for enhancing education by motivating and collaborating with key stakeholders to share and implement a vision for change. Inclusive leaders, committed to equality and high educational opportunities for all, play a significant role in achieving student success and promoting inclusive education. They focus on creating effective collaborations and implementing

customized educational programs within an inclusive setting. This approach involves educational leaders acting as agents of change, with responsibilities that include promoting inclusive practices and implementing various initiatives to transform inclusive education.

Vlachou and Tsirantonaki's (2023) study examines the influence of school principals' values on inclusive education for disabled students and explores how these values interact with their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and practices. The findings reveal that principals' values are the most significant predictor of their attitudes towards inclusive education, emphasizing that values guide behavior by setting standards for acceptable actions. These values play a crucial role not only in educational reforms but also in all aspects of educating disabled students, impacting principals' leadership in promoting inclusive education. Additionally, the study identifies principals' knowledge about disabled students' education as a key factor in the development and implementation of effective educational practices. However, Greek principals often lack the experience and comprehensive training needed for inclusive education. Beliefs held by principals moderately influence their attitudes and practices toward inclusive education and have minimal impact on their views regarding the school's capability to educate disabled students. Prior research supports that positive beliefs among principals can lead to favorable attitudes and practices for the education of disabled students.

Jarvis et al. (2020) emphasize the necessity for school leaders to embody and model inclusive principles to foster an inclusive school community. Adopting a whole school approach to inclusion encourages reflection on values such as equality, diversity, and respect. Achieving sustainable and effective inclusion requires a shared vision, commitment, ongoing reflection, and patience, alongside changes in teachers' planning and pedagogy. This process is supported by well-designed professional learning within a strong leadership framework and an inclusive school culture. A whole school approach allows for a collective consideration and planning of key areas like leadership, school values, staff capacity building, and frameworks for inclusive practice.

According to the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2021), it is a necessity that raised all the stakeholders' awareness regarding the comprehensive benefits arising out of the inclusive education in the long run. Such awareness is important in creating a foundation for a more inclusive society, and it is a precondition of commitment towards ensuring successful implementation of inclusive education.

The report by Fowler et al. (2019) lends emphasis on the knowledge along with implementation skills of supervisors and administrators special education with highlighting. Regarding classroom assessments and instructional practices, responses demonstrated high levels of competence. However, most of them felt that their colleagues in general education and administrators who come from a special education background do not have the required knowledge or skills needed to adequately provide for students with exceptionalities.

McLeskey et al. (2017) attempt to delve into the practices that special education administrators and teachers use, emphasizing content knowledge as well as implementation strategies in the subject of special education. They state that the development of comprehensive learning profiles for learners with disabilities is framed by research on assessment, on determining the effectiveness of special education teachers, and on the legal context which provides general oversight to the education of students with disabilities. This foundation allows teacher educators to collectively work together in deepening their understanding of the core practices. Literacy in assessment is important for both general education and special education teachers that have a deep knowledge of students' literacy strengths, needs, and interests. Special education teachers, on the other hand, are competent at developing learners' profiles exhaustively on individual students. The profile helps personalized instruction into play ensuring that all the students are granted the required support and resources for their success.

According to Gray et al. (2018), this study assessed the awareness and roles of school administrators in the implementation of organizational and pedagogical practices for social inclusion. They show the critical need thus urging teachers as well as school administrators to become informed as sensitive to circumstances that may cause division or marginalization of students.

In respect to the perceptions, the findings of the research present a series of attitudes regarding educational inclusion. While most principals accept its importance and commitment in the development of inclusiveness, their practice pertaining to inclusion varies with each driven by the principal's personal belief in addition to prevailing circumstances at their schools.

In this light, the researches offered a comprehensive view to varied perspectives and methodologies school directors take towards educational inclusion as well as the problems of implementation. While there are recognized benefits of an inclusive education, attaining the diverse educational needs of all students within an inclusive framework still has many challenges and barriers. The teachers have pointed out the need of systemics support from

leadership that will make it easy to overcome major obstacles in successful inclusion, namely the problems pertaining to human and physical resources, attitude of other teacher, parents and students besides managing competing demands, constraints in time, sizes of class and curricular demands (Woodcock & Woolfson, 2018). On the other hand, Mngo and Mngo (2018) in their study collected positive opinions from directors about the inclusion or integration of students with special needs in general education classrooms. The research puts emphasis on the role of the principals in promoting the inclusive school and demonstrates them as the major players whose efficacy could be influenced by race, disability, family background, language, and immigration status among other factors. Although these factors were recognized by principals and confronted many challenges, they exhibited a broad range of beliefs along with the strategies for establishing the surroundings relating to inclusiveness (DeMatthews et al., 2021). Juvonen et al. (2019) raises an argument toward importance of school administrators and teachers' role in promotion of inclusion focusing on the students' subjective experiences.

In addition, Arnaiz Sánchez et al. (2019) underlines the limitations within school settings and teachers' attitudes in the standpoint of future education professionals highlighting that flexibility, creativity, tolerance, and diversity can be viewed as some necessary constituent elements for schools to respond all students with an effective consideration and build up an education for all. Further demographics characteristics were observed in the analysis with the age factor having significant power on the directors' points of view. In general, younger directors had a more progressive attitude towards inclusion as because of the recent implemented reforms and education that appeared within these countries.

In more detail, the findings of our study indicate that both age and gender significantly affect the knowledge of inclusive education protocols and policies among directors. Younger directors (aged 31 to 50 years) possess greater knowledge across all areas of inclusive education compared to those aged 51 years or older. Moreover, female directors outperform male directors in their general knowledge of the legal framework and in every knowledge sub-dimension: the conceptual clarification of definitions, models of inclusive education, international policies of inclusive education, legislation and measures for inclusion within the Greek educational system, and protocols for inclusion in Greek schools. This indicates a gender-based disparity in understanding and implementing inclusive education protocols.

Also, our study highlights significant differences in directors' perceptions of inclusive education protocols in Greece based on gender and age. Men directors show stronger beliefs in the effectiveness of inclusive education protocols, while women directors have a more comprehensive understanding of inclusive education policies and their implementation. Alongside, age differences reveal that older directors (51 years and above) value the effectiveness of implementing inclusive education protocols in Greece more than younger directors, who prioritize practical aspects of inclusive education, such as individualized support and integration strategies.

Alongside, our study identifies gender and age as significant factors influencing school directors' attitudes and perceptions towards implementing and improving inclusive education. Men directors view themselves as more effective in fundamental roles for promoting inclusivity, whereas women directors exhibit a broader understanding of the diverse needs and challenges that must be addressed for enhancing inclusive education. Younger directors are more attuned to contemporary strategies for inclusion, showing a greater commitment to providing necessary resources and acknowledging various challenges that inclusive education faces. In contrast, older directors focus more on traditional aspects of school management.

The following studies contribute to enhancing the understanding of how demographic variables, more specifically age, significantly influence directors' attitudes toward its inclusion in education.

Galaterou and Antoniou (2017) conducted research where it showed that younger teachers were more positive towards inclusion as compared to older ones. Woodcock and Woolfson (2018) argue that the barriers to effective inclusion go beyond the mindset of a class teacher and the operational application of inclusive strategies, drilling down to the school climate and culture at large, as well as the extent of systemic support received from leadership. Apart from salient factors significantly associated with positive attitudes towards inclusion such as younger age and female gender (Saloviita, 2019), Mngo and Mngo (2018) noted that teachers endowed with special education training were more likely to support inclusion unlike their colleagues who failed to be given the same kind of training. This body of research indicates that demographic variables, mostly age, are the driving force in developing beliefs about inclusion among educational leaders and signals the necessity for particular training and systemic support to encourage an inclusive school milieu.

Our study, also, emphasizes the significant relationship between school directors' knowledge of inclusive education protocols and their attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education. Directors with a higher level of knowledge about inclusive education protocols perceive the existence of a deep complexity of implementing these protocols and understanding the components necessary for developing and executing inclusive education successfully in Greece. The findings highlight that increased knowledge correlates with more positive perceptions of inclusive education's implementation and development. Moreover, directors with more extensive knowledge are also more likely to recognize and value the principal's role in promoting inclusive practices. In essence, the research highlights the crucial role that knowledge plays in shaping directors' perspectives towards inclusive education, suggesting that enhancing directors' understanding of inclusive protocols could positively influence the implementation of inclusive practices within schools.

The studies mentioned below contribute to deepening the understanding of the relationship between school directors' knowledge of inclusive education protocols and their attitudes and perceptions towards inclusive education.

Not all stakeholders in the education sector share a clear and common understanding of its values, the benefits it can offer to both learners and teachers, how it can be implemented, and the systemic changes required. Indeed, effectively using data and research evidence remains a challenge. Also, teachers at all educational levels, including headteachers, are crucial links in the chain. They can implement inclusive pedagogies when they are ethically committed to inclusive education and familiar with strategies that are effective for all learners (Kefallinou et al., 2020). Most teachers report that ongoing training has enhanced their abilities in inclusive education, and many express a willingness to participate in further training on inclusion. Therefore, educational administrations should offer continuous and improved initial training to bolster teachers' self-efficacy and their perception of their competencies in inclusive education, particularly among secondary education teachers (Triviño Amigo et al., 2022). In evaluating the findings from Yazicioglu's (2021) study, it is observed that school principals generally hold positive views towards inclusive education. This is highly beneficial for the education of students with special needs, given that principals are in a position to steer and manage all educational processes within the school effectively and efficiently.

Comparing the findings with our objectives at the beginning, we should say that this study did manage to fulfill its objective as now we have an in depth comprehension of

director's knowledge and perceptions on inclusive education in terms of demographic factor. However, it should be noted that even though the objectives were met, the degree and extent of understanding among the directors themselves varied which in itself would be a critical factor for future policy formulation and training programs respectively.

Based upon these findings, from the key informant interviews, it could therefore be concluded that although positive steps towards understanding and practicing inclusive education were taken in Greece, the gap between policy and practice was still substantially wider. This difference was mainly based on different levels of awareness and commitment amongst directors. These findings of the study agree with the broader literature which indicated successful implementation of inclusive education depends not simply on policy but also being accompanied by appropriate comprehensive training, resources, and supportive culture at school level.

Görel and Hellmich's (2022) study outlined that some of the central elements required for the effective realization of inclusive education are as follows: the personnel, financial and material resources, as well as the infrastructure of elementary schools.

Toughest for principals, DeMatthews et al. (2021) point out being the challenges and hard decisions they have to make, making inclusion complicated. They also highlight a lack of resources, the persistent effects of segregation as well as the trials of district-developed, self-contained special education programs not often under their direct control.

According to Hassanein et al. (2021), another research that interrelated barriers to adoption of inclusive education implementation, with the major emphasis of having wide-ranging training initiatives and development of supportive cultures. It showed that teachers mostly conceived the decline in infrastructure and the reduction of financial support for schools as a damage of schools' social role, and thus an essential blocking point of inclusivity. In addition, the study depicted some of the complex barriers to inclusion such as a lack of resources, inadequate training, and teacher attitudes that identify the main challenges in making education accessible to all. According to Mitchell & Sutherland (2020), the lack of appropriate resources has been identified as a major hindrance to successful realization of inclusion in most countries, with leadership required to champion for enhanced teacher training alongside systematic re-allocation of resources that will see implementation of inclusive education.

Woodcock and Woolfson (2018) believe that teachers regard systemic support from leadership and broad levels as need base to help to overcome some critical barriers for successful inclusion that relates human and physical resourcing, attitudes of other teachers,

parents, and students, as well as management of competing demands, time, class sizes, and curricula.

Collectively, these studies bring out the complex requirements for successful inclusive education reinforcing the need for teachers' training, resource allocation as well as the actual development of supportive educational settings.

In regard to improvements in the management of inclusive schools, clearly, more focused training and resources are needed, especially for heads who demonstrate an insufficient understanding of inclusive education protocols.

The impact of demographic characteristics on the knowledge, perceptions and attitudes toward inclusive education protocols and policies among directors, specifically regarding gender and age, sheds critical insights into the differences in understanding and implementing inclusive practices in education. Gender differences may denote a variety in access to professional development opportunities or interest in issues of inclusion, or perceptions of the importance of inclusion in education. In the same vein, female directors outperforming their male counterparts may suggest that women are more committed or are better equipped and trained in matters dealing with inclusive education.

The effect of age on directors' knowledge communicates some key tendencies. Younger directors, between 31 to 50 years old, may have been exposed to more recent trends in educational training, including the latest in inclusive education practices. This reflects the continuous evolution of inclusive education policies and the need of current training in these areas. Additionally, younger directors might be more adaptive to changes in educational policies, and hence willing to address contemporary issues in education with innovative approaches.

Alternatively, it can be anticipated that the generation's gap may play a crucial role due to new directors who may be more proactive in aspects such as finding information on implements for inclusive education or access to professional development opportunities. These observations actually support targeted professional development to be designed around these demographic characteristics. Greater support and training for male directors and those 51 or older, by promoting a progressive level of uniformity both in understanding and implementation around inclusion education protocols and policies, could likely narrow the gap even further.

In addition, these differences in directors' knowledge by gender and age, raising the need for different perspectives in inclusive educational leadership. By acknowledging and

addressing these differences, educational institutions can adopt more effective and comprehensive approaches to inclusive education, benefiting the entire school community. According to these findings, and in comparison with recent literature and theoretical frameworks, it is evident that continuous education and professional development remain critical for all school directors. The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, among others, articulate the dynamic nature of inclusive education policies. This dynamic nature requires that educators and directors remain well-informed about the latest best practices and legal requirements to effectively lead and support inclusive education initiatives. The push towards a more inclusive educational environment is not only a matter of policy but also a social justice commitment to equity in education, requiring highly informed, dedicated, and adaptable leadership. The relationship between demographic characteristics and attitude suggests that a tailor-made training for different age groups may be beneficial.

Additionally, our research also emphasizes the significant relationship between school directors' understanding of inclusive education protocols and their attitudes and perceptions concerning inclusive education. It points out the vital impact that knowledge has on directors' viewpoints regarding inclusive education, indicating that improving directors' comprehension of inclusive protocols might positively affect the adoption of inclusive practices in schools. The achievement of inclusive education is based on aspects like the attitudes and beliefs about educational leadership figures. Effective inclusive education should not only follow protocols but rather reflect the philosophy of being inclusive. The principals or school directors need to be well versed in policies, as well as being champions of inclusive culture within their educational settings. This view is in congruence with the perspective presented by Mitchell and Sutherland (2020) that the success of inclusive education is premised on factors such as attitudes and beliefs towards educational leadership figures.

This extends to training the school directors on more than just policy knowledge but also on drawing an inclusive mind that is essential in ensuring a respectful and welcoming environment for all its pupils. Principals and teachers, therefore, play a highly critical role in establishing such an environment, ensuring their actions and management of resources are in line with the goals of inclusive education.

As Mitchell and Sutherland (2020) would reiterate, therefore, it is particularly the responsibility of each individual within the school community, but the leadership in particular, to actively work towards establishing a culture that encourages respect and

inclusivity for all students. This inclusive training approach and leadership philosophy are necessary for inclusive education progress. Several factors contribute to promoting inclusivity in school, and the principal have a major role to play. Though there are multiple challenges, their convictions and modes of achieving inclusivity differ (DeMatthews et al., 2021). Often, principals have confessed lacking in proper preparatory measures within special education.

Many are motivated by their professors advocating for in promoting inclusion and commit towards building a school culture of co-creation as well as improving teacher instructional quality. To them, special education, inclusion, as well as equity awareness, are elements deemed necessary in preparing principals (DeMatthews et al., 2020). Taken together, these studies highlight the importance of leadership for inclusive education provision, which underscores the need to have school principals and directors who are not only knowledgeable about the policies supporting inclusion but who are also active advocates for an inclusive culture within their educational settings. From the above insights, it is clear that even though Greek secondary education has made tremendous efforts towards realizing inclusivity there's still a long distance to be covered or better put, much work that needs to be done in moving from policy to practice.

Principals work in a societal context where exclusion is prevalent (Slee, 2018) and remain part of the very same educational systems that maintain that exclusionary process (Ainscow, 2020). This reality should be recognized by those who place the burden of inclusive education primarily on schools. Despite this, large bureaucratic organizations keep trying to attempt shifting accountability all the same onto the principals, schools, and many other reasons whether this is a practice shift of blame from their practices or have something convenient in the case the inclusive initiatives do not materialize as was expected. This therefore needs re-examination. While principals play a crucial role in developing sustainable schools that serve to the needs of all students and must accept a share of the responsibility for this, it is unreasonable to expect them to single-handedly correct broader societal inequities.

Future policies should not only enhance knowledge and understanding through focused training and resource support but also efforts in nurturing a culture that genuinely embraces diversity and inclusion.

5.2 Limitations and Prospective

The course of this research was not without its limitations. Perhaps the most obvious is that of a pervasive study on the demographic characteristics. The study revolved mainly on gender and age, neglecting other main factors that may include educational background, years of experience in the education sector, personal experiences of inclusive education. Furthermore, the research was limited geographically and culturally to the Greek context where the above affects the generalizability of its findings across other cases.

