

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56663/rop.v14i1.94>

The indirect effect of spiritual well-being on the relationship between interaction with persons with disabilities and negative attitudes in a Romanian sample

Ioana-Dumitrița Grasu¹
Tudor-Daniel Huțul²
Adina Karner-Huțuleac³

Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the potential indirect effect of spiritual well-being on the relationship between interaction with persons with disabilities and negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. The research was conducted on a sample of 352 participants from Romania, aged between 18 and 70 years ($M = 27.51$, $SD = 8.90$). Participants completed psychological instruments assessing the main constructs of interest, along with a series of socio-demographic measures. The findings indicated significant associations between the key variables and further revealed that spiritual well-being had a significant indirect effect on the relationship between interaction with individuals with disabilities and negative attitudes toward them. The results are discussed in relation to existing theoretical frameworks, and both theoretical and practical implications are outlined.

Keywords: spiritual well-being; attitudes, disabilities, interaction with persons with disabilities, Romania

Introduction

An attitude is a general and relatively stable evaluation of an object, person, or situation, through which an individual appraises them positively or negatively, thereby providing a synthesis of previous experiences, beliefs, or behaviors related to the evaluated aspect (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Rosenberg and his colleagues (1960) proposed a tridimensional model of attitudes, emphasizing affective, cognitive, and behavioral components. The affective component reflects positive or negative feelings toward an object or situation, the cognitive component refers to beliefs, expectations, and knowledge that shape perception, and the behavioral component is expressed through concrete reactions and actions (Rosenberg et al., 1960). In the case of disability, attitudes can be divided into positive—acceptance, tolerance, and understanding—or negative—indifference, rejection, and irritability (Freer, 2023). These components interact to shape how individuals perceive and respond to disability in everyday life, reflecting both personal experiences and broader cultural narratives.

¹ MA student, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania, ioanadumitrita01@gmail.com; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-4836-2042>;

² PhD student, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania, tudordanielhutulpsih@gmail.com; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9670-080X>;

³ Assoc. Prof. PhD, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iași, Romania, adina.karner@uaic.ro; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4402-7649>.

Corresponding Author:

Email: tudordanielhutulpsih@gmail.com

Negative attitudes and stereotypes toward people with disabilities have existed since Ancient Greece and Rome, when individuals with disabilities were often believed to be possessed or punished by the gods for their ancestors' sins (Stamm, 2004). Although historical, these beliefs have left a legacy of negative connotations that still persists today, often influencing young people and shaping social behaviors in subtle but powerful ways (Stamm, 2004). In contemporary society, attitudes toward individuals with disabilities are generally categorized into two broad orientations: (I) positive—characterized by acceptance, tolerance, and understanding, and (II) negative—marked by indifference, rejection, and irritability (Freer, 2023). This duality highlights how societal perceptions are still divided, despite legal and social efforts aimed at promoting inclusion. It should not be overlooked that we live in a world where the social inclusion of people with disabilities often faces negative or ambivalent attitudes. Identifying the personal and situational factors that underlie these perceptions is essential for understanding how they are formed and maintained (Himmelberger et al., 2023). One of the most influential factors in shaping attitudes is the lack of frequent contact with people with disabilities. Studies have consistently shown that individuals who have more opportunities for interaction tend to express more accepting and empathetic attitudes, often replacing negative stereotypes with feelings of compassion and familiarity (Himmelberger et al., 2023; Phillips et al., 2019). This pattern aligns with contact theory, which suggests that interpersonal interaction can reduce prejudice and foster positive attitudes.

Attitudes toward persons with disabilities have recently become a major topic of interest, both socially and psychologically, as inclusion is increasingly recognized as a key element of equity and quality of life (Gherguț, 2005, 2013). Despite institutional and legal efforts, including the involvement of state structures, NGOs, and various advocacy groups, cultural and attitudinal barriers toward persons with disabilities continue to persist in Romania. These barriers are often subtle and deeply ingrained, shaping not only public discourse but also everyday interactions and opportunities for social participation. Research across different contexts has consistently shown that frequent contact with persons with disabilities tends to be associated with more positive attitudes (Bellanca & Pote, 2013; De Laat et al., 2013; Hellmich & Löper, 2018; Huțul et al., 2022; Karner-Huțuleac & Huțul, 2023; Phillips et al., 2019; Shalev et al., 2016; Sheridan & Scior, 2013). For example, De Laat (2013) emphasized that the more contact an individual has with a person with a disability, the more positive their attitudes tend to be. Similarly, Al-Kandari (2015) highlighted the importance of both long- and short-term encounters in shaping perceptions. At the same time, other studies point out that not all forms of contact are beneficial, as negative or superficial interactions can sometimes reinforce prejudices rather than reduce them (Alnahdi, 2019; Coles & Scior, 2012; Georgiadi et al., 2012). This ambivalence underlines the complexity of the relationship between contact and attitudes.