This, therefore, opens up for different avenues of research. Comparative studies among the different countries or regions to ascertain the influence of cultural and systemic differences on the policies of inclusive education will feature in future research.

Another potential area of research would be the long-term implications of inclusive policies on student outcomes, particularly in diverse and multicultural set. Taking the accounts from students and teachers who are directly involved in an inclusive setting would provide multiple views to the efficacy as well as gaps for improvement in the current setup.

In conclusion, despite the strides made in Greece towards the pursuit of inclusive education, so much more still needs to be done towards the bridging of the gaps between policy and practice that could be met through specific support training, resources as well as a culture.

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RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

El papel del director de la escuela se percibe como central para hacer que la inclusión funcione dentro de las escuelas contemporáneas (Eisenman et al., 2015), siendo los líderes escolares los que pueden promover una visión compartida de la inclusión (UNESCO, 2020). Desde la dirección se debe atender al cuidado a través de aspectos administrativos y habilitación del proceso educativo y formación de la cultura en la escuela, teniendo en cuenta los intereses de todos los niños y niñas sin excepción (Young, Winn y Reedy, 2017). Los directores que pueden entender la necesidad de inculcar la inclusión la proporcionan de manera que el profesorado, los progenitores y el estudiantado se sientan impulsados a seguir el camino inclusivo (Adams, Olsen y Ware, 2017; Wang, 2016). Para ese caso, las estructuras escolares, prácticas y actitudes cambian para responder individualmente a las necesidades de sus estudiantes, al mismo tiempo que promueven la igualdad, la aceptabilidad de la diversidad, la justicia social (Osiname, 2017), y en colaboración con el profesorado. Por lo tanto, la influencia de los directores es indirecta en sus estudiantes, a través de los y las docentes o directa al interactuar con los niños y las niñas personalmente (Adams et al., 2017; Roberts y Guera, 2015).

De hecho, se ha dado cuenta de que el liderazgo educativo está directamente relacionado con la mejora de actitudes y percepciones positivas hacia el alumnado con necesidades educativas especiales y su incorporación en la misma escuela que todos los demás niños y niñas (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2012). En este aspecto, las actitudes y percepciones parecerían estar relacionadas con una serie de factores como características genéticas (género y edad) y cualificaciones académicas (nivel de formación en educación especial, experiencia en entornos de educación especial) (Almotairi, 2013; Avramidis y Norwich, 2002; Hadjikakou y Mnasonos, 2012). Otros de los factores que incidenson la permanencia y experiencia de los directores, el contacto personal con alumnado que tiene necesidades educativas especiales o su permanencia como directores en diferentes escuelas en todo el país (Hadjikakou y Mnasonos, 2012).

Las evidencias de estos estudios demuestran que es necesario indagar sobre las creencias y actitudes de las personas que ostentan la dirección; examinar la percepción y el conocimiento de los directores de unidades de educación secundaria, en Grecia, respecto a los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva, y su relación con las actitudes hacia la educación inclusiva, teniendo en cuenta características demográficas relevantes, con el fin de facilitar la toma de decisiones educativas.

MARCO TEÓRICO

En el ámbito de la Educación Secundaria en Grecia, el concepto y la práctica de la educación inclusiva han experimentado una evolución significativa, reflejando tendencias internacionales más amplias y esfuerzos legislativos dirigidos a fomentar un entorno educativo donde cada estudiante, independientemente de sus habilidades o discapacidades, sea bienvenido y apoyado. Este viaje, desde la integración hacia un modelo educativo plenamente inclusivo, encapsula un cambio tanto en política como en filosofía, con el objetivo final de crear un espacio de aprendizaje más equitativo y de apoyo para todos los estudiantes.

1. Legislación, medidas y protocolos para la educación inclusiva en la Educación Secundaria en el sistema educativo griego

1.1 Clarificación conceptual de definiciones

La educación inclusiva en el sistema educativo griego, particularmente a nivel secundario, se alinea con una directiva más amplia de la Unión Europea y un ethos internacional que aboga por la integración de estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE) en entornos educativos generales. Este enfoque filosófico y práctico ha evolucionado a través de una serie de cambios conceptuales—desde la integración, la inclusión educativa, hasta la inclusión—cada uno reflejando un avance progresivo hacia un sistema educativo más inclusivo y acomodaticio para todos los estudiantes, independientemente de sus diferencias individuales (Comisión Europea, 2002; Meijer, 2003; Zigmond, 2003; Vislie, 2003; Δόικου-Αυλίδου, 2002).

La defensa de la educación inclusiva no es solo una tendencia europea sino que también está incrustada en marcos internacionales, como la Declaración de Salamanca, que subraya los derechos de los niños con NEE a aprender junto a sus compañeros en entornos menos restrictivos (UNESCO, 1994; Mitchell, 1990). Este enfoque inclusivo beneficia no solo a los estudiantes con NEE al otorgarles acceso a entornos escolares regulares sino que también enriquece la experiencia educativa de todos los estudiantes al fomentar una cultura de diversidad y comprensión (Zoniou-Sideri y Vlachou, 2006).

La transición hacia la educación inclusiva representa un cambio de paradigma significativo, no solo en términos organizativos o técnicos sino como un movimiento arraigado en una filosofía que valora la diversidad y afirma el derecho de cada niño a una

educación de calidad. Este cambio requiere una reorganización integral del currículo y las prácticas escolares para atender las necesidades individuales de todos los estudiantes, asegurando que los entornos educativos sean acogedores y accesibles para todos, previniendo así la exclusión o marginación basada en discapacidades o necesidades de aprendizaje (UNESCO, 2001; Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2009; Σπυρόπουλος, 2014).

La implementación efectiva de la educación inclusiva depende de proporcionar un apoyo adecuado—tanto humano (asistentes, intérpretes de lengua de signos, etc.) como técnico—y del desarrollo profesional continuo de profesores y personal escolar. Este marco es crucial para abordar los desafíos específicos que enfrentan los estudiantes con NEE y facilitar su plena participación y compromiso en el proceso educativo (Comisión Europea, 2000).

Sin embargo, el camino hacia un modelo educativo totalmente inclusivo está lleno de desafíos, incluyendo cambios sistémicos, adaptaciones en métodos y materiales de enseñanza, y el cultivo de una cultura escolar que abrace activamente la diversidad y la inclusión. A pesar de estos obstáculos, el movimiento hacia la educación inclusiva se considera esencial para lograr la equidad educativa y asegurar que todos los estudiantes tengan la oportunidad de realizar su pleno potencial (Ainscow, 2005; Καλογήρου, 2014; Αγγελίδης, 2011).

La educación inclusiva en Grecia, reflejando prácticas más amplias de la UE y globales, se define por un compromiso de crear entornos educativos de apoyo y acomodaticios para todos los estudiantes. Este compromiso requiere esfuerzos concertados de los responsables de políticas, educadores y la comunidad en general para superar las barreras existentes y fomentar una sociedad inclusiva a través de la educación, encarnando los ideales y aspiraciones de la Declaración de Salamanca y los principios de "Una Escuela para Todos" (UNESCO, 1994; Booth y Ainscow, 1998).

1.2. Modelos de Educación Inclusiva

La exploración de la educación inclusiva dentro de la literatura internacional revela cuatro modelos distintos que articulan varios enfoques para integrar a los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE) en el sistema educativo general. Estos modelos reflejan diversas filosofías, metodologías y resultados con respecto a la inclusión de estudiantes con NEE en entornos de educación general.

El Modelo de Inclusión Total sostiene que todos los estudiantes deben participar igualmente en el entorno de educación general, independientemente de sus características únicas, necesidades o las preferencias de sus padres. Este modelo promueve la interacción entre todos los estudiantes, pero ha sido criticado por su falta de un marco de apoyo para los niños con discapacidades. Esta deficiencia se origina en la ausencia de marcos legislativos o institucionales para salvaguardar los derechos de estos estudiantes, resultando en un modelo que a menudo no logra satisfacer las diversas necesidades del aula debido a la falta de currículos individualizados y apoyo especializado (Kavale y Mostert, 2004; Papapetrou et al., 2013).

El Modelo de Participación en la Misma Clase (Enfoque en la Participación en el Mismo Lugar) reconoce la necesidad y especifica la provisión de asistencia de apoyo a los estudiantes con discapacidades dentro de las escuelas generales, abogando contra la existencia de escuelas especiales, excepto por clases de apoyo. Este modelo integra plenamente la Educación Especial en la educación general, con estudiantes con discapacidades y sus compañeros de desarrollo típico recibiendo apoyo en el aula general de profesores especialistas. Este enfoque no toma en cuenta las opiniones de las familias de los estudiantes y ha sido implementado en el sistema educativo griego a través de la provisión de apoyo paralelo, también conocido como un modelo de inclusión consultivo (Norwich, 2000; Hmellou, 2011; Papapetrou et al., 2013).

El Modelo de Enfoque en las Necesidades Individuales recomienda la asistencia temporal a una escuela especial para estudiantes que experimentan dificultades que afectan su participación y respuesta al currículo de educación general. Este modelo se centra en las necesidades educativas especiales de los niños, abordando estas necesidades tanto cuando obstaculizan el desarrollo del individuo como cuando interrumpen el desarrollo académico y social de otros. Sin embargo, mientras este enfoque enfatiza la asistencia a una escuela especial, no prioriza la integración social del estudiante (Papapetrou et al., 2013).

Por último, el Modelo de Inclusión Limitada por Elección propone clases especiales que brindan apoyo académico a los estudiantes con discapacidades pero no facilitan su socialización, debido a la interacción limitada con compañeros de desarrollo típico. Este modelo aboga por la inclusión de niños con discapacidades en la educación general, con decisiones respecto al tipo de escolarización tomadas en colaboración por la escuela y la familia (Norwich, 2000; Papapetrou et al., 2013).

Cada uno de estos modelos representa una estrategia diferente para incorporar a los estudiantes con NEE en entornos educativos generales, con diversos grados de énfasis en el

apoyo académico, la integración social y la consideración de las necesidades individuales y las preferencias familiares. La diversidad entre estos modelos subraya la complejidad de crear un sistema educativo inclusivo que pueda abordar efectivamente la amplia gama de necesidades presentadas por los estudiantes con NEE.

1.3. Política internacional de educación inclusiva

La trayectoria de la política internacional sobre educación inclusiva ha evolucionado significativamente en las últimas décadas, marcada por hitos legislativos clave, informes influyentes y declaraciones que han dado forma colectivamente al enfoque global hacia la educación inclusiva. Este viaje refleja un consenso creciente sobre la necesidad de sistemas educativos que sean accesibles para todos los estudiantes, independientemente de sus habilidades o discapacidades.

Las raíces del movimiento de educación inclusiva se pueden rastrear hasta principios de los años 70, ganando impulso con desarrollos emblemáticos como la Ley Pública 94-142 de EE.UU. en 1975, el Informe Warnock en 1978, la Ley de Educación del Reino Unido de 1983 y la resolución de 1984 por el Consejo de Ministros de Educación en Europa, todos abogando por la integración de niños con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE) en aulas generales (Τριλιανός, 1992; Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 1998).

El Informe Warnock, en particular, jugó un papel fundamental al desafiar las nociones prevalecientes de la época de categorizar a los niños únicamente basados en sus deficiencias o inteligencia, influyendo así en las políticas educativas no solo en el Reino Unido sino en toda Europa y más allá. Los años 80 emergieron como una década crucial para la inclusión, con políticas cada vez más favorables al principio de integrar tantos niños con NEE como fuera posible en escuelas generales (Τσιναρέλης, 1993; Hornby, 1999).

Diálogos internacionales facilitados por las Naciones Unidas condujeron a la Declaración de la UNESCO en 1990, abogando por 'Educación para Todos' y preparando el escenario para la Conferencia Mundial sobre Educación Especial en Salamanca, España, en 1994. La Declaración de Salamanca subrayó la amplia brecha en lograr educación para todos, destacando particularmente las barreras enfrentadas por los niños con NEE. Esta declaración, respaldada por 92 gobiernos y 25 organizaciones internacionales, enfatizó el derecho de cada niño a la educación, el reconocimiento de necesidades de aprendizaje diversas y la importancia de la escolarización general para los niños con NEE como medio

para combatir la discriminación y promover una sociedad inclusiva (UNESCO, 1994; Conner, 2016).

Además, el cambio de un modelo médico de discapacidad, que ve las discapacidades como déficits a corregir, a un modelo social, que ve las discapacidades como resultado de barreras sociales, marcó una evolución significativa en la conceptualización de la discapacidad y la inclusión (McKenzie, 2013; Shakespeare, 2002).

La Convención de la ONU sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidades, adoptada en 2006, representa la primera legislación internacional centrada en los derechos de las personas con discapacidades, enfatizando la necesidad de reducir la discriminación y asegurar el acceso igualitario a la educación entre otros derechos (Liasidou, 2017).

El marco estratégico para la cooperación europea en educación y formación ('ET 2020'), establecido por el Consejo de la Unión Europea en 2009, y el Marco Estratégico de la Comisión Europea para la Discapacidad 2010-2020 reforzaron aún más el compromiso con la educación inclusiva, enfatizando la necesidad de superar barreras y asegurar la integración exitosa de todos los alumnos, incluidos aquellos con discapacidades y/o NEE (Consejo Europeo, 2009; Comisión Europea, 2010; Liasidou, 2012).

El respaldo a la educación inclusiva continuó con la Declaración "Educación 2030, Hacia una educación de calidad inclusiva y equitativa y el aprendizaje permanente para todos" en el Foro Mundial de Educación en Incheon, República de Corea, en 2015. Esta declaración, junto con la defensa continua de la UNESCO, destaca el compromiso internacional para eliminar todas las formas de exclusión y marginación en la educación (UNESCO, 2017; Ainscow, 2016).

La evolución de la política internacional sobre educación inclusiva refleja un cambio hacia el reconocimiento de la educación inclusiva como un derecho fundamental y subraya los beneficios de un sistema de educación pública no excluyente que sirve a todos los estudiantes, posicionando la educación inclusiva no como un privilegio sino como un derecho esencial para todos.

1.4. Legislación y medidas de inclusión en el sistema educativo griego

En las últimas tres décadas, Grecia ha realizado avances significativos en el campo de la educación inclusiva dentro de su sistema educativo, alineándose con las tendencias globales y la perspectiva europea que aboga por una educación para todos. A pesar del progreso a nivel político y legislativo, la implementación completa de las políticas de

educación inclusiva ha enfrentado desafíos. Este viaje de educación inclusiva en Grecia está marcado por varias legislaciones y medidas clave destinadas a integrar a los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE) en la educación general, reflejando un cambio de un modelo médico de discapacidad a un enfoque más inclusivo.

El génesis de la legislación sobre Educación Especial en Grecia se puede rastrear hasta la Ley 1143/1981, que fue un acto pionero para la educación griega sobre cuestiones de Educación Especial, enfocándose en el reconocimiento de igualdad de derechos y oportunidades para todos los ciudadanos, incluidos aquellos con discapacidades. Esta ley marcó la primera responsabilidad del estado hacia las personas con discapacidades pero fue criticada por su enfoque de modelo médico y por reforzar la segregación entre individuos "normales" y "anormales" (Τζουριάδου, 1995; Ζώνιου-Σιδερή, 1998; Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου, 2012).

La legislación subsiguiente, como la Ley 1566/1985 y la Ley 2817/2000, apuntó a abordar estas críticas fomentando un enfoque más integrado. La Ley 1566/1985, por ejemplo, buscó abolir la discriminación contra los niños con discapacidades y promover su integración en las escuelas generales, introduciendo por primera vez servicios auxiliares especiales (Ζώνιου-Σιδερή, 2000; Λαμπροπούλου y Παντελιάδου, 2000). Sin embargo, estas leyes también fueron criticadas por continuar la segregación en la práctica, bajo diferentes terminologías y por no apoyar suficientemente a los alumnos y profesores en el sistema de educación general (Ζώνιου-Σιδερή, 2004; Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου, 2012).

La Ley 2817/2000 representó un paso importante al redefinir el contenido de la Educación Especial, enfocándose en las necesidades educativas en lugar de la causa causal de estas necesidades y promoviendo la integración de los niños con necesidades especiales de aprendizaje en la escolarización general. Esta ley introdujo nuevas estructuras como el apoyo paralelo y la enseñanza en casa, junto con reconocer la lengua de señas como un idioma oficial, avanzando así hacia un marco educativo más inclusivo (Ζώνιου-Σιδερή, 2012).

La adopción de la Ley 3699/2008 avanzó aún más el marco legislativo al apuntar a proporcionar una educación integral a los estudiantes con discapacidades y NEE, enfatizando el desarrollo de su personalidad, igualdad de oportunidades y participación plena en la sociedad. Esta ley continuó apoyando el modelo dual de integración, incluyendo el apoyo paralelo y los departamentos de inclusión dentro de las escuelas generales (Στασινός, 2016).

Además, la ratificación de la Convención de la ONU sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidades a través de la Ley 4074/2012 destacó el compromiso de Grecia de alinear sus políticas educativas con los estándares internacionales, asegurando la participación igualitaria de las personas con discapacidades en el proceso educativo (Στασινός, 2016).

A pesar de estos esfuerzos legislativos, persisten desafíos en la realización plena de la educación inclusiva en Grecia. Dificultades teóricas y prácticas, como la confusión en torno a los principios, objetivos y prácticas de la educación inclusiva y las prácticas de segregación dentro del sistema escolar general, resaltan la brecha entre la política y la práctica. Además, la ausencia de una política educativa integral que incluya la formación docente en servicio, la adaptación del currículo y la reestructuración apropiada del ambiente escolar ha obstaculizado la implementación efectiva de la educación inclusiva (Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2000; Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη & Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου, 2012).

Si bien Grecia ha realizado avances legislativos hacia la educación inclusiva, quedan desafíos significativos para traducir estas leyes en prácticas efectivas. Un cambio más amplio en la cultura social, la política educativa, el desarrollo y la implementación del currículo, así como una estrategia cohesiva que incluya a todos los interesados, es esencial para la integración exitosa de los estudiantes con NEE en las actividades educativas y sociales de la vida escolar, reduciendo así la marginación y promoviendo una sociedad verdaderamente inclusiva (Ainscow, 2005; Λαχανά & Ευσταθίου, 2015; Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2004a).

1.5. Protocolos de inclusión en las escuelas griegas

En Grecia, el camino hacia la educación inclusiva dentro del ámbito de la Educación Especial abarca casi cuatro décadas, marcado por esfuerzos legislativos destinados a integrar a los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE) en la educación general. A pesar de estos esfuerzos, persisten desafíos, particularmente en el desarrollo e implementación de programas apropiados que aseguren el acceso y las oportunidades iguales para todos los estudiantes, como lo manda la Convención de la ONU sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidades (Λαμπροπούλου, 2008; Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη & Ντεροπούλου-Ντέρου, 2012).

El sistema educativo griego, aunque no encarna completamente el concepto de inclusión de "Una Escuela para Todos", ha visto avances a través de reformas legislativas

dirigidas a la integración educativa de individuos con NEE. Estructuras como las clases de integración y el apoyo paralelo dentro de las clases generales se ven como pasos hacia un marco educativo inclusivo con implicaciones educativas y sociales significativas (Στασινός, 2016).

La Ley 4547/2018 introdujo cambios críticos, particularmente en el proceso diagnóstico y educativo para estudiantes con discapacidades y NEE. Esboza los roles de varios organismos de apoyo, incluidos los Centros de Apoyo Educativo y de Consejería (Κ.Ε.Σ.Υ.), Comités de Evaluación y Apoyo Educativo Interdisciplinario (Ε.Δ.Ε.Α.Υ.), y Centros Comunitarios de Salud Mental para Niños y Adolescentes (Κο.Κε.Ψ.Υ.Π.Ε.), en investigar, identificar y apoyar las necesidades educativas especiales de los estudiantes (Ley 4547/2018).

Estas entidades juegan un papel fundamental en proporcionar oportunidades educativas, evaluaciones, planificación e implementación de intervenciones, y acciones de orientación vocacional a estudiantes con NEE, con el objetivo de ampliar las funciones de apoyo para escuelas, estudiantes, profesores y padres (Decisión 211076 / ΓΔ4). La ley enfatiza la naturaleza colaborativa de estos esfuerzos, involucrando equipos interdisciplinarios para el proceso de evaluación y la preparación de Programas Educativos Personalizados (Ε.Π.Ε.), que se desarrollan en colaboración con el estudiante, sus padres o tutores, y profesionales de la educación (Ley 4547/2018).

La legislación también aborda los criterios para las evaluaciones de los estudiantes, el establecimiento y funcionamiento de redes de apoyo dentro de las escuelas, y los procedimientos para apelar los resultados de las evaluaciones, demostrando un enfoque integral para satisfacer las diversas necesidades de los estudiantes con NEE (Ley 4547/2018).

Enmiendas y leyes adicionales han continuado refinando el marco para la educación inclusiva en Grecia, detallando la asistencia y los arreglos educativos para estudiantes con NEE. Esto incluye especificar los entornos y mecanismos de apoyo que pueden servir mejor a sus necesidades educativas, ya sea a través de aulas generales con apoyo paralelo, departamentos de integración con programas especializados, u otras estructuras educativas especializadas (Leyes 3699/08, 3879/2010, 3966/2011, 4368/2016, 4452/2017, 4547/2018).

Además, estas leyes y enmiendas enfatizan la importancia de los Programas Educativos Personalizados (Ε.Π.Ε.), la colaboración entre profesionales de la educación, padres y tutores, y el desarrollo de programas de educación inclusiva destinados a fomentar

la inclusión, igualdad de oportunidades y respeto por la diversidad dentro del sistema educativo.

A pesar de estos avances legislativos y políticos, el sistema educativo griego enfrenta desafíos continuos en la realización plena de los objetivos de la educación inclusiva. Los esfuerzos por alinearse con los estándares internacionales y las mejores prácticas continúan, destacando la necesidad de desarrollo, implementación y evaluación continuos de estrategias de educación inclusiva para asegurar que todos los estudiantes, independientemente de sus habilidades o discapacidades, tengan acceso a una educación de calidad y la oportunidad de prosperar dentro de la comunidad educativa.

2. Habilidades y competencias de los directores de Unidades de Educación Especial

El panorama de la Educación Especial en Grecia, caracterizado por su naturaleza multidimensional, presenta un marco complejo de instituciones y unidades educativas diseñadas para apoyar a niños con discapacidades y/o necesidades educativas especiales. Esta complejidad surge del objetivo de estas instituciones no solo de abordar las dificultades de aprendizaje, sino también de mejorar los antecedentes educativos y preparar a los estudiantes para la vida profesional futura (Χρηστίδου & Χρηστίδου, 2018).

A pesar de la división inherente entre la Educación Especial y la educación general dentro del sistema educativo griego, ambas esferas comparten el objetivo común de inclusión. Este concepto de inclusión enfatiza el apoyo personalizado para cada estudiante, con el objetivo de lograr niveles educativos, cognitivos y de aprendizaje similares, independientemente de los desafíos individuales. La filosofía detrás de la inclusión es aprovechar el potencial del alumnado, dotándolo de las habilidades y conocimientos necesarios para su beneficio personal y el bien común más amplio (Bouillet, 2013).

Sin embargo, la operacionalización de la Educación Especial en Grecia se marca por una clara distinción del proceso de educación general, basada en la creencia de que tal segregación permite que ambos conjuntos de estudiantes alcancen mejores resultados educativos. Mientras que la educación general sigue un currículo estándar diseñado en torno a las necesidades del estudiante promedio, la Educación Especial atiende a alumnado con discapacidades y/o necesidades educativas especiales a través de programas personalizados e instituciones especializadas diseñadas para satisfacer sus requisitos únicos (Bossaert et al., 2015).

Las principales instituciones y unidades que proporcionan Educación Especial en la educación secundaria griega incluyen:

Unidades Escolares de Educación Especial y Formación, que abarcan Escuelas de Educación y Formación Profesional Especial (EEEEK) y Gimnasios y Licenciaturas Vocacionales Especiales Únicas (ΕΝΕΕΓΥΛ). Estas unidades están diseñadas para estudiantes con discapacidades o necesidades educativas especiales moderadas a severas, ofreciendo un currículo orientado a la vocación para optimizar las perspectivas de empleo aprovechando las habilidades e intereses de los estudiantes.

Clases de Integración (Τμήματα Ένταξης), diseñadas para estudiantes con dificultades leves de aprendizaje y necesidades educativas. Ubicadas dentro de escuelas generales, estas clases permiten a los estudiantes participar en el currículo estándar mientras reciben apoyo adicional.

Centros de Apoyo Educativo y de Consejería (ΚΕΔΑΣΥ), que brindan orientación y apoyo esenciales a otras unidades educativas en la implementación de la Educación Especial. Más allá de su mandato educativo para estudiantes con discapacidades y/o necesidades educativas especiales, estos centros también ofrecen servicios de asesoramiento vocacional y de empleo. Hay un centro ubicado en la capital de cada prefectura griega, con ciudades más grandes como Atenas y Tesalónica albergando varios centros.

Dado este diverso panorama educativo, las habilidades y competencias requeridas de los directores que supervisan estas unidades varían significativamente, influenciadas por la estructura administrativa y organizativa de cada unidad y las poblaciones estudiantiles específicas a las que sirven. Un liderazgo efectivo en la Educación Especial requiere un director que no solo esté alineado con los objetivos de inclusión, sino que también posea la capacidad de navegar los desafíos únicos presentados por sus respectivas unidades. Esto implica una comprensión matizada de la misión, visión y responsabilidades institucionales, junto con la capacidad de adaptar las políticas educativas al contexto específico de sus unidades, asegurando la entrega efectiva de protocolos y procesos de Educación Especial (Chua Yan Piaw et al., 2013).

2.1. El caso de los directores de Unidades Escolares de Educación Especial y Formación

El rol de los directores en las Unidades Escolares de Educación Especial y Formación en Grecia abarca un amplio espectro de deberes administrativos, científicos,

pedagógicos e instructivos, lo que requiere un conjunto diverso de habilidades y competencias para su cumplimiento efectivo. Sus responsabilidades multifacéticas subrayan la importancia de poseer competencias generales y específicas para navegar los desafíos únicos de la educación especial (Arhipova et al, 2018).

- Habilidades y Competencias Generales:

Los directores actúan como funcionarios encargados de implementar políticas gubernamentales y públicas dentro de un sistema educativo centralizado. Este sistema opera bajo una jerarquía desde el Ministro de Educación hasta los directores escolares locales, con Consejeros Educativos - Escolares brindando apoyo científico, incluyendo para asuntos de Educación Especial (Αργυροπούλου & Συμεωνίδης, 2017). Se espera que los directores efectivos promuevan la visión de la escuela, orienten a los maestros, fomenten la colaboración y aseguren la adherencia a políticas y protocolos educativos, enfatizando la necesidad de competencias de liderazgo que incluyen comprensión de la cultura escolar, compromiso con la igualdad y gestión de la burocracia para el desarrollo escolar (Αργυροπούλου, 2010; Συμεωνίδης, 2016).

- Habilidades Administrativas:

Dado el contexto del sector público, los directores deben tener un conocimiento profundo de la administración pública griega, abarcando responsabilidades legales hacia los maestros, procedimientos de adquisición y leyes de protección de datos, especialmente el GDPR. Este conocimiento asegura una operación legal, apoyo a los maestros y manejo seguro de datos dentro de la unidad escolar (Μαδεμλής, 2014; Αργυροπούλου, 2012).

- Habilidades Organizacionales y Gerenciales:

Los directores deben adaptarse a cambios constantes dentro del entorno educativo. Habilidades en comunicación, creatividad, TIC, trabajo en equipo, flexibilidad, gestión de información, autocontrol y desarrollo personal son cruciales para manejar diversas necesidades educativas, implementar prácticas de educación inclusiva y fomentar una cultura escolar positiva (Arhipova, 2018; Luthra, 2015; Stoll y Temperley, 2009; Ξανθούλη et al, 2016; Polega et al, 2019; Day et al, 2016; Blau y Presser, 2013; Sesen et al., 2016).

- Experiencia Extensa en Educación Inclusiva:

Los directores deberían tener una base sólida en principios de educación inclusiva, enfatizando la aceptación de la diversidad, la enseñanza colaborativa y una cultura escolar de apoyo. Esta experiencia, junto con la exposición profesional a la enseñanza tanto en entornos de Educación Especial como típicos, equipa a los directores para aplicar

efectivamente los protocolos de educación inclusiva, transformando enfoques teóricos en estrategias educativas prácticas (Carter y Abawi, 2018; Devecchi y Nevin, 2010).

Conocimiento Académico y Práctico sobre Discapacidad y Necesidades Educativas Especiales:

Comprender el espectro de discapacidades y dificultades de aprendizaje es vital para los directores. La ley griega 3699/2008 proporciona un marco para clasificar a los estudiantes con discapacidades y/o necesidades educativas especiales, destacando la importancia del conocimiento especializado en manejar requisitos educativos diversos y fomentar un ambiente propicio para el aprendizaje y desarrollo de todos los estudiantes (Νικολαΐδης, 2013; State of Victoria, 2019; Ηλιακοπούλου, 2017; Παπάνης et al., 2009; Κατσουλης & Χαλικιά, 2007; Κούλου & Τσιντώνη, 2019; WHO, 2019; American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

La efectividad de los directores en las Escuelas de Educación Especial en Grecia depende de un conjunto de habilidades integral que abarca perspicacia administrativa, cualidades de liderazgo, capacidades organizativas, una comprensión profunda de los principios de educación inclusiva y conocimiento especializado en discapacidades y desafíos de aprendizaje. Estas competencias permiten a los directores liderar sus escuelas hacia el logro del objetivo general de inclusión, asegurando que todos los estudiantes reciban el apoyo necesario para prosperar académica y socialmente.

2.2. El caso de los directores de escuelas típicas con Clases de Integración

En el contexto de la educación griega, la Educación Especial opera dentro del sistema educativo típico, con el objetivo de apoyarlo bajo la política de inclusión. Este esfuerzo se manifiesta a través del establecimiento de "Clases de Integración", diseñadas para cerrar la brecha entre los estudiantes con discapacidades o necesidades educativas especiales y sus compañeros en entornos de educación típica. Originado en los EE.UU. en la segunda mitad del siglo XX, el concepto de Clases de Integración se centra en minimizar las diferencias y maximizar la interacción entre todos los estudiantes, fomentando así un ambiente educativo inclusivo (Μεσσαριτάκης & Γουδήρας, 2013).

El éxito operacional de las Clases de Integración en la educación secundaria depende de los esfuerzos colaborativos de los profesores de Educación Especial y sus homólogos en la educación típica. Esta colaboración es esencial para crear programas educativos cohesivos y personalizados que aborden las diversas necesidades de los

estudiantes dentro de un marco inclusivo. Las responsabilidades de los profesores de Educación Especial, según lo establecido por la Ley 3699/2008, abarcan una gama de actividades desde la coordinación con los profesores de educación típica hasta la interacción con los padres y la gestión de datos sensibles de los estudiantes, todo bajo la supervisión del director de la escuela (Σούλης, 2008).

El papel del director de la escuela en la gestión de las Clases de Integración es crítico, particularmente en la educación secundaria donde están involucrados múltiples profesores de especialidades variadas. Los directores son responsables de proporcionar los recursos necesarios, mantener el enfoque en la Educación Especial y fomentar un ambiente propicio para la educación inclusiva. Esto implica no solo habilidades logísticas y administrativas sino también cualidades de liderazgo que trascienden el rol tradicional de un director (Γιγουρτάκη, 2019).

El liderazgo, en contraste con la dirección convencional, enfatiza la innovación, la comunicación abierta y el fomento de prácticas colaborativas. Los líderes se distinguen por su capacidad para inspirar, participar en interacciones directas y promover una cultura escolar positiva e inclusiva. Este enfoque es particularmente efectivo en escuelas con Clases de Integración, donde la integración de profesores de educación típica y Educación Especial es primordial para alcanzar los objetivos de la educación inclusiva (Κουτούζης, 2012; Ανδρής, 2015).

El esfuerzo de integración a menudo enfrenta desafíos, notablemente la resistencia o el escepticismo de los profesores de educación típica hacia las prácticas de Educación Especial, en gran parte debido a la falta de formación y comprensión de los beneficios de la Educación Especial. Transformar el clima de la escuela en uno genuinamente inclusivo requiere que el director actúe como líder, fomentando el trabajo en equipo, la responsabilidad y la participación activa de todos los interesados en el proceso educativo. Un enfoque impulsado por el liderazgo asegura un ambiente colaborativo y cohesivo, superando la naturaleza burocrática e impersonal que puede caracterizar a las instituciones educativas estrictamente organizadas (Μπαγιάτη, 2019).

La efectividad de las Clases de Integración dentro del sistema educativo griego depende de la capacidad del director de la escuela para encarnar las cualidades de un líder. Esto incluye fomentar un clima escolar positivo, promover la colaboración entre los profesores de Educación Especial y educación típica, y asegurar que se satisfagan las necesidades educativas de todos los estudiantes de manera inclusiva. La transición de ser meramente un director a convertirse en un líder es esencial para crear un ambiente

educativo donde los estudiantes con discapacidades y/o necesidades educativas especiales puedan prosperar junto a sus compañeros, realizando así la verdadera esencia de la educación inclusiva (Carter y Abawi, 2018).

2.3. Los Centros de Apoyo Educativo y Consejería

Los Centros de Apoyo Educativo y Consejería en Grecia desempeñan un papel crucial en cerrar la brecha entre la educación especial y la típica, asegurando el acceso igualitario y promoviendo el desarrollo armónico de estudiantes con discapacidades o necesidades educativas especiales. Establecidos en las capitales prefecturales, estos centros están involucrados en la evaluación de las necesidades educativas y psicosociales, la planificación e implementación de intervenciones, y la provisión de orientación vocacional, todo dirigido a apoyar a la comunidad escolar más amplia bajo las directrices de la legislación griega (Decisión Ministerial 211076/ΓΔ4/6-12-2018) (Κίτσου, 2015).