According to Nowicki (2006) and Yazbeck et al. (2004), both the type of disability and the level of familiarity with individuals with disabilities significantly influence societal attitudes. These findings emphasize that attitudes are not static; they depend on personal experiences, cultural context, and the quality of interpersonal interactions. Therefore, investigating negative attitudes toward persons with disabilities is essential for designing effective educational, social, and psychotherapeutic interventions that promote inclusion and reduce barriers in society.

On another note, interaction refers to any process that involves mutual stimulation between two or more individuals (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Several studies have highlighted that

the quality, frequency, and context of these interactions are key in determining whether attitudes toward disability will be positive or negative (Barr & Bracchitta, 2012).

The number of students with disabilities included in mainstream schools began to increase once the law aimed at improving the educational process for individuals with disabilities and special needs was adopted in 2004 (Laird, 2016). In Romania, according to the Constitution, all children have the right to education regardless of disability or learning difficulties, with inclusion being determined by the School Orientation issued by the County Centers for Educational Resources and Assistance (CJRAE), in accordance with the Methodology of Order No. 6552/2011 (*ORDIN ADMINISTRATIE PUBLICA 6552/2011*). Although the educational system has thereby created opportunities for the development of positive attitudes toward disability through various group activities with students, it has also led to an increase in negative attitudes and behaviors among typically developing children toward their peers with disabilities, such as social isolation and negative labeling within the classroom (Laird, 2016). However, contact does not operate in isolation. Individual psychological factors can shape how people interpret these interactions. One such factor is spiritual well-being, which may provide a framework for acceptance, empathy, and meaning-making.

Spiritual well-being as a potential mediator

Spirituality can be viewed as a coping mechanism in the face of challenges, and within the context of disability, it reflects the need for acceptance and adaptation by both individuals and society in order to achieve social integration (Treloar, 2002). The same author emphasizes the importance of community involvement, including places of worship, in promoting understanding of disability and offering examples of good practice and acceptance.

A study conducted by Hodge and Reynolds (2019) highlights that persons with different types of disabilities can develop distinct spiritual profiles, suggesting that spirituality may serve as a coping mechanism that can be integrated into therapy to enhance support. Similarly, Maggi (2012) argued that spirituality plays an important role in individuals' emotional balance and the development of a sense of acceptance.

Recent findings also show that spirituality functions as a resource for caregivers of persons with disabilities, who report that it reduces fatigue, lowers perceived demands, and fosters a more positive outlook on life (Xavier & Esperandio, 2023). Along the same lines, McWhirter and McIntyre (2021) emphasized that religion and spirituality are associated with lower levels of stress, pointing to their role as emotional coping strategies in facing daily challenges. The authors recommend incorporating spiritual beliefs into therapeutic processes to support both individuals with disabilities and those around them.

Overall, the literature highlights the interaction between spirituality and psychological well-being, underlining its role in reducing psychological distress, anxiety, and social segregation, while fostering social cohesion and cooperation (Aydoğdu, 2019).

Taken together, these findings suggest that spiritual well-being contributes to emotional balance, social cohesion, and more positive relational dynamics. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that higher levels of spiritual well-being may facilitate the development of more accepting perspectives following interactions with persons with disabilities, thereby reducing negative attitudes. In this context, spiritual well-being may function as a mediator in the relationship between interaction with persons with disabilities and negative attitudes toward them.

The present study

These findings highlight the complexity of attitudes toward persons with disabilities and underscore the importance of further research. Building on this literature, the present study aims to investigate the role of spiritual well-being as a potential mediator in the relationship between interaction with persons with disabilities and negative attitudes toward them, within the Romanian context.