Los directores de estos centros sostienen las riendas, guiando a sus equipos para cumplir con la misión multifacética de los centros. Sus responsabilidades van desde fomentar colaboraciones con varios interesados, asegurar que el personal esté alineado con la legislación educativa y las nuevas investigaciones en educación especial e inclusiva, hasta supervisar la planificación de acciones y su evaluación (ΚΕΔΔΥ Αχαΐας, 2015). Estos roles exigen que los directores posean una gama de competencias, incluyendo un profundo conocimiento en educación especial, familiaridad con diversos casos de discapacidad, cualidades de liderazgo, adaptabilidad y competencia en TIC, entre otros.

Particularmente desafiante pero vital es el dominio de la orientación vocacional. La responsabilidad de los Centros se extiende más allá del apoyo educativo para preparar a los estudiantes para vidas profesionales significativas. Por lo tanto, los directores deben navegar a través de evaluaciones individuales y personalizar la orientación profesional para alinearla con las habilidades, intereses y aspiraciones de cada estudiante, todo mientras consideran el dinámico mercado laboral. Este aspecto de su trabajo subraya la necesidad de poseer no solo una base sólida en educación especial sino también una comprensión amplia de la orientación vocacional y las complejidades de integrar a los estudiantes con discapacidades en la fuerza laboral (Achterberg et al., 2009; Briel y Getzel, 2014).

La transformación de ver la discapacidad a través de una lente médica a un modelo social ha reformulado la conversación sobre los derechos y capacidades de las personas con discapacidades, incluido su derecho a trabajar y contribuir activamente a la sociedad. Los

directores, al promover la orientación vocacional, juegan un papel crucial en facilitar esta transición, asegurando que los estudiantes con discapacidades o necesidades educativas especiales estén equipados y empoderados para navegar el mundo profesional (Oliver, 2013).

Para apoyar efectivamente a sus estudiantes, los directores de estos Centros necesitan adoptar un enfoque integral y sistemático que no solo se enfoque en los aspectos académicos y vocacionales, sino que también profundice en el panorama socioemocional más amplio de la vida de los estudiantes. Esto incluye comprender los antecedentes de los estudiantes, fomentar su integración en entornos sociales y escolares, y empoderarlos con habilidades de vida esenciales. En última instancia, el objetivo es construir puentes entre los estudiantes y el mercado laboral, resaltando oportunidades que resuenen con sus habilidades y aspiraciones, y facilitando así su transición sin problemas a la edad adulta y la vida profesional (Δελλασούδας, 2004; Τσελεχίδου, 2019).

Los directores de los Centros de Apoyo Educativo y Consejería encarnan un cruce crítico en el sistema educativo griego, encargados del doble mandato de apoyo educativo y orientación vocacional para estudiantes con discapacidades o necesidades educativas especiales. Su rol exige una mezcla de conocimientos especializados, liderazgo, empatía y una perspectiva orientada al futuro para navegar los desafíos y oportunidades en fomentar un ambiente inclusivo y empoderador para todo el alumnado.

METODOLOGÍA

3. Metodología y diseño de investigación

3.1 Definición del problema de investigación

El impulso global hacia la educación inclusiva, caracterizado por la integración de estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales (NEE) en aulas generales, enfrenta desafíos significativos en su implementación, notablemente en Grecia a pesar de la legislación de apoyo como la Ley 3699/2008. Obstáculos como recursos insuficientes, formación docente inadecuada y falta de prácticas colaborativas contribuyen a la marginación de los estudiantes con NEE (Fyssa et al., 2014; Pappas, Papoutsi y Drigas, 2018; Genova, 2015). Investigaciones sugieren que fomentar actitudes positivas hacia la diversidad entre el alumnado se puede lograr a través de entornos inclusivos, enfatizando la necesidad de un cambio cultural dentro de las escuelas para abrazar a cada estudiante (Soulis et al., 2016; Fyssa et al., 2014).

Como se ha comentado, el éxito de la educación inclusiva depende en gran medida de la capacidad de los docentes para atender a diversas necesidades de aprendizaje, subrayando la necesidad de condiciones de apoyo y formación especializada (UNESCO, 2020). Además, el papel de los directores escolares es crucial para fomentar un ambiente inclusivo; su liderazgo puede influir significativamente en la cultura y prácticas escolares hacia la inclusividad (Eisenman et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2020). Las actitudes de los directores hacia la inclusión están formadas por varios factores, incluyendo sus experiencias y formación en educación especial, destacando la complejidad de implementar la educación inclusiva y la importancia de investigar más a fondo las perspectivas de los directores para comprender mejor y abordar los desafíos de las prácticas inclusivas (Almotairi, 2013; Avramidis y Norwich, 2002; Ζώνιου-Σιδέρη, 2012).

3.2 Objetivo

El propósito de esta tesis es examinar la percepción y conocimiento de los directores de unidades de escuelas secundarias sobre los protocolos y políticas de inclusión educativa, y su relación con las actitudes hacia la educación inclusiva, considerando también características demográficas relevantes, de manera que facilite la toma de decisiones educativas.

Más específicamente, los objetivos de esta investigación son:

1. Determinar los conocimientos y compresión que tienen los directores de unidades de escuelas secundarias sobre los protocolos y políticas de inclusión educativa que deben implementar en sus escuelas.

2. Explorar las percepciones de los directores escolares, independientemente del nivel en el que trabajen, con respecto al concepto de inclusión.

3. Analizar las características demográficas (como género y edad) que pueden estar relacionadas con los conocimientos de los protocolos y políticas de inclusión educativa, las actitudes y las percepciones de los directores hacia la educación inclusiva.

4. Analizar la posible relación entre el conocimiento de los protocolos y políticas de inclusión educativa con las actitudes y percepciones de los directores hacia la inclusión educativa.

Basándonos en los objetivos específicos mencionados y teniendo en cuenta la revisión bibliográfica, se formulan las siguientes preguntas de investigación:

- ¿Cuál es el nivel de conocimiento y comprensión de los directores sobre los protocolos y políticas de inclusión educativa en sus escuelas secundarias?

- ¿Cuáles son las percepciones de los directores sobre los beneficios y desafíos de la educación inclusiva en el entorno escolar?

- ¿Existen diferencias significativas en los conocimientos de los protocolos y políticas de inclusión educativa de los directores según sus características demográficas, como género y edad?

- ¿Existen diferencias significativas en las actitudes y percepciones de los directores según sus características demográficas, como género y edad?

- ¿Qué relación existe entre el conocimiento de los protocolos y políticas de inclusión educativa con las actitudes y percepciones de los directores de unidades escolares de educación especial?

3.3 Variables de investigación

De acuerdo con los objetivos formulados y el problema de investigación planteado, las variables se agruparon en cuatro dimensiones (ver figura 2):

- Dimensión 1: Características demográficas y laborales de los directores, compuesta por 9 variables.

- Dimensión 2: Conocimiento de los directores sobre el marco legal relacionado con la educación inclusiva y especial en Grecia, compuesta por 5 subdimensiones:

  o Conocimiento de la clarificación conceptual de las definiciones, con 5 variables.

  o Conocimiento de los modelos de educación inclusiva, con 5 variables.

  o Conocimiento de la política internacional de educación inclusiva, con 5 variables.

  o Conocimiento de la legislación y medidas de inclusión en el sistema educativo griego, con 5 variables.

  o Conocimiento de los protocolos de inclusión en las escuelas griegas, con 5 variables.

- Dimensión 3: Percepciones sobre la Educación Especial, Inclusión y Protocolos Relativos, compuesta por 2 subdimensiones:

  o Grado de implementación de los protocolos de educación inclusiva en Grecia, con 6 variables.

  o Causa subyacente del desarrollo de la educación inclusiva, con 9 variables.

- Dimensión 4: El papel del director en la implementación y aplicación de los protocolos de educación inclusiva, con 3 subdimensiones:

  o Papel que desempeña en fortalecer y promover la educación inclusiva, con 4 variables.

  o Formas de apoyo para estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales y/o discapacidades, con 6 variables.

  o Necesidades, problemas o situaciones que pueden abordarse desde la gestión escolar para mejorar la educación inclusiva, con 11 variables.

Figura 2

Dimensiones y subdimensiones del estudio
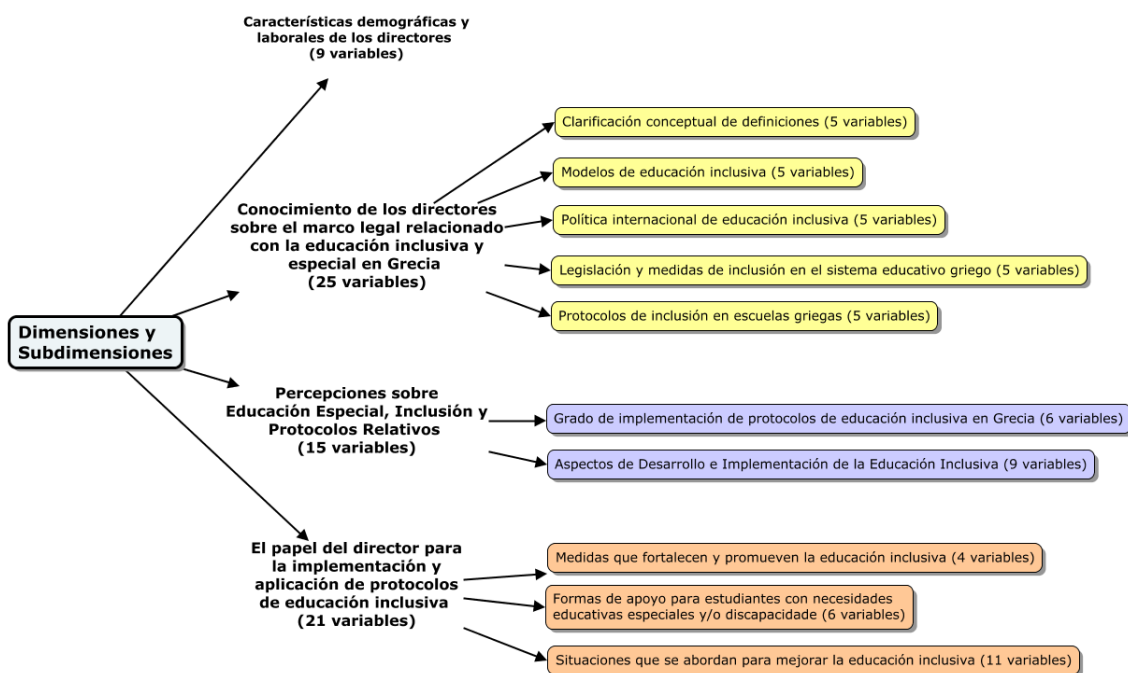
3.4 Diseño de Investigación

En este punto, se realiza la identificación de la modalidad de investigación utilizada que permite dar respuesta a los interrogantes formulados y el logro de los objetivos del estudio. El diseño de investigación determina la estructura general y la metodología que se utilizará para recopilar, analizar y presentar los datos (Bisquerra, 2009). Para ello, hay que tener en cuenta una serie de aspectos importantes como son los objetivos formulados y las preguntas planteadas, la naturaleza del problema de investigación, las variables, los recursos disponibles, la validez interna y externa del estudio, así como los aspectos éticos que conlleva.

En este caso, se optó por un diseño de investigación descriptiva ex post facto y correlacional, el cual permite describir una situación o fenómeno que ya ha ocurrido, sin manipular variables o intervenir en el contexto. Esto es relevante cuando el objetivo es obtener una comprensión detallada de un fenómeno en particular tal como ocurrió naturalmente. Como menciona Creswell y Creswell (2017), la investigación descriptiva se centra en proporcionar una imagen precisa y sistemática de un evento o situación, sin influir en sus resultados.

Por otro lado, un diseño de investigación ex post facto implica la observación y recopilación de datos después de que los eventos ya han ocurrido. En este caso, el investigador no tiene control sobre las variables independientes, ya que estas se han presentado naturalmente y de manera no manipulada. La investigación ex post facto busca analizar las relaciones entre variables que ya han sucedido en un entorno natural y no puede establecer relaciones causales directas debido a la falta de control experimental. Este diseño es apropiado para estudiar fenómenos complejos en situaciones en las que no es ético, práctico o posible manipular las variables de interés (Bisquerra, 2009).

Por último, un diseño de investigación correlacional se centra en analizar la relación entre dos o más variables. A diferencia de la investigación experimental, donde se manipulan las variables, en el diseño correlacional, las variables se miden tal como son sin intervenir en ellas. El objetivo es determinar si existe una asociación estadística entre las variables y en qué dirección se da esta relación (positiva, negativa o nula). Sin embargo, al igual que en la investigación ex post facto, el diseño correlacional no permite establecer relaciones causales directas, ya que no se puede determinar la dirección de la causalidad o si existe una variable desconocida que influya en ambas (Hernández-Sampieri y Mendoza, 2018).

Esta investigación abordó las siguientes fases de investigación:

- Fase 1. Identificación del problema de investigación: en la cual se definió el problema de investigación y se formularon los objetivos e interrogantes del estudio.

- Fase 2. Planificación de la investigación: por la cual se estableció el enfoque metodológico, la población objeto de estudio, así como la técnica de recopilación de datos que permitiera dar respuesta a las preguntas de investigación y su posterior construcción.

- Fase 3. Trabajo de campo: en el que se recolectó la información sobre el fenómeno a estudiar a través de un cuestionario, en soporte digital, enviado a través de correo electrónico corporativo a los directores de los centros educativos de secundaria.

- Fase 4. Procesamiento y análisis de datos: recopilada la información, esta se volcó en una matriz del paquete estadístico SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Depurados los datos, se aplicaron diferentes pruebas estadísticas con el fin de dar respuesta a los objetivos e interrogantes formulados.

- Fase 5. Extraer conclusiones y preparar el informe de investigación: descritos los resultados, se presentó de manera clara y estructurada las inferencias extraídas, siendo estos discutidos.

3.5 Población y Muestra

La investigación se centró en explorar las actitudes y experiencias de los directores de escuelas secundarias en Grecia hacia la educación inclusiva. La población para este estudio fue cuidadosamente seleccionada para incluir directores de varios tipos de instituciones educativas: Escuelas de Educación Especial, Escuelas Regulares con Clases de Integración y Centros de Apoyo Educativo y Orientación, específicamente dentro de las regiones de Ática y Macedonia Central. Estas áreas fueron elegidas debido a su significativa representación del paisaje educativo de Grecia, abarcando 7 prefecturas e involucrando un total de 1.524 escuelas de educación secundaria general, especial y vocacional.

Para asegurar una muestra representativa e imparcial, el estudio empleó una técnica de muestreo aleatorio simple. Cada director tenía la misma posibilidad de selección, facilitada por un generador de números aleatorios. El objetivo inicial era distribuir cuestionarios a 750 directores, apuntando a una visión general amplia de las perspectivas de los directores sobre la educación inclusiva. De estos, 420 directores respondieron, resultando en una muestra final con una tasa de participación del 56%. Esta tasa de respuesta es indicativa del interés de los directores y la relevancia de los temas de educación inclusiva dentro del sistema educativo griego.

Demográficamente, la muestra presentó un ligero predominio masculino (56.4%) con una edad promedio de 55.81 años. Esta distribución de edad sugiere un grupo maduro y experimentado de líderes educativos. La mayoría de las escuelas involucradas en el estudio eran escuelas regulares sin clases de integración (84.3%), reflejando la estructura general del sistema educativo griego. Un porcentaje menor de escuelas fue identificado como teniendo clases de integración (12.4%), escuelas de educación especial (2.4%) y Centros de Apoyo Educativo y Orientación (1.0%). Esta distribución resalta los diferentes niveles de práctica de educación inclusiva a través de diferentes tipos de escuelas.

Respecto al trasfondo profesional de los directores, la gran mayoría tenía más de 21 años de servicio educativo, sugiriendo una experiencia bien establecida en el campo de la educación. Sin embargo, solo una pequeña fracción (4.8%) tenía estudios formales en Educación Especial, indicando una brecha potencial en el conocimiento especializado

esencial para implementar políticas efectivas de educación inclusiva. Este grupo comprendía individuos con diversas calificaciones en Educación Especial, incluyendo maestrías, seminarios y grados con especialización mayor en el campo.

Interesantemente, el 95.2% de los directores informó no tener experiencia en enseñar a estudiantes con discapacidades o necesidades educativas especiales. Esta falta de experiencia directa en la enseñanza podría impactar en la comprensión y la implementación de prácticas inclusivas de los directores. Entre los pocos que tenían dicha experiencia, la mayoría tenía entre 6 y 10 años de experiencia docente relevante.

La distribución geográfica de las escuelas se centraba principalmente en áreas urbanas (75.7%), con menos en pueblos y aldeas. Esta concentración urbana podría influir en la accesibilidad y disponibilidad de recursos para la educación inclusiva.

El estudio destaca el panorama actual de la educación inclusiva desde la perspectiva de los directores de escuelas secundarias en Grecia. Aunque los directores son líderes educativos experimentados, los hallazgos sugieren un notable déficit en formación especializada y experiencia docente directa con estudiantes con discapacidades o necesidades educativas especiales. Esta situación subraya la necesidad crítica de mejorar el desarrollo profesional y la formación en educación inclusiva para equipar mejor a los directores para fomentar una cultura escolar inclusiva.