The novelty of this research lies in two main aspects. First, while previous studies have documented the role of contact and familiarity in shaping attitudes, few have examined spiritual well-being as a psychological mechanism that may explain why some interactions foster acceptance whereas others do not. Second, this study extends the existing literature to Romania, where cultural and attitudinal barriers toward disability remain persistent despite efforts toward inclusion.

By testing these relationships, we seek to achieve a better understanding of the mechanisms that support or hinder the development of positive attitudes. Ultimately, these insights may inform the design of educational, social, and psychotherapeutic interventions that promote social inclusion and reduce barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

Hypotheses

H1. There are significant associations between spiritual well-being, interaction with persons with disabilities, and negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities.

H2. There is an indirect effect of spiritual well-being on the relationship between interaction with persons with disabilities and negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities.

Method

Participants and procedure

Data was collected between May 15 and May 25, 2025. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were not compensated in any way for their involvement.

The current study included 352 participants (22.4% male and 77.4% female) from Romania, aged between 18 and 70 years ($M = 27.51$; $SD = 8.90$). Regarding relationship status, 150 participants (42.6%) were in a relationship, 101 (28.7%) were single, 85 (24.1%) were married, 11 (3.1%) preferred not to disclose, 3 (0.9%) were divorced, and 2 (0.6%) were widowed. Concerning place of residence, 183 participants (52%) were from rural areas, while 169 (48%) were from urban areas. The majority of respondents, 204 (58%), reported having a university degree. Regarding the number of children, 29 participants (8.2%) had one child, 34 (9.7%) had two children, 6 (1.7%) had three children, and 283 participants reported having no children. The participants' characteristics are detailed in Table 1.

The questionnaire used in this study was distributed via the online platform Google Forms. A convenience sampling strategy was employed, complemented by a snowball approach, as the link was disseminated on social media and participants could further share it with others. To ensure a balanced representation of the Romanian population, the questionnaire was distributed on social media within online groups, while efforts were made to avoid targeting specific communities, such as student groups, as previously recommended in the literature (Huțul & Karner-Huțuleac, 2024a, 2024b).

Before completing the questionnaire, participants were informed about the informed consent process. They were explicitly told that participation was voluntary, that they could discontinue completion at any time without consequences, and that they could request additional information. To this end, the principal investigator’s email address was provided. The average time for completing the questionnaire was approximately 10–15 minutes.

Eligibility criteria for participation included a minimum age of 18 years. The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards established by the American Psychological Association (APA). Furthermore, the research adhered to the Declaration of Helsinki (1995), as revised in Edinburgh in 2000. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the faculty with which the authors are affiliated.

Table 1. The characteristics of the participants

		N	%
Sex	Female	272	77.5
	Male	79	22.5
	Non-binary	0	0
Residence	Rural	183	52
	Urban	169	48
Education level	Pre-university education	50	14.2
	In-progress university studies	98	27.8
	Postgraduate studies	204	58
Marital status	Married	85	24.2
	Divorced (not currently in a relationship)	3	0.9
	Single (never married, not in a relationship)	111	31.7
	In a relationship (not married)	150	42.6
	Widowed (not currently in a relationship)	2	0.6

Measures

The tools were translated from English into Romanian using the Backward method. Recommendations for translation and adaptation of the scales were made according to protocol (Maneesriwongul & Dixon, 2004; Sousa & Rojjanasrirat, 2011).

The instruments used in this study were translated from English into Romanian using the backward translation method. The translation and adaptation process of the scales was carried out in accordance with recommendations from the specialized literature. The use of backward translation ensured that the conceptual meaning of the original items was faithfully preserved. This translation method has also been previously used in studies involving the Romanian population (Ciobanu et al., 2025; Huțul et al., 2025; Maftai et al., 2023).

Interaction with disabled persons. To assess this construct, the Interaction with Disabled Persons Scale (IDP; Gething & Wheeler, 1992) was utilized. This instrument comprises 20 items (e.g., “*I feel overwhelmed with discomfort about my lack of disability*”), with respondents indicating their agreement on a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The scale has been previously employed in research involving Romanian populations (Huțul et al.,

2022). In the present study, the scale demonstrated good internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha of $\alpha = .86$.

Spiritual well-being scale. To measure this concept, the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWBS; Paloutzian & Ellison, 1982) was used. The scale consists of 20 items (e.g., “*I feel a sense of well-being about the direction my life is headed in*”). Responses were recorded on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). This scale has previously demonstrated sound psychometric properties in studies involving the Romanian population (Rusu et al., 2015). In the present study, the scale showed good internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha of $\alpha = .86$.

Negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. To measure negative attitudes, the Attitudes to Disability Scale (ADS; Power & Green, 2010) was used. The instrument consists of 16 items (e.g., “*People with a disability have less to look forward to than others*”), rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). This instrument has previously been used with the Romanian population (Maftei & Ghergut, 2023), demonstrating adequate psychometric properties. In the present study, the scale showed good internal consistency, with a Cronbach’s alpha of $\alpha = .70$.

Socio-demographic data. Participants provided their sex, age, place of residence, relationship status, level of education, and whether or not they had children.

Overview of the statistical analysis

First, we assessed the normality of the data distribution using the Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients. Subsequently, we examined the associations among the study variables through Pearson’s correlation. Finally, we tested the potential indirect effect of spiritual well-being on the relationship between interaction with persons with disabilities and negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities, using PROCESS macro in SPSS 26 (George & Mallery, 2019) – Model 4 (Hayes, 2017). The statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software, Version 26 (George & Mallery, 2019).

Results

Preliminary data analyses

We assessed the normality of the data distribution through the Skewness and Kurtosis coefficients. All the values were within the 2/-2 limits suggested by George & Mallery (2010). The values are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics and the association between research variables

Variables	M	SD	Skewness (SE)	Kurtosis (SE)	1	2	3
Interaction with disabled persons	11.94	5.69	.76 (.13)	.18 (.26)	-		
Spiritual well-being	23.39	8.72	.49 (.13)	-.42 (.26)	.11*	-	
Negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities	70.60	11.48	-.39 (.13)	.53 (.26)	-.28**	-.19**	-

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

Association between variables

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis suggest that there are significant negative associations between negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities and both interaction with persons with disabilities and spiritual well-being. Moreover, a significant positive association was found between interaction with persons with disabilities and spiritual well-being. The Pearson correlation coefficients are presented in Table 2.

Testing the indirect effect

We used the PROCESS macro in SPSS 26 – Model 4 (Hayes, 2017) to investigate the potential indirect effect of spiritual well being on the relationship between interaction with disabled persons and negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities (see Figure 1). The results suggest that the total effect of interaction with disabled persons on negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities was significant, $b = -.57$; $SE = .10$; $p < .001$; 95% CI [-.77; -.36]. The direct effect was significant, $b = -.56$; $SE = .10$; $p < .001$; 95% CI [-.73; -.33]. Moreover, spiritual well being had a significant indirect effect on the relationship between interaction with disabled persons and negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities, $b = -.03$; $SE = .02$; 95% CI [-.08; -.002].

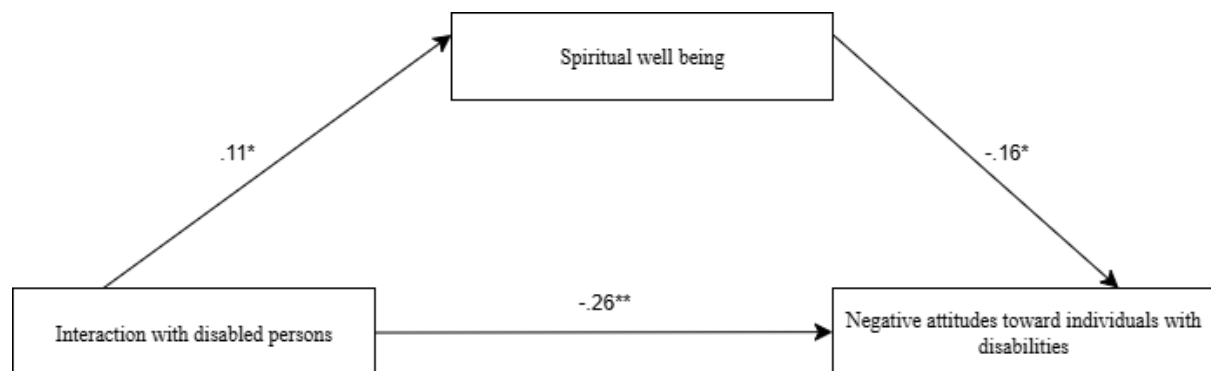


Figure 1. The indirect effect of spiritual well-being on the relationship between interaction with persons with disabilities and negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$; The reported coefficients represent standardized coefficients