3.6 Instrumento de recogida de información

3.6.1. Construcción del Primer Borrador

La investigación se centró en evaluar el papel de los directores en la implementación de políticas de educación inclusiva dentro del sistema educativo griego. Para la recogida de información se desarrolló un cuestionario con la finalidad de explorar diversas dimensiones de este rol, empleando preguntas cerradas tipo Likert para obtener respuestas estructuradas y comparables. Este método fue elegido por su facilidad de análisis estadístico y claridad para los encuestados, especialmente beneficioso al dirigirse a un grupo geográficamente diverso.

El cuestionario, inspirado en la Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos (OCDE) y otras fuentes reputadas, consta de cuatro dimensiones. La primera recopila datos demográficos de los directores, aprovechando la credibilidad establecida de la OCDE. Su objetivo es perfilar a los participantes por género, edad, formación educativa y experiencia profesional, centrándose exclusivamente en directores de secundaria.

La segunda dimensión profundiza en el conocimiento de los directores sobre el marco legal que rodea la educación inclusiva en Grecia. Refleja los desafíos destacados por estudios previos, como la encuesta realizada por el Ministerio de Educación en Grecia y el Instituto Pedagógico Heleno (Παιδαγωγικό Ινστιτούτο, 2004), que subrayaron la complejidad del marco legal en educación especial. En ella se utilizan preguntas adaptadas de esta y otras encuestas relevantes, centrándose en la comprensión de los directores sobre las leyes, procedimientos y modelos de educación inclusiva.

La tercera dimensión examina las percepciones de los directores sobre la educación especial y la inclusión, basándose en preguntas de investigaciones sobre las percepciones de los educadores sobre la educación inclusiva, como el estudio de Blackie (2010) en escuelas primarias sudafricanas y el estudio de Shi (2020) sobre las perspectivas de los profesores en Beijing. Esta parte utiliza preguntas tipo Likert para evaluar las opiniones de los directores sobre las estructuras de la educación especial, la práctica de apoyo paralelo y la importancia general de la educación inclusiva.

La última sección se centra en la autoevaluación de los directores con respecto a su papel en la promoción e implementación de protocolos de educación inclusiva. Se examinan las habilidades y desafíos que enfrentan los directores, inspirados en estudios que relacionan la educación inclusiva efectiva con cualidades de liderazgo, como el trabajo de Devecchi y Nevin (2010), y Carter y Abawl (2018). Esta sección también incluye preguntas tipo Likert y ofrece a los directores la oportunidad de expresar sus opiniones sobre cómo gestionar a estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales dentro de entornos educativos típicos.

3.6.2. Análisis de la Validez y Confiabilidad del Cuestionario

Para garantizar la validez y confiabilidad del cuestionario, se realizó un estudio piloto con directores seleccionados, lo que llevó a modificaciones para claridad y pertinencia basadas en retroalimentación. La validez del estudio se reforzó adhiriéndose a un marco teórico riguroso, seleccionando una muestra representativa y aplicando el método de triangulación para resultados objetivos. La confiabilidad se confirmó a través del análisis de consistencia interna y pruebas de discriminación de ítems, resultando en altos valores de Alfa de Cronbach indicativos de un instrumento fiable, como se describirá a continuación.

Tras el estudio piloto, en el cual participaron 75 directores, se realizaron varios ajustes al cuestionario, incluyendo la adición y reformulación de preguntas para capturar

mejor el conocimiento y percepciones de los directores. El cuestionario final pasó por un proceso de validación, asegurando que mide con precisión las variables pretendidas y proporciona una herramienta fiable para la investigación.

El enfoque integral para desarrollar y validar el cuestionario refleja la complejidad de explorar los roles de los directores en el contexto de la educación inclusiva en Grecia, con el objetivo de ofrecer percepciones que puedan informar la política y práctica en esta área crítica del liderazgo educativo.

La muestra piloto estuvo conformada por un 58.7% de hombres y 41.3% de mujeres, con una media de edad de 55.19 (S.D.=4.983), de los cuales el 27.3% están en escuela de Educación Especial, el 63.6% en escuelas típica con Clases de Integración y el 9.1% en centros de Apoyo Educativo y Asesoramiento.

El 4.0% llevan de 6 a 10 años como docentes, el 20.0% entre 11 a 20 años, siendo la mayoría, el 76.0% los que tienen más de 21 años de experiencia. Del conjunto de directores, el 34.7% ejercen este puesto desde 1 a 5 años, el 37.3% desde 11 a 20 años, siendo una minoría los que llevan en la dirección más de 21 años. A su vez, el 81.3% ejercen en Area of the school unit de Urban (> 10.000 population), el 14.7% en Semi-urban (3.000 – 10.000 population) y el 4.0% en Rural area (< 3.000 population).

Con respecto a la experiencia en la enseñanza de estudiantes con discapacidad, el 92.0% de los directores carecían de experiencia en la enseñanza de estudiantes con discapacidad, siendo solo el 8.0% los que si la tenían. De este último grupo, el 1.3% la tenían en un periodo de 1 a 5 años, al igual que los que alegaron tenerla de 6 a 10 años, siendo el 5.3% los que contaban con una experiencia con esta tipo de alumnado de 11 a 20 años.

Para estudiar la validez y confiabilidad del cuestionario se aplicó, por un lado, un Análisis de Consistencia Interna, prueba que facilita la verificación de la significación de los elementos que lo componen mediante el coeficiente Alfa de Cronbach (Del Rincón et al., 1995) y, por otro lado, un análisis de la capacidad de discriminación de los elementos, a través de una prueba de t de Student entre las medias de los grupos que puntúan bajo y los que puntúan alto (García, Gil y Rodríguez, 1995). Ambas pruebas se llevaron a cabo con las secciones del cuestionario con elementos escalares, tercera y cuarta sección. De esta manera, se evaluó la homogeneidad de las 29 preguntas de escala Likert de 5 puntos.

La fiabilidad de las escalas del cuestionario se comprobaron con la medida estadística Alpha de Cronbach, estableciendo como valor de la medida por encima 0.7

como criterio de una fiabilidad elevada (Nunally, 1978). El valor del conjunto de los ítems fue de 0.813, lo que evidencia un alto nivel de confiabilidad, al igual que el análisis realizado a las diferentes subdimensiones conformadas por las preguntas escalares, siendo los valores superiores a 0.897.

Con respecto al comportamiento de los ítems, se observa que los seis primeros elementos ostentan valores Alfa de Cronbach por encima de la medida del conjunto, siendo a partir de .849.

Para verificar el poder discriminatorio de cada elemento, se aplicó el análisis que permite diferenciar entre las puntuaciones altas y las puntuaciones bajas que los sujetos obtienen en el test (García, Gil y Rodríguez, 1995). Este se realizó con la selección de los ítems escalares con variaciones del 1 al 5, y la suma total se reagrupó en tres grupos (Bajo, Medio y Alto):

1 = Grupo Bajo (valor mínimo, percentil 33): (76, 88)

2 = Grupo Medio (percentil 34, percentil 66): (89, 97)

3 = Grupo Alto (percentil 67, valor máximo): (98, 121)

La prueba t de Student para muestras independientes permitió establecer la existencia o no de diferencias estadísticas (n.s. = 0.05) entre los grupos que obtienen puntuaciones bajas y altas en los ítems, obteniendo en los 25 elementos valores de p inferiores a 0.05, lo que representa un alto poder de discriminación por parte del ítem.

3.7 Estrategias de análisis de datos

La investigación exploró el papel de los directores en la implementación de la educación inclusiva en las escuelas griegas, empleando un cuestionario detallado analizado utilizando el software SPSS. El análisis comenzó con la organización de datos en una matriz y su limpieza para asegurar la precisión. La consistencia interna del cuestionario se verificó a través de cálculos de Alfa de Cronbach y coeficiente de discriminación.

Para evaluar el conocimiento de los directores sobre la educación inclusiva, las respuestas se puntuaron, con las respuestas correctas obteniendo un punto y las respuestas incorrectas o desconocidas recibiendo ninguno. Esta puntuación permitió la clasificación del conocimiento de los directores en niveles bajo, moderado y alto, basado en sus puntajes acumulativos.

El análisis descriptivo proporcionó percepciones sobre las actitudes y percepciones de los directores respecto a la educación especial y las prácticas inclusivas. Esto incluyó frecuencias, porcentajes y medidas de tendencia central y dispersión para cada ítem del cuestionario.

Análisis comparativos e inferenciales, incluyendo la prueba t de Student, ANOVA y pruebas de Chi-cuadrado, se utilizaron para examinar diferencias basadas en género, edad y otras variables demográficas. Estas pruebas ayudaron a identificar variaciones en el conocimiento y percepciones de los directores sobre los protocolos de educación inclusiva.

Variables que representan las actitudes y percepciones de los directores se agregaron para explorar más a fondo sus vistas sobre la implementación de la educación inclusiva, el papel de los directores en promover prácticas inclusivas y los desafíos encontrados en la mejora de la educación inclusiva.

Finalmente, estudios correlacionales evaluaron la relación entre los niveles de conocimiento de los directores y sus actitudes hacia la educación inclusiva. Este análisis comprensivo tuvo como objetivo entender las complejidades de implementar la educación inclusiva en las escuelas griegas desde la perspectiva de los directores, arrojando luz sobre las complejidades de fomentar un ambiente educativo inclusivo.

4. Resultados

4.1. Conocimiento y comprensión de los directores sobre los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva en las escuelas secundarias

El estudio profundiza en el conocimiento y la comprensión de los directores con respecto a los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva en las escuelas secundarias griegas, revelando niveles variados de comprensión en diferentes dimensiones. Respecto a la clarificación conceptual de definiciones relacionadas con la educación inclusiva, una mayoría significativa de directores (96.2%) identificó correctamente que la base del modelo de educación inclusiva son los principios de la escuela democrática. Sin embargo, se observaron porcentajes menores en aspectos más detallados, como la educación de todos los niños en el mismo ambiente (25.7%) y la diferenciación entre "integración" e "inclusión" (23.8%).

En términos de modelos de educación inclusiva, los directores mostraron una comprensión variada, con solo el 46.7% reconociendo que el modelo de inclusión total no se aplica en Grecia. Las brechas de conocimiento fueron evidentes en el impacto de la

inclusión en el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes sin necesidades especiales (23.1%) y la existencia de escuelas especiales junto a clases coeducativas (14.5%).

La comprensión de los directores sobre la política internacional de educación inclusiva también varió, con un tercio reconociendo correctamente el impacto del ambiente y la cultura escolar (33.3%). La familiaridad con documentos fundamentales como el Informe Warnock de 1978 y la Declaración de Salamanca de 1994 fue limitada (28.1% y 21.9%, respectivamente).

Respecto a la legislación y las medidas de inclusión en el sistema educativo griego, el 60.0% identificó correctamente el objetivo de los programas de coeducación, pero solo una minoría respondió acertadamente preguntas sobre el uso de las TIC en los procesos de aprendizaje (26.9%) y el momento de la primera legislación de educación especial en Grecia (25.7%).

El conocimiento sobre los protocolos de inclusión en las escuelas griegas mostró que, mientras el 85.2% entendía las diferencias curriculares entre las escuelas de educación especial y general, solo el 50.7% identificó correctamente la composición del panel de expertos para evaluar las necesidades educativas especiales.

En general, el estudio indica que el 71.0% de los directores posee un bajo nivel de conocimiento sobre los protocolos y políticas de inclusión en la educación secundaria, con el 14.5% mostrando un conocimiento moderado y un porcentaje igual mostrando altos niveles de conocimiento. Estos hallazgos subrayan la necesidad de mejorar la formación y los recursos para equipar mejor a los directores en la implementación efectiva de la educación inclusiva.

4.2. Percepciones de los Directores Escolares Sobre el Concepto de Inclusión

El estudio indaga sobre las percepciones de los directores escolares acerca de la educación inclusiva, enfocándose en los beneficios y desafíos de su implementación y el papel de los directores. Los directores muestran percepciones variadas sobre la eficacia de los protocolos de educación inclusiva de Grecia. Creen moderadamente que estos protocolos ayudan a integrar a los estudiantes con Necesidades Educativas Especiales (NEE) en clases típicas (M=3.49, S.D.=1.151) y fortalecen la educación inclusiva (M=3.42, S.D.=1.032). Sin embargo, la confianza en estos protocolos para cerrar brechas entre estudiantes con y sin NEE es relativamente más baja (M=3.14, S.D.=1.139).

Los directores valoran fuertemente la cooperación entre maestros y educadores especiales (M=4.19, S.D.=0.779) y ven la educación inclusiva como beneficiosa para el éxito académico de todos los estudiantes con NEE (M=4.11, S.D.=0.484), asegurando la participación y progreso de todos los estudiantes (M=4.08, S.D.=0.490). Sin embargo, ven la educación inclusiva como algo que complica el trabajo de los maestros de clases típicas en lugar de simplificarlo (M=2.45, S.D.=1.097).

En términos de su papel en fomentar la educación inclusiva, los directores priorizan apoyar a los maestros y fomentar la cooperación (M=4.24, S.D.=0.798) e iniciar programas de capacitación para la educación inclusiva (M=4.17, S.D.=0.549). Muestran menos preocupación por asegurar instalaciones y materiales adecuados para estudiantes con NEE, indicando áreas potenciales para el crecimiento en la provisión de recursos (M=2.8, S.D.=1.208 para instalaciones; M=2.68, S.D.=1.194 para materiales y equipo).

Los directores identifican desafíos clave en la mejora de la educación inclusiva, como la falta de tiempo para consultas (M=4.26, S.D.=0.770) y la necesidad de más personal especializado (M=4.13, S.D.=0.526). Es interesante que estén menos preocupados por el señalamiento y la marginación de estudiantes con NEE (M=2.86, S.D.=1.157) y las reacciones de los padres (M=2.62, S.D.=1.322), sugiriendo una comunidad escolar de apoyo o una posible subestimación de estos aspectos.

Para apoyar a los estudiantes con NEE, los directores prefieren una amplia cooperación con educadores especiales (28.9%) y comunicación con los padres (26.4%). La cooperación con otras unidades escolares y Centros de Apoyo y Consejería Educativa es menos priorizada (8.5%), y la evaluación continua y los ajustes curriculares para estudiantes con NEE son mínimos (1.2%).

Estos hallazgos subrayan una comprensión y aplicación complejas de la educación inclusiva entre los directores escolares, destacando la importancia de la colaboración, capacitación y recursos adecuados para abordar desafíos y adoptar completamente los principios inclusivos.

4.3. Estudio Comparativo del Conocimiento de los Protocolos y Políticas de Educación Inclusiva, Percepciones y Actitudes de los Directores Escolares hacia la Educación Inclusiva

Esta sección examina si el conocimiento sobre la educación inclusiva de los directores de escuelas de educación secundaria y sus actitudes hacia ella difieren según

género y edad. Para explorar estas relaciones, se abordaron las siguientes preguntas de investigación: ¿Existen diferencias significativas en el conocimiento de los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva entre los directores basadas en sus características demográficas, como el género y la edad? ¿Existen diferencias significativas en las actitudes y percepciones de los directores basadas en sus características demográficas, como el género y la edad?

La prueba t de Student para muestras independientes evidencia diferencias significativas de género en la *comprensión de los directores sobre los protocolos de educación inclusiva*, con las mujeres superando a los hombres en todos los aspectos (t=-4.302, p=0.000). Específicamente, se encontraron disparidades notables en áreas como las definiciones conceptuales (t=-2.635, p=0.004), modelos de educación inclusiva (t=-2.205, p=0.014), política internacional (t=-5.788, p=0.000), legislación griega (t=-4.513, p=0.000) y protocolos de inclusión (t=-7.900, p=0.000).

Los resultados del análisis de varianza ANOVA revelan diferencias significativas relacionadas con la edad en el *conocimiento de los directores sobre los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva*, reforzadas por la prueba post hoc de Scheffé. Los directores de 31 a 50 años muestran más comprensión que aquellos mayores de 51 años, en todas las áreas de conocimiento: marco legal, definiciones conceptuales, modelos, políticas internacionales, medidas legislativas y protocolos de inclusión:

- Conocimiento general del marco legal: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=1.774, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.407, p=0.000) poseen mayor conocimiento que aquellos mayores de 51 años (F=187.495, p=0.000).

- Conocimiento de la clarificación conceptual de definiciones: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.662, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=2.529, p=0.000) poseen mayor conocimiento que aquellos mayores de 51 años (F=188.523, p=0.000).

- Conocimiento de modelos de educación inclusiva: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=3.240, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=3.107, p=0.000) poseen mayor conocimiento que aquellos mayores de 51 años (F=247.896, p=0.000).

- Conocimiento de política internacional de educación inclusiva: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.606, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=2.156, p=0.000) poseen mayor conocimiento que aquellos mayores de 51 años (F=96.417, p=0.000).

- Conocimiento de legislación y medidas de inclusión en el sistema educativo griego: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.793, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-

J=2.027, p=0.000) poseen mayor conocimiento que aquellos mayores de 51 años (F=78.008, p=0.000).