Findings and discussion

The present study identified several important findings. First, our results suggest that there are significant negative associations between negative attitudes toward individuals with disabilities and both interaction with persons with disabilities and spiritual well-being. This result aligns with a substantial body of literature (Freer, 2023; Himmelberger et al., 2023; Högberg et al., 2012; Nowicki, 2006; Yazbeck et al., 2004), which has shown that the attitudes individuals develop toward persons with disabilities are shaped by the level of familiarity they have with them and the quality of previous contact. Moreover, it is important to highlight that Allport's theory (1954) underlines that interpersonal interactions with members of an outgroup can reduce prejudice, preconceived ideas, and stereotypical beliefs, ultimately fostering more positive evaluations. In addition to these theoretical foundations, several empirical studies have demonstrated that individuals who report higher levels of interaction with persons with disabilities tend to show greater acceptance and, consequently, more positive attitudes toward this group (Bellanca & Pote,

2013; De Laat et al., 2013; Hellmich & Löper, 2018; Phillips et al., 2019; Shalev et al., 2016; Sheridan & Scior, 2013). At the same time, our findings are consistent with previous evidence suggesting that past experiences of discomfort in interactions with individuals with disabilities can predict more negative attitudes and lower support for their social inclusion (Brandes & Crowson, 2009). In this line, the present results reinforce existing interpretations in literature, indicating that both previous contact and interaction, as well as spiritual well-being, may act as protective factors against the development of negative attitudes.

Moreover, the results revealed a significant positive association between interaction with persons with disabilities and spiritual well-being. This finding observed among our participants may suggest that interpersonal contact with individuals with disabilities not only has the potential to reduce prejudice and stereotypes but may also be associated with personal psychological resources such as spiritual well-being. In this sense, previous research has shown that spirituality and religion can serve as emotional coping mechanisms, helping individuals regulate their own levels of stress and cultivate empathy in challenging social contexts, such as interactions with persons with disabilities (McWhirter & McIntyre, 2021). Furthermore, spirituality has been linked in the literature to intrinsic emotional balance and increased acceptance (Maggi et al., 2012), as well as to a reduction in psychological distress (Aydoğdu, 2019). Taken together, these findings support the idea that interpersonal interactions with persons with disabilities can stimulate reflection, empathy, and even meaning-making, thereby strengthening spiritual well-being.

Furthermore, the findings indicated that spiritual well-being had a significant indirect effect on the relationship between interaction with individuals with disabilities and negative attitudes toward them. This result suggests that spiritual well-being may serve as a psychological resource that amplifies the impact of interpersonal contact by fostering empathy, acceptance, and meaning-making. Previous studies have emphasized its role in promoting emotional balance, reducing stress, and facilitating social cohesion and cooperation (Aydoğdu, 2019; Maggi et al., 2012; McWhirter & McIntyre, 2021). By integrating these perspectives with the current findings, it becomes evident that spiritual well-being may buffer negative responses to previous interactions with persons with disabilities and transform these experiences into opportunities for attitudinal change. This finding also expands the existing literature by introducing spiritual well-being as a mediating factor in a Romanian context, where cultural and attitudinal barriers toward disability remain deeply rooted despite formal inclusion efforts.

Overall, these findings underscore the complex interplay between interpersonal contact, spiritual well-being, and attitudinal change. By revealing the mediating role of spirituality, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how social interactions can foster more inclusive perspectives. These insights may inform the design of educational, social, and psychotherapeutic programs aimed at promoting inclusion and reducing stigma toward persons with disabilities.

In conclusion, the current study provides empirical support for the theoretical assumption that interpersonal contact and spiritual well-being are interrelated and jointly contribute to shaping attitudes toward individuals with disabilities.