- Conocimiento de protocolos de inclusión en escuelas griegas: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.226, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.460, p=0.000) poseen mayor conocimiento que aquellos mayores de 51 años (F=37.982, p=0.000).

La prueba t de Student muestra diferencias significativas de género en las *percepciones de los directores sobre los protocolos de educación inclusiva*, con los hombres teniendo percepciones más positivas que las mujeres en seis áreas: fortalecimiento de la educación inclusiva, ayuda en la integración en clases típicas, preservación de la uniformidad de la educación general, construcción de puentes entre estudiantes, abordaje de las necesidades de los estudiantes minoritarios y facilitación de la integración y expansión de oportunidades subsiguientes en la vida de los estudiantes apoyados por ellos:

- Servir al camino hacia el fortalecimiento de la educación inclusiva (t=7.869, p=0.000),

- Ayudar a los estudiantes a integrarse en clases típicas (t=7.556, p=0.000),

- Preservar la uniformidad de la educación general (t=6.740, p=0.000),

- Construir puentes entre estudiantes con y sin Necesidades Educativas Especiales (t=14.056, p=0.000),

- Ser la forma más apropiada y efectiva de abordar las necesidades de una minoría de estudiantes (t=11.101, p=0.000), y

- Conducir a la integración y expansión de oportunidades subsiguientes en la vida de los estudiantes apoyados por ellos (t=14.210, p=0.000).

A su vez, esta misma prueba revela diferencias significativas de género en las *percepciones sobre el desarrollo e implementación de la educación inclusiva*, con las mujeres obteniendo puntuaciones más altas que los hombres en nueve áreas: integración de todos los estudiantes, provisión de apoyo, compromiso con currículos individuales, participación y progreso del estudiante, progreso académico de estudiantes de desarrollo formal, éxito académico para estudiantes con necesidades especiales, simplificación del trabajo del maestro de clase, oportunidades de participación igualitaria y cooperación entre maestros y educadores especiales:

- Tiene que ver con la integración de todos los estudiantes en escuelas típicas (t=-7.652, p=0.000),

- Se refiere a la provisión de apoyo a los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales, para satisfacer los requisitos del contexto escolar (t=-3.595, p=0.000),

- Argumenta que cada estudiante debe seguir su propio currículo, mientras participa al mismo tiempo en actividades comunes (t=-7.566, p=0.000),

- Asegura la presencia, participación y progreso de todos los estudiantes en la educación (t=-1.941, p=0.026),

- Promueve el progreso académico de los estudiantes de desarrollo formal (t=-10.957, p=0.000),

- Favorece el éxito académico de todos los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales (t=-5.392, p=0.000),

- Simplifica el trabajo del maestro de clase típica (t=-8.970, p=0.000),

- Proporciona oportunidades para una participación igualitaria en un contexto de aprendizaje común (t=-6.231, p=0.000), y

- Presupone la cooperación fluida de un maestro y un educador especial (t=-11.722, p=0.000).

Con respecto a los *roles de los directores en la educación inclusiva* atendiendo a la variable género, el análisis mostró diferencias estadísticamente significativas: los hombres califican más alto que las mujeres en cuatro áreas—suministro de materiales y equipo, provisión de instalaciones para la enseñanza de niños con necesidades especiales, apoyo y cooperación con los maestros, e implementación de programas de capacitación:

- Cuidado del suministro de materiales y equipo adecuados, para que las necesidades de los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales estén adecuadamente cubiertas (t=-6.322, p=0.000),

- Provisión de las instalaciones necesarias para la enseñanza de niños con necesidades educativas especiales (t=-7.740, p=0.000),

- Apoyo a los maestros y desarrollo de la cooperación con ellos (t=-14.004, p=0.000), y

- Implementación de iniciativas de capacitación, programas y seminarios para la educación inclusiva (t=-6.309, p=0.000).

El análisis a través de la prueba t de Student entre la variable género y las *necesidades de la educación inclusiva*, reveló que las mujeres puntúan más alto que los

hombres en los once aspectos, incluyendo el personal, la formación, los cambios curriculares, las reacciones de los padres, la infraestructura, los libros de texto, la adaptación del estudiante, la adecuación del profesorado, la cooperación, la focalización de estudiantes con discapacidades y el tiempo para la consulta:

- Necesidad de personal con personal especializado (t=-4.910, p=0.000),

- Necesidad de más educación y formación (t=-6.865, p=0.000),

- Necesidad de cambiar el currículo (t=-8.787, p=0.000),

- Reacciones de los padres (t=-9.796, p=0.000),

- Falta de infraestructura y equipamiento necesarios en la unidad escolar (t=-7.621, p=0.000),

- Insuficiencia de libros de texto escolares (t=-9.546, p=0.000),

- Dificultades en los estudiantes de educación formal en adaptarse con sus compañeros con necesidades educativas especiales (t=-8.067, p=0.000),

- Inadecuación de los profesores en aplicar los protocolos de educación inclusiva (t=-5.469, p=0.000),

- Negativa de los profesores a cooperar entre sí (t=-10.590, p=0.000),

- Focalización y marginación de los estudiantes con discapacidad y/o necesidades educativas especiales (t=-12.664, p=0.000), y

- Falta de tiempo para consultar con otros profesores y especialistas (t=-9.582, p=0.000).

Por otro lado, la prueba Chi-cuadrado muestran impactos de género en las *estrategias de apoyo para estudiantes con necesidades especiales*, siendo los resultados: Cooperación y comunicación con los padres de los estudiantes ($\chi2$=11.565, p=.000), donde los hombres (53.2%) lo identifican en mayor medida que las mujeres (46.8%), Cooperación y comunicación extensiva con el educador especial de cada estudiante ($\chi2$=6.783, p=.009), con los hombres (54.9%) identificándolo más que las mujeres (45.1%), Intentos de facilitar la aceptación de los estudiantes por parte de sus compañeros ($\chi2$=52.336, p=.000), donde las mujeres (60.2%) lo identifican en mayor medida que los hombres (39.8%), y Cooperación extensiva con otras unidades escolares y los Centros de Apoyo y Consejería Educativa ($\chi2$=8.170, p=.009), con las mujeres (54.7%) identificándolo más que los hombres (45.3%).

Los resultados del estudio de varianza ANOVA revelan influencias de la edad en las *percepciones de los directores sobre la implementación de protocolos de educación inclusiva*. Los hallazgos significativos incluyen:

- Servir al camino hacia el fortalecimiento de la educación inclusiva: Los directores mayores de 51 años (F=94.671, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.659, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.576, p=0.000).

- Ayudar a los estudiantes a integrarse en clases típicas: Los directores mayores de 51 años (F=139.547, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.293, p=0.002) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=2.043, p=0.000).

- Conocimiento de modelos de educación inclusiva: Los directores mayores de 51 años (F=67.859, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.561, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.328, p=0.000).

- Conocimiento de la política internacional de educación inclusiva: Los directores mayores de 51 años (F=56.177, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.355, p=0.005) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.438, p=0.000).

- Conocimiento de la legislación y medidas de inclusión en el sistema educativo griego: Los directores mayores de 51 años (F=72.673, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.539, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.489, p=0.000).

- Conocimiento de protocolos de inclusión en escuelas griegas: Los directores mayores de 51 años (F=60.653, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de 31 a 41 años (I-J=1.894, p=0.013) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.344, p=0.000).

A su vez, es análisis realizado mediante ANOVA muestra diferencias relacionadas con la edad en las *percepciones de los directores sobre los aspectos de la educación inclusiva*:

- Tiene que ver con la integración de todos los estudiantes en escuelas típicas: Los directores de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.538, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=17.979, p=0.000).

- Se refiere a la provisión de apoyo a estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales, para cumplir con los requisitos del contexto escolar: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=0.992, p=0.009) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.358, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=20.519, p=0.000).

- Argumenta que cada estudiante debe seguir su propio currículo, mientras al mismo tiempo participa en actividades comunes: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.098, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.248, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=73.062, p=0.000).

- Asegura la presencia, participación y progreso de todos los estudiantes en la educación: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=0.975, p=0.015) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.342, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=17.318, p=0.000).

- Promueve el progreso académico de los estudiantes de desarrollo formal: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.212, p=0.006) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.579, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=73.479, p=0.000).

- Favorece el éxito académico de todos los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=0.958, p=0.013) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.425, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=25.968, p=0.000).

- Simplifica el trabajo del maestro de clase típica: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.229, p=0.008) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.179, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=39.275, p=0.000).

- Proporciona oportunidades para la participación igualitaria en un contexto de aprendizaje común: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=1.377, p=0.009) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.894, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=55.768, p=0.000).

- Presupone la cooperación fluida de un maestro y un educador especial: Directores de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.855, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=37.692, p=0.000).

Los resultados del análisis de varianza ANOVA muestran el impacto de la edad en las *percepciones de los directores sobre sus roles en promover la educación inclusiva*. Los hallazgos clave incluyen:

- Cuidar el suministro de materiales y equipo apropiados, para que las necesidades de los estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales estén adecuadamente cubiertas: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.620, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=2.020, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=122.040, p=0.000).

- Proporcionar las instalaciones necesarias para la enseñanza de niños con necesidades educativas especiales: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.489, p=0.002) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.922, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=100.969, p=0.000).

- Apoyar a los maestros y desarrollar cooperación con ellos: Directores de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.852, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=35.147, p=0.000).

- Implementación de iniciativas de capacitación, programas y seminarios para la educación inclusiva: Directores de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.452, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos de más de 51 años (F=21.692, p=0.000).

Los resultados del análisis ANOVA revelan diferencias relacionadas con la edad en las *percepciones de los directores sobre las necesidades de gestión escolar para mejorar la educación inclusiva*. Los directores más jóvenes (31-41, 41-50), en comparación con los directores de 51 años o más, enfatizan más en:

- Necesidad de personal con personal especializado: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=0.944, p=0.027) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.494, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=28.826, p=0.000).

- Necesidad de más formación y capacitación: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=1.137, p=0.049) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.537, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=20.116, p=0.000).

- Necesidad de cambiar el currículo: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.609, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=2.209, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=144.206, p=0.000).

- Reacciones de los padres: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.721, p=0.001) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=2.321, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=135.146, p=0.000).

- Falta de infraestructura y equipamiento necesarios en la unidad escolar: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.740, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=2.140, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=116.794, p=0.000).

- Insuficiencia de libros de texto escolares: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.668, p=0.000) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=2.051, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=127.561, p=0.000).

- Dificultades de los estudiantes de educación formal en adaptarse con sus compañeros con necesidades educativas especiales: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=2.587, p=0.002) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=2.087, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=108.532, p=0.000).

- Inadecuación de los profesores en aplicar los protocolos de educación inclusiva: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=1.059, p=0.037) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.459, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=18.999, p=0.000).

- Negativa de los profesores a cooperar entre sí: Directores de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.984, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=28.259, p=0.000).

- Focalización y marginación de los estudiantes con discapacidad y/o necesidades educativas especiales: Directores de 31 a 41 años (I-J=1.888, p=0.028) y aquellos de 41 a 50 años (I-J=1.672, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=75.455, p=0.000).

- Falta de tiempo para consultar con otros profesores y especialistas: Directores de 41 a 50 años (I-J=0.774, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que los de 51 años o más (F=30.757, p=0.000).

Esto indica un cambio generacional en la priorización de las necesidades de la educación inclusiva.

La prueba de Chi-cuadrado muestra diferencias significativas relacionadas con la edad en las *formas de apoyo para estudiantes con necesidades educativas especiales*. Los

directores mayores (51 años o más) en comparación con los de mediana edad (41-50) y los más jóvenes (31-41), enfatizan más frecuentemente:

- Cooperación con los padres ($\chi2=11.422$, p=.003),

- Esfuerzos para facilitar la aceptación del estudiante ($\chi2=61.115$, p<.000), y

- Cooperación extensa con otras unidades escolares y centros de apoyo ($\chi2=58.646$, p<.000).

Esto sugiere que la experiencia y la edad pueden influir en la priorización de estrategias de apoyo para la educación inclusiva.

4.4 Estudio correlacional entre el conocimiento de los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva y las actitudes y percepciones de los directores hacia la educación inclusiva

Esta sección explora la relación entre el conocimiento de los directores escolares sobre los protocolos de educación inclusiva y sus actitudes hacia la educación inclusiva. Examinando varias dimensiones y subdimensiones de este conocimiento y sus percepciones, el estudio pretende descubrir cuán bien entienden los directores las políticas de educación inclusiva y cómo este entendimiento influye en sus actitudes. La pregunta guía investiga la conexión entre el conocimiento de los directores sobre las políticas y sus percepciones y actitudes hacia la educación inclusiva, enfocándose en los directores de unidades de educación especial. A través del análisis de medias y desviaciones estándar dentro de cada dimensión, el estudio busca revelar la profundidad del conocimiento de los directores y cómo se correlaciona con su enfoque hacia la educación inclusiva. Específicamente, la pregunta de investigación que guía esta exploración es: ¿Cuál es la relación entre el conocimiento de los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva y las actitudes y percepciones de los directores de unidades escolares de educación especial?

Los resultados del análisis de varianza ANOVA, reforzada por la prueba post hoc de Scheffé, indican vínculos significativos entre los niveles de conocimiento de los directores y sus actitudes/percepciones hacia los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva, destacando énfasis variados en diferentes dimensiones:

- Percepciones de la implementación de los protocolos de educación inclusiva (F=536.422, p=0.000): Los directores con un bajo nivel de conocimiento sobre los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva otorgan mayor importancia a esto que

aquellos con un nivel de conocimiento moderado (I-J=1.044, p=0.000) y aquellos con un alto nivel de conocimiento (I-J=2.309, p=0.000). Adicionalmente, los directores con un nivel de conocimiento moderado otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos con un alto nivel de conocimiento (I-J=1.265, p=0.000).

- Percepciones de los diversos aspectos o componentes relacionados con el desarrollo e implementación de la educación inclusiva (F=366.208, p=0.000): Los directores con un nivel de conocimiento moderado sobre los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos con un bajo nivel de conocimiento (I-J=0.371, p=0.000). Adicionalmente, los directores con un alto nivel de conocimiento sobre los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos con un nivel de conocimiento moderado (I-J=0.978, p=0.000) y aquellos con un bajo nivel de conocimiento (I-J=1.349, p=0.000).

- Rol del director para fortalecer y promover la educación inclusiva: Los directores con un alto nivel de conocimiento sobre los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva (I-J=1.780, p=0.000) y aquellos con un nivel de conocimiento moderado (I-J=0.854, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos con un bajo nivel de conocimiento (F=390.891, p=0.000).

- Necesidades, problemas o situaciones que pueden ser abordadas desde la gestión escolar para mejorar la educación inclusiva: Los directores con un alto nivel de conocimiento sobre los protocolos y políticas de educación inclusiva (I-J=1.946, p=0.000) y aquellos con un nivel de conocimiento moderado (I-J=0.948, p=0.000) otorgan mayor importancia a esto que aquellos con un bajo nivel de conocimiento (F=533.741, p=0.000).

Estos hallazgos subrayan la relación crítica entre los niveles de conocimiento y la priorización de los directores de los elementos de educación inclusiva. Para saber si existe una relación entre los diferentes conocimientos de los directores y las percepciones sobre los aspectos que influyen en la educación inclusiva, se calcularon el índice de correlación de Pearson y su respectivo nivel de significancia (ver tabla 35). Los resultados revelan que existe una relación entre el conjunto de variables estudiadas, la mayoría de ellas presentando una intensidad muy alta y alta.

Por un lado, se evidencia una relación negativa entre la variable "Percepciones de la implementación de protocolos para la educación inclusiva" y las variables de conocimiento. Específicamente, con muy alta intensidad con las variables "Conocimiento de la política

internacional de educación inclusiva" (r=-.801, p=.000) y "Conocimiento de la legislación y medidas de inclusión en el sistema educativo griego" (r=-.803, p=.000), y con alta intensidad con las variables "Conocimiento de la clarificación conceptual de definiciones" (r=-.754, p=.000), "Conocimiento de modelos de educación inclusiva" (r=-.789, p=.000) y "Conocimiento de protocolos de inclusión en escuelas griegas" (r=-.639, p=.000). Esto implica que cuanto mayor es el conocimiento de los directores, menores son los valores que tienen para las percepciones que los maestros tienen sobre la implementación de protocolos para la educación inclusiva en Grecia.

En cuanto a la relación entre las percepciones de varios aspectos o componentes relacionados con el desarrollo y la implementación de la educación inclusiva y el nivel de conocimiento, estas son positivas, con alta intensidad con las variables "Conocimiento de la clarificación conceptual de definiciones" (r=.741, p=.000), "Conocimiento de modelos de educación inclusiva" (r=.736, p=.000), "Conocimiento de la política internacional de educación inclusiva" (r=.767, p=.000), "Conocimiento de la legislación y medidas de inclusión en el sistema educativo griego" (r=.718, p=.000), y moderada con la variable "Conocimiento de protocolos de inclusión en escuelas griegas" (r=.575, p=.000). Esto revela que niveles más altos de conocimiento conducen a niveles más altos de percepciones de varios aspectos o componentes relacionados con el desarrollo y la implementación de la educación inclusiva.

La relación entre la concepción de los directores del papel del director en el fortalecimiento y promoción de la educación inclusiva y diferentes conocimientos sobre el marco legal relacionado con la educación inclusiva y especial en Grecia es positiva y de alta intensidad: "Conocimiento de la clarificación conceptual de definiciones" con un valor de r=.734 (p=.000), "Conocimiento de modelos de educación inclusiva" con un valor de r=.758 (p=.000), "Conocimiento de la política internacional de educación inclusiva" con un valor de r=.740 (p=.000), "Conocimiento de la legislación y medidas de inclusión en el sistema educativo griego" con un valor de r=.743 (p=.000), y "Conocimiento de protocolos de inclusión en escuelas griegas" con un valor de r=.609 (p=.000). Esto indica que cuanto mayor es el conocimiento, mayor es el nivel de apreciación por este papel.

Finalmente, la relación es positiva y de alta intensidad entre la variable "Papel del director en abordar necesidades, problemas o situaciones que pueden ser gestionadas a través de la administración escolar para mejorar la educación inclusiva" y las variables de conocimiento: "Conocimiento de la clarificación conceptual de definiciones" con un valor de r=.762 (p=.000), "Conocimiento de modelos de educación inclusiva" con un valor de

r=.790 (p=.000), "Conocimiento de la política internacional de educación inclusiva" con un valor de r=.783 (p=.000), "Conocimiento de la legislación y medidas de inclusión en el sistema educativo griego" con un valor de r=.776 (p=.000), y "Conocimiento de protocolos de inclusión en escuelas griegas" con un valor de r=.637 (p=.000). Esto indica que un mayor conocimiento conduce a una mayor apreciación del papel del director en abordar necesidades, problemas o situaciones que pueden ser gestionadas a través de la administración escolar para mejorar la educación inclusiva.

5. Conclusión

El estudio tuvo como objetivo explorar el conocimiento y las perspectivas de los directores de escuelas secundarias sobre los protocolos de educación inclusiva, considerando su impacto en las actitudes hacia la inclusividad, junto con las influencias demográficas. Los objetivos incluyeron evaluar la comprensión de los directores sobre los protocolos de educación inclusiva, entender sus percepciones sobre la inclusión educativa, examinar cómo el género y la edad afectan sus puntos de vista y conocimiento, e investigar la relación entre su comprensión de los protocolos inclusivos y sus actitudes hacia la inclusión. Este enfoque pretendía apoyar los procesos de toma de decisiones educativas.

Conclusiones generales

Nuestra investigación arrojó luz sobre la diversa conciencia y comprensión de los protocolos de educación inclusiva entre los directores, destacando el papel crucial del liderazgo en la implementación exitosa de estas políticas. Dar et al. (2022) enfatizan la importancia del liderazgo escolar en fomentar la excelencia educativa a través de la colaboración y el compartir una visión para el cambio. Argumentan que los líderes inclusivos, dedicados a la igualdad y a las oportunidades de alta calidad para todos los estudiantes, son fundamentales para impulsar el éxito estudiantil y el avance de la educación inclusiva.

Vlachou y Tsirantonaki (2023) se centran en el impacto de los valores de los directores de escuela en la educación inclusiva, revelando que estos valores dan forma significativamente a sus actitudes hacia la inclusión. Argumentan que los valores de un director establecen el estándar para las acciones aceptables, desempeñando un papel vital en las reformas educativas y la educación de estudiantes con discapacidades. Sin embargo, el estudio también señala una brecha en la experiencia y formación de los directores griegos

para la educación inclusiva, sugiriendo una necesidad de programas de formación más integrales.

Jarvis et al. (2020) discuten la importancia de que los líderes escolares encarnen y modelen principios inclusivos para cultivar una comunidad escolar inclusiva. Abogan por un enfoque integral de la escuela hacia la inclusión, que requiere una visión compartida, compromiso, reflexión y cambios en la planificación y pedagogía de los maestros. Este enfoque es apoyado por el aprendizaje profesional dentro de un marco de liderazgo y una cultura escolar inclusiva, permitiendo la planificación colectiva y la consideración de áreas clave como los valores de liderazgo, el desarrollo de la capacidad del personal y las prácticas inclusivas.

Estos estudios subrayan colectivamente el papel esencial de la conciencia de liderazgo, los valores y la formación en la implementación efectiva de políticas de educación inclusiva. Destacan la necesidad de que los líderes escolares estén bien informados, guiados por valores y comprometidos con fomentar un ambiente inclusivo, asegurando así el éxito y la sostenibilidad de las iniciativas de educación inclusiva.

La investigación descubre percepciones significativas sobre la conciencia y la implementación de los directores escolares de los protocolos de educación inclusiva, destacando el papel fundamental del liderazgo en promover la inclusividad educativa. Estudios por Dar et al. (2022) y Vlachou y Tsirantonaki (2023) subrayan la influencia crítica de los valores y conocimientos de liderazgo en fomentar ambientes de educación inclusiva. Estos valores y conocimientos impactan significativamente en las actitudes de los directores hacia la educación inclusiva y su efectividad en implementar prácticas educativas que acomodan a estudiantes con discapacidades. Además, la importancia del liderazgo en incrustar principios inclusivos en toda la cultura escolar es enfatizada por Jarvis et al. (2020), abogando por un enfoque integral de la escuela que valore la igualdad, la diversidad y el respeto.

Además, la Agencia Europea para las Necesidades Especiales y la Educación Inclusiva (2021) enfatiza la importancia de concienciar a todos los interesados sobre los beneficios a largo plazo de la educación inclusiva como base para una sociedad más inclusiva. Además, los trabajos de Fowler et al. (2019) y McLeskey et al. (2017) destacan la necesidad de que los administradores y los profesores de educación especial posean tanto un conocimiento integral como estrategias de implementación efectivas para apoyar a los estudiantes con excepcionalidades. Esto incluye el desarrollo de perfiles de aprendizaje

detallados para estudiantes con discapacidades, subrayando la importancia de la instrucción personalizada y la provisión de apoyo y recursos necesarios para el éxito del estudiante.

Gray et al. (2018) contribuyen a este entendimiento evaluando la conciencia y los roles de los administradores escolares en promover la inclusión social, demostrando la necesidad de que educadores y administradores estén informados y sean sensibles al potencial de división o marginación entre los estudiantes. Colectivamente, estos hallazgos apuntan a una necesidad de capacitación mejorada, recursos y una cultura de apoyo para implementar efectivamente la educación inclusiva, siendo la conciencia, apreciación y comprensión del liderazgo fundamentales para la inclusión exitosa de todos los estudiantes en entornos educativos.

El estudio descubre actitudes diversas hacia la inclusión educativa entre los directores, quienes generalmente reconocen su valor pero varían en implementación basada en creencias personales y contextos escolares. Proporciona perspectivas sobre las complejas perspectivas y estrategias que los directores emplean hacia la inclusión y destaca los desafíos de implementación. Notablemente, el apoyo de liderazgo sistémico se identifica como crucial para navegar obstáculos hacia una inclusión exitosa, como la asignación de recursos, actitudes de los interesados y desafíos logísticos (Woodcock & Woolfson, 2018). Mngo & Mngo (2018) encontraron comentarios positivos de directores sobre la integración de estudiantes con necesidades especiales en la educación general, subrayando el papel clave de los directores en fomentar la inclusividad, influenciada por varios factores demográficos. DeMatthews et al. (2021) exploran los sistemas de creencias de los directores y estrategias de inclusividad, mientras Juvonen et al. (2019) enfatizan el papel significativo del liderazgo escolar en promover experiencias inclusivas para los estudiantes. Arnaiz Sánchez et al. (2019) señalan limitaciones del entorno educativo y la necesidad de adaptabilidad, creatividad y diversidad para lograr una educación comprensiva para todos. La edad emerge como un factor importante, con directores más jóvenes mostrando actitudes más progresistas hacia la inclusión, probablemente influenciados por las reformas educativas recientes.

En detalle, nuestros hallazgos de investigación destacan que tanto la edad como el género juegan roles cruciales en dar forma a la comprensión y conocimiento de los protocolos de educación inclusiva entre los directores escolares. Los directores menores de 50 años exhiben un conocimiento más amplio en todos los aspectos de la educación inclusiva, superando a sus contrapartes mayores. Además, las directoras demuestran una comprensión superior en varias dimensiones de la educación inclusiva, incluidos marcos

legales, modelos, políticas internacionales y protocolos específicos dentro del sistema educativo griego, indicando diferencias de género claras en la comprensión y aplicación de estrategias de educación inclusiva.

Además, el estudio revela disparidades significativas en cómo los directores perciben la educación inclusiva basada en su género y edad. Los directores tienden a tener convicciones más fuertes sobre la efectividad de los protocolos, en contraste con las directoras que muestran una comprensión matizada de estas políticas y su ejecución. En términos de edad, el grupo mayor valora más la eficacia de los protocolos, mientras que la cohorte más joven se centra en enfoques pragmáticos para la inclusión, enfatizando el apoyo personalizado y estrategias para la integración.

Además, nuestros hallazgos subrayan el papel crucial del género y la edad en dar forma a las perspectivas y enfoques de los directores escolares hacia la implementación y mejora de la educación inclusiva. Los directores tienden a creer en su eficacia en roles cruciales para fomentar la inclusividad, mientras que las directoras muestran una comprensión más profunda de las innumerables necesidades y desafíos esenciales para avanzar en prácticas inclusivas. Los directores en el espectro más joven están más alineados con estrategias inclusivas modernas, demostrando un compromiso con la dotación de recursos y reconociendo los desafíos multifacéticos inherentes en la educación inclusiva. Por el contrario, los directores mayores tienden hacia un enfoque más convencional de la administración escolar.

La investigación complementaria refuerza nuestra comprensión de cómo los factores demográficos, particularmente la edad, dan forma a las actitudes hacia la educación inclusiva. Galaterou y Antoniou (2017) encontraron que los educadores más jóvenes muestran una disposición más favorable hacia la inclusión que sus contrapartes mayores. Woodcock y Woolfson (2018) sugieren que la inclusión efectiva trasciende las actitudes individuales de los educadores, extendiéndose a la cultura escolar más amplia y el nivel de apoyo del liderazgo. Saloviita (2019) y Mngo & Mngo (2018) destacan que la edad más joven y el género, así como la formación especializada en educación especial, son cruciales para fomentar una postura de apoyo hacia la inclusión. Estos estudios subrayan colectivamente la influencia de aspectos demográficos, especialmente la edad, en la mentalidad de inclusividad entre los líderes escolares, destacando la necesidad crítica de capacitación dirigida y respaldo sistémico para cultivar un ambiente educativo inclusivo.

La investigación también subraya un vínculo crítico entre la comprensión de los protocolos de educación inclusiva por parte de los directores escolares y sus actitudes y

percepciones hacia la educación inclusiva. Los directores con un profundo entendimiento de los protocolos de educación inclusiva son más conscientes de las complejidades involucradas en su aplicación y los elementos esenciales para ejecutar con éxito la educación inclusiva en Grecia. Nuestros hallazgos revelan una correlación directa entre un conocimiento mejorado y actitudes positivas hacia la implementación y el avance de la educación inclusiva. Notablemente, los directores bien informados en educación inclusiva tienen más inclinación a reconocer y apreciar el papel fundamental del director en fomentar prácticas inclusivas. Esto sugiere que mejorar la comprensión de los directores sobre los protocolos inclusivos podría impactar significativamente en la adopción efectiva de prácticas inclusivas en las escuelas.

Un análisis más profundo proporciona una visión más clara de cómo el nivel de conocimiento de los directores escolares influye en su perspectiva hacia la educación inclusiva. Se hace evidente que una comprensión unificada de los valores, beneficios, métodos de implementación y cambios sistémicos necesarios para la educación inclusiva no se mantiene universalmente entre los interesados en el sector educativo. Se destaca la importancia de la capacitación continua y completa, sugiriendo que los líderes educativos, incluidos los directores, juegan un papel integral en la aplicación de pedagogías inclusivas, siempre que estén comprometidos y bien informados sobre estrategias efectivas para todos los estudiantes. Los estudios indican que la capacitación continua mejora las capacidades de los maestros en educación inclusiva, con un interés notable en el desarrollo profesional adicional. Por lo tanto, se recomienda que las autoridades educativas proporcionen capacitación inicial sostenida y enriquecida para fortalecer la confianza de los maestros y la percepción de sus habilidades en entornos inclusivos, especialmente entre los educadores de secundaria. Análisis, como los de Yazicioglu (2021), revelan que los directores escolares generalmente mantienen una postura positiva hacia la educación inclusiva, crucial para la educación efectiva de los estudiantes con necesidades especiales y la gestión general de los procesos educativos dentro de las escuelas.

Este estudio se alinea con los objetivos iniciales, ofreciendo una comprensión integral del conocimiento y las percepciones de los directores sobre la educación inclusiva moldeada por factores demográficos. A pesar de cumplir con los objetivos, la variación en la comprensión de los directores subraya la necesidad de desarrollar políticas y programas de capacitación dirigidos. Las entrevistas con informantes clave subrayan la brecha persistente entre la política y la práctica en la educación inclusiva de Grecia, atribuida a variados niveles de conciencia y compromiso entre los directores. Esta brecha, alineada con la literatura, sugiere que una educación inclusiva exitosa requiere más que política:

capacitación integral, recursos y una cultura escolar de apoyo son esenciales. Görel & Hellmich (2022) destacan la necesidad de recursos humanos, financieros y materiales para la educación inclusiva. DeMatthews et al. (2021) abordan los desafíos que enfrentan los directores, incluidas las limitaciones de recursos y el manejo de la segregación sistémica. Hassanein et al. (2021) enfatizan la importancia de una capacitación extensa y el desarrollo de culturas de apoyo para superar barreras como la insuficiencia de recursos y la resistencia de los maestros. Mitchell & Sutherland (2020) y Woodcock & Woolfson (2018) identifican la asignación de recursos y el apoyo sistémico como pivotes para superar obstáculos de inclusión. Estas perspectivas subrayan los requisitos complejos para una educación inclusiva exitosa, llamando a una mejora en la capacitación de maestros, distribución de recursos y ambientes educativos de apoyo para mejorar la gestión escolar inclusiva.

Los factores demográficos como el género y la edad influyen significativamente en cómo los directores escolares comprenden, perciben y abordan la educación inclusiva. Las disparidades de género podrían reflejar variaciones en el acceso al desarrollo profesional, el compromiso con los problemas de inclusividad o la valoración de prácticas inclusivas. Notablemente, las directoras a menudo superan a sus homólogos masculinos en la comprensión e implementación de la educación inclusiva, posiblemente debido a niveles más altos de compromiso o mejor formación.

La edad impacta en el conocimiento de inclusividad de los directores, siendo los directores más jóvenes (de 31 a 50 años) probablemente más familiarizados con las prácticas educativas modernas, reflejando la naturaleza evolutiva de las políticas de educación inclusiva. Estos líderes más jóvenes también pueden estar más abiertos a adoptar nuevas políticas y soluciones innovadoras a los desafíos educativos.

La división generacional subraya la importancia de adaptar el desarrollo profesional a estas sutilezas demográficas. Mejorar el apoyo y la capacitación para los directores masculinos y aquellos mayores de 51 podría armonizar la comprensión y las estrategias de implementación en general. Reconocer y abordar estas diferencias demográficas permite a las instituciones educativas crear estrategias más efectivas e inclusivas, enriqueciendo toda la comunidad escolar.

Esta necesidad de educación continua y desarrollo profesional es crucial para que todos los directores escolares se mantengan al tanto de los estándares evolutivos de educación inclusiva. Organizaciones como la Agencia Europea para las Necesidades Especiales y la Educación Inclusiva resaltan la importancia de mantenerse actualizado con las últimas prácticas y marcos legales para liderar y apoyar efectivamente las iniciativas

inclusivas. En última instancia, fomentar un ambiente educativo inclusivo trasciende la política, encarnando un compromiso con la equidad y la justicia social que exige un liderazgo informado, comprometido y flexible.

La conexión entre factores demográficos y actitudes subraya el valor de la capacitación específica por edad para la educación inclusiva. La inclusión efectiva trasciende la adherencia al protocolo, encarnando una filosofía de inclusividad comprensiva. Los líderes escolares deben estar profundamente informados sobre las políticas inclusivas y ser campeones de una cultura escolar inclusiva, alineándose con la visión de Mitchell y Sutherland (2020) de que el éxito de la educación inclusiva depende de las actitudes y creencias del liderazgo. Los directores requieren capacitación más allá de la comprensión de la política para fomentar la inclusividad, asegurando un ambiente respetuoso y acogedor para cada estudiante. El liderazgo juega un papel fundamental en la creación de este ambiente, enfrentando desafíos con enfoques diversos hacia la inclusividad. A pesar de numerosos obstáculos, la motivación de los mentores educativos y el compromiso con el fomento de una cultura escolar co-creativa y la mejora de la calidad de la enseñanza son cruciales. El papel del liderazgo en la promoción de una cultura inclusiva es vital, como destacan DeMatthews et al. (2020), indicando la necesidad de que los directores sean tanto bien informados como defensores activos de la inclusividad. Aunque la educación secundaria griega ha avanzado hacia la inclusividad, siguen existiendo brechas significativas entre la política y la práctica, subrayando la necesidad de esfuerzos continuos para cerrar esta división.

Los directores operan dentro de una sociedad donde la exclusión es común, participando en sistemas educativos que perpetúan esta exclusión (Slee, 2018; Ainscow, 2020). Esta dinámica subraya la expectativa injusta de que las escuelas soporten la carga de avanzar la educación inclusiva. A pesar de estos desafíos, las entidades burocráticas frecuentemente intentan trasladar la culpa a los líderes escolares cuando las iniciativas inclusivas fallan, sugiriendo la necesidad de una reevaluación crítica de estas medidas de responsabilidad. Aunque los directores son integrales para fomentar ambientes escolares inclusivos que atiendan las necesidades de todos los estudiantes, es irreal esperar que puedan rectificar de forma independiente las disparidades sociales más amplias.

Las futuras políticas no solo deberían mejorar el conocimiento y la comprensión a través de capacitación enfocada y apoyo de recursos, sino también esfuerzos en cultivar una cultura que genuinamente abrace la diversidad y la inclusión.

Limitaciones y Prospectivas

Esta investigación encontró ciertas limitaciones, notablemente en su enfoque en características demográficas. Centrándose principalmente en género y edad, pasó por alto factores adicionales significativos como el background educativo, años de experiencia en educación y experiencias directas con educación inclusiva. El alcance del estudio también estuvo geográfica y culturalmente confinado a Grecia, limitando la aplicabilidad de sus hallazgos en diferentes contextos.

Estas limitaciones sugieren nuevas direcciones para futuras investigaciones. Estudios comparativos a través de varios países o regiones podrían explorar cómo las diferencias culturales y sistémicas impactan en las políticas de educación inclusiva. Además, examinar los efectos a largo plazo de las políticas de educación inclusiva en los resultados de los estudiantes en contextos diversos y multiculturales podría ofrecer percepciones sobre la efectividad y áreas para el mejoramiento de las prácticas actuales. Recoger perspectivas de estudiantes y profesores en ambientes inclusivos proporcionaría una comprensión más rica de las implicaciones prácticas de estas políticas.

En resumen, aunque Grecia ha avanzado hacia la educación inclusiva, queda un trabajo significativo en cerrar la brecha entre política e implementación. Esto se puede lograr a través del apoyo dirigido, capacitación, recursos y fomentando una cultura inclusiva.

APPENDIX I

Pilot Questionnaire

A. Demographic data

1. Sex   ☐ Male   ☐ Female

2. Age   _____

3. Type of school Unit
    1. Special education school
    2. Typical school with Integration Classes
    3. Centers of Educational and Counseling Support

4. Years of educational service
    1. 1-5 years
    2. 6-10 years
    3. 11-20 years
    4. More than 20 years

5. Years as director
    1. 1-5 years
    2. 6-10 years
    3. 11-20 years
    4. More than 20 years

6. Area of the school unit
    1. City (> 10.000 population)
    2. Town (10.000 – 3.000 population)
    3. Village (< 3.000 population)

7. Apart from your basic university degree, what other academic education or training do you have on Special Education?
    1. Second university degree
    2. Master
    3. PhD
    4. Seminars of more than 300 hours
    5. Seminars of less than 300 hours
    6. Other (please indicate) ……………

8. Do you have any experience in teaching students with disability and/or special educational needs?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

9. (If yes in previous question) How many years of experience do you have in teaching students with disability and/or special educational needs?
    1. 1-5 years
    2. 6-10 years
    3. 11-20 years

4. More than 20 years ☐

B. Knowledge of the legal framework concerning inclusive and special education in Greece.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. In an integration class, there is always a physicist.			
2. Inclusive education is a national (Greek) educational policy.			
3. The full inclusion model is the model of inclusive education that is applied in the Greek educational system.			
4. Special education school units have the same curricula as the "general" education schools.			
5. For inclusion the system is expected to change, not the child.			
6. The first legislation on Special Education in Greece was enacted in the 1990s.			
7. Full inclusion model proposes the equal participation of all pupils in the general school setting without regard to their particular characteristics and needs.			
8. The definition "inclusive education" refers to the education of all children together, in the same school environment, regardless of physical or mental status.			
9. The inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classroom has a negative impact on the academic performance of other students.			
10. The 2006 UN Convention is the first international legislation on the treatment of people with disabilities.			
11. According to the 1978 Warnock Report, children are categorized according to their deficiency or intelligence.			
12. The educational system has failed to involve all students virtually in the educational and social activities of school life.			
13. The diagnostic procedure for the assessment of special educational needs is performed by an expert panel that consists obligatory ofSocial workers.			
14. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and digital educational material in the learning process is a central issue of co-education policy in Greece.			
15. The Salamanca Declaration of 1994 was the starting point to give impetus to the co-education approach.			

C. Perceptions about Special Education, inclusion and relative protocols

1. To what extent do you believe that the following sentences are valid?

The inclusive education protocols of Greece:	Totally disagree	Disagree	Not agree or disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
1. Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education.					
2. Help students integrate into typical classes.					
3. Preserve the uniformity of general education.					
4. Create borders among students with and without Special Educational Needs					
5. Are the most appropriate and effective way of addressing the needs of a minority of students					

	Very little	Little	Average	Much	Very much
6. Lead to the marginalization and limitation of subsequent opportunities in the lives of the students supported by them					

2. To what extent do you believe that the following sentences are valid?

Inclusive education	Very little	Little	Average	Much	Very much
1. Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools					
2. It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context.					
3. Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, without engaging in common activities.					
4. Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education.					
5. Prevents the academic progress of students of formal development.					
6. Does not favor the academic success of all students with special educational needs					
7. Complicates the work of the typical class teacher.					
8. Provides opportunities for equal participation in a common learning context.					
9. It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator.					

D. The role of the director for the implementation and application of inclusive education protocols

1. To what extent are the following conditions considered to play a role in strengthening and promoting inclusive education?

	Very little	Little	Average	Much	Very much
1. Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are adequately covered					
2. Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs					
3. Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them					
4. Implementation of training initiatives, programs and seminars for inclusive education					

2. With which ways do you support the students with special educational needs and/or disability? (You may choose more than one option)

1. Cooperation and communication with the parents of the students   ☐
2. Cooperation and communication with specialists and school counselors   ☐
3. Extensive cooperation and communication with the special educator of each student   ☐
4. Attempts to facilitate the acceptance of the students from his/her classmates   ☐
5. Extensive cooperation with other school units and the Centers of Educational and   ☐

Counseling Support

6. Constant evaluation of each student's case and proposal of a differentiated curriculum ☐
or change of school environment

3. What needs, problems or situations do you think you will be asked to deal with as a School director to enhance inclusive education?

	Very little	Little	Average	Much	Very much
1. Need for staffing with specialized staff					
2. Need for further education and training					
3. Need to change the curriculum					
4. Reactions from parents					
5. Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit					
6. Insufficiency of school textbooks					
7. Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs					
8. Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols					
9. Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another					
10. Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs					
11. Other (please mention)					

APPENDIX II

Final Questionnaire

A. Demographic data

1. Sex ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Age _____

3. Type of school Unit
    1. Special education school ☐
    2. Typical school with Integration Classes ☐
    3. Centers of Educational and Counseling Support ☐

4. Years of educational service
    1. 1-5 years ☐
    2. 6-10 years ☐
    3. 11-20 years ☐
    4. More than 20 years ☐

5. Years as director
    1. 1-5 years ☐
    2. 6-10 years ☐
    3. 11-20 years ☐
    4. More than 20 years ☐

6. Area of the school unit
    1. City (> 10.000 population) ☐
    2. Town (10.000 – 3.000 population) ☐
    3. Village (< 3.000 population) ☐

7. Apart from your basic university degree, what other academic education or training do you have on Special Education?
    1. Second university degree ☐
    2. Master ☐
    3. PhD ☐
    4. Seminars of more than 300 hours ☐
    5. Seminars of less than 300 hours ☐
    6. Other (please indicate) …………… ☐

8. Do you have any experience in teaching students with disability and/or special educational needs? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. (If yes in previous question) How many years of experience do you have in teaching students with disability and/or special educational needs?
    1. 1-5 years ☐
    2. 6-10 years ☐
    3. 11-20 years ☐
    4. More than 20 years ☐

B. Knowledge of the legal framework concerning inclusive and special education in Greece.

	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. The inclusive education model is based on the principles of the democratic school.			
2. In an integration class, there is always a physicist.			
3. Inclusive education is a national (Greek) educational policy.			
4. Typically developing pupils benefit from interaction and coexistence with children with disabilities or special educational needs.			
5. The term "integration" and the term "inclusion" that Greece has adopted as principles of common education reflect the same practices.			
6. (Successful) Education in separate special structures precludes the successful operation of co-educational classes.			
7. The full inclusion model is the model of inclusive education that is applied in the Greek educational system.			
8. Special education school units have the same curricula as the "general" education schools.			
9. The environment and culture of the school setting can have a direct impact on the acceptance of pupils with special needs.			
10. For inclusion the system is expected to change, not the child.			
11. Co-education programs can be implemented with co-located non-co-located units of general education.			
12. The first legislation on Special Education in Greece was enacted in the 1990s.			
13. Full inclusion model proposes the equal participation of all pupils in the general school setting without regard to their particular characteristics and needs.			
14. The definition "inclusive education" refers to the education of all children together, in the same school environment, regardless of physical or mental status.			
15. The investigation and identification of the special educational needs of the students within the Greek educational system takes place in every school.			
16. The inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classroom has a negative impact on the academic performance of other students.			
17. The 2006 UN Convention is the first international legislation on the treatment of people with disabilities.			
18. The aim of co-education programs in Greece is to raise awareness of human rights issues among students in general education schools.			
19. According to the 1978 Warnock Report, children are categorized according to their deficiency or intelligence.			
20. The educational system has failed to involve all students virtually in the educational and social activities of school life.			
21. According to the model of participation in the same class, special schools have no reason to exist except support classes.			
22. The diagnostic procedure for the assessment of special educational needs is performed by an expert panel that consists obligatory ofSocial workers.			
23. The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and digital educational material in the learning process is a central issue of co-education policy in Greece.			
24. The Salamanca Declaration of 1994 was the starting point to give impetus to the co-education approach.			
25. The UN International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006 has been ratified by law in Greece.			

C. Perceptions about Special Education, inclusion and relative protocols

1. To what extent do you believe that the following sentences are valid?

The inclusive education protocols of Greece:	Totally disagree	Disagree	Not agree or disagree	Agree	Totally Agree
1. Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education.					
2. Help students integrate into typical classes.					
3. Preserve the uniformity of general education.					
4. Building bridges between students with and without Special Educational Needs.					
5. Are the most appropriate and effective way of addressing the needs of a minority of students.					
6. Lead to the integration and expansion of subsequent opportunities in the lives of the students supported by them.					

2. To what extent do you believe that the following sentences are valid?

Inclusive education:	Very little	Little	Average	Much	Very much
1. Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools.					
2. It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context.					
3. Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, while at the same time engaging in common activities.					
4. Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education.					
5. Promotes the academic progress of students of formal development.					
6. Favors the academic success of all students with special educational needs.					
7. Simplifies the work of the typical class teacher.					
8. Provides opportunities for equal participation in a common learning context.					
9. It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator.					

D. The role of the director for the implementation and application of inclusive education protocols

1. To what extent are the following conditions considered to play a role in strengthening and promoting inclusive education?

	Very little	Little	Average	Much	Very much

		Very little	Little	Average	Much	Very much
1.	Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are adequately covered.					
2.	Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs.					
3.	Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them.					
4.	Implementation of training initiatives, programs and seminars for inclusive education.					

2. With which ways do you support the students with special educational needs and/or disability? (You may choose more than one option)

1. Cooperation and communication with the parents of the students ☐

2. Cooperation and communication with specialists and school counselors ☐

3. Extensive cooperation and communication with the special educator of each student ☐

4. Attempts to facilitate the acceptance of the students from his/her classmates ☐

5. Extensive cooperation with other school units and the Centers of Educational and Counseling Support ☐

6. Constant evaluation of each student's case and proposal of a differentiated curriculum ☐
or change of school environment

3. What needs, problems or situations do you think you will be asked to deal with as a School director to enhance inclusive education?

		Very little	Little	Average	Much	Very much
1.	Need for staffing with specialized staff.					
2.	Need for further education and training.					
3.	Need to change the curriculum.					
4.	Reactions from parents.					
5.	Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit.					
6.	Insufficiency of school textbooks.					
7.	Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs.					
8.	Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols.					
9.	Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another.					
10.	Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs.					
11.	Lack of time for consulting with other teachers and specialists.					
12.	Other (please mention):					

APPENDIX III

Measurement Adjustment Tests

Prior to data analysis, it has been verified that the variables are normally distributed. The values provided by the skewness coefficients (<3.00) and kurtosis (<8.00) indicate univariate normality of the data obtained (Thode, 2002) in the various elements that make up the questionnaire dimensions. Furthermore, the goodness of fit of the statistical model underlying the observations made and those considered desirable has been established, assuming a discrete character in the scalar values using the chi-squared test (n.s.=.05) (Rao and Scott, 1981). The contrast has been significant in all components of each dimension, indicating that the collected data are distributed along a normalized continuum of observations and can be generalized to the reference population (see Annex 3).

Table 36

Adjustment of the measurements obtained in the scalar elements

	Asymmetry		Kurtosis		Goodness of fit	
	Coef.	Std. Error	Coef.	Std. Error	χ^2	p
P1. Serve the path to the strengthening of inclusive education	-0.900	0.119	0.246	0.238	289.071	0.000
P2. Help students integrate into typical classes	-1.048	0.119	0.155	0.238	357.071	0.000
P3. Preserve the uniformity of general education	-0.725	0.119	0.252	0.238	242.452	0.000
P4. Building bridges between students with and without Special Educational Needs	-0.351	0.119	-0.733	0.238	106.381	0.000
P5. Are the most appropriate and effective way of addressing the needs of a minority of students	-0.605	0.119	-0.301	0.238	183.333	0.000
P6. Lead to the integration and expansion of subsequent opportunities in the lives of the students supported by them	-0.407	0.119	-0.456	0.238	169.595	0.000
P7. Has to do with the integration of all students in typical schools	0.030	0.119	-0.279	0.238	267.448	0.000
P8. It refers to the provision of support to students with special educational needs, in order to meet the requirements of the school context	-0.345	0.119	4.043	0.238	697.314	0.000
P9. Argues that each student should follow his/her own curriculum, while at the same time engaging in common activities	0.761	0.119	-0.002	0.238	191.143	0.000
P10. Ensures the presence, participation and progress of all students in education	0.187	0.119	1.042	0.238	339.557	0.000
P11. Promotes the academic progress of students of formal development	0.346	0.119	-0.928	0.238	131.143	0.000
P12. Favors the academic success of all students with special educational needs	0.020	0.119	2.260	0.238	628.057	0.000
P13. Simplifies the work of the typical class teacher	0.739	0.119	0.225	0.238	177.190	0.000
P14. Provides opportunities for equal participation in a common learning context	0.057	0.119	-0.471	0.238	230.133	0.000
P15. It presupposes the smooth cooperation of a teacher and a special educator	-0.646	0.119	-0.190	0.238	189.352	0.000

	Asymmetry		Kurtosis		Goodness of fit	
	Coef.	**Std. Error**	**Coef.**	**Std. Error**	**χ^2**	**p**
R1. Care for the supply of appropriate materials and equipment, so that the needs of students with special educational needs are adequately covered	0.788	0.119	-0.447	0.238	242.405	0.000
R2. Providing the necessary facilities for the teaching of children with special educational needs	0.631	0.119	-0.703	0.238	180.405	0.000
R3. Supporting teachers and developing cooperation with them	-0.743	0.119	-0.223	0.238	191.448	0.000
R4. Implementation of training initiatives, programs and seminars for inclusive education	-0.277	0.119	1.702	0.238	503.200	0.000
R6. Need for staffing with specialized staff	-0.255	0.119	2.273	0.238	562.914	0.000
R7. Need for further education and training	-0.573	0.119	0.863	0.238	352.933	0.000
R8. Need to change the curriculum	0.624	0.119	-0.742	0.238	178.786	0.000
R9. Reactions from parents	0.530	0.119	-0.897	0.238	78.786	0.000
R10. Lack of necessary infrastructure and equipment in the school unit	0.675	0.119	-0.626	0.238	126.548	0.000
R11. Insufficiency of school textbooks	0.752	0.119	-0.486	0.238	230.452	0.000
R12. Difficulties in students of formal education in adapting with their classmates with special educational needs	0.515	0.119	-0.856	0.238	103.071	0.000
R13. Inadequacy of teachers in applying inclusive education protocols	-0.462	0.119	1.319	0.238	446.533	0.000
R14. Refusal of teachers to cooperate with one another	-1.002	0.119	0.120	0.238	277.690	0.000
R15. Targeting and marginalization of the students with disability and/or special educational needs	0.434	0.119	-0.621	0.238	116.881	0.000
R16. Lack of time for consulting with other teachers and specialists	-0.729	0.119	-0.164	0.238	206.133	0.000