Limitations and future directions

Despite the strengths and positive aspects of the present study, several important limitations should be acknowledged. First, we must address the gender imbalance in our sample, as the number of female participants was considerably higher than that of male participants. Future research should make efforts to achieve a more balanced gender ratio, which could provide a more nuanced and

generalizable understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to infer causality and reduces the generalizability of the results. Future studies may benefit from adopting longitudinal research designs to examine how these relationships evolve over time. Third, the measurement tools used in this research were based on self-report instruments, which are inherently vulnerable to biases such as social desirability and subjective interpretation. Subsequent research could incorporate complementary methods, such as behavioral observations or experimental designs, to gain a deeper and more objective understanding of the processes involved.

Additionally, an important future research direction could involve statistical analyses that account for participants' religious affiliation. In our sample, the majority of participants identified as Christian Orthodox, which may have influenced the results, particularly given the central role of spiritual well-being in this study. Exploring potential differences across religious groups could provide valuable insights into how spiritual beliefs shape attitudes toward individuals with disabilities.

Conclusion

Theoretical and practical implications

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of the present study may contribute to extending the existing literature on attitudes toward individuals with disabilities and represent an expansion of current theoretical frameworks in this field. Examining spiritual well-being within this context may serve as an important starting point for future research and the development of more comprehensive theoretical models that address the psychological mechanisms underlying attitudinal change.

From a practical perspective, the present findings may be applied in psychotherapeutic and clinical practice by psychologists, clinicians, and other mental health professionals who work with individuals facing challenges related to disability and inclusion. Moreover, these insights may inform the development and refinement of social public policies aimed at promoting social inclusion and reducing stigma toward persons with disabilities.

Educational implications

The findings of this study have several important implications for inclusive education and educational practice. First, they highlight the importance of fostering positive attitudes toward individuals with disabilities from an early age through structured educational programs. Teacher training and professional development initiatives could incorporate modules on disability awareness, empathy development, and the role of interpersonal contact in reducing prejudice. Additionally, schools and universities can organize awareness workshops, experiential learning activities, and service-learning programs that provide opportunities for direct interaction with individuals with disabilities in supportive contexts. Such initiatives have the potential to not only reduce stigma but also promote social cohesion and the development of inclusive classroom environments. Furthermore, integrating content related to disability, inclusion, and spiritual well-being into the curricula of education and psychology faculties could better prepare future educators, psychologists, and other professionals to address diversity in their future practice. These educational strategies may play a key role in shaping attitudes, fostering empathy, and supporting the development of inclusive schools in the Romanian educational system.

Disclosure statement

The authors report no conflicts of interest. The authors alone are responsible for the content and writing of the paper.

Reference

- Al-Kandari, H. Y. (2015). High school students' contact with and attitudes towards persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Kuwait. *Australian Social Work*, 68(1), 65–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0312407X.2014.946429>
- Alnahdi, G. H. (2019). The positive impact of including students with intellectual disabilities in schools: Children's attitudes towards peers with disabilities in Saudi Arabia. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 85, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2018.10.004>
- American Psychiatric Association (Ed.). (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders: DSM-5* (5th ed). American Psychiatric Association.
- Aydoğdu, B. N. (2019). Disability and spirituality. *Spiritual Psychology and Counseling*, 4(2), 181–193.
- Barr, J. J., & Bracchitta, K. (2012). Attitudes toward individuals with disabilities: The effects of age, gender, and relationship. *Journal of Relationships Research*, 3, 10–17. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jrr.2012.1>
- Bellanca, F. F., & Pote, H. (2013). Children's attitudes towards ADHD, depression and learning disabilities. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 13(4), 234–241. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-3802.2012.01263.x>
- Brandes, J. A., & Crowson, H. M. (2009). Predicting dispositions toward inclusion of students with disabilities: The role of conservative ideology and discomfort with disability. *Social Psychology of Education*, 12(2), 271–289. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1614-0001.27.3.117>
- Ciobanu, V., Huțul, T.-D., Kärner-Huțuleac, A., & Huțul, A. (2025). Exploring the role of workaholism and social support in social anxiety and loneliness. Findings and implications from a cross-sectional study in a Romanian sample. *Psychological Reports*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00332941251347224>
- Coles, S., & Scior, K. (2012). Public attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities: A qualitative comparison of white British & South Asian people. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 25(2), 177–188. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-3148.2011.00655.x>
- De Laat, S., Freriksen, E., & Vervloed, M. P. (2013). Attitudes of children and adolescents toward persons who are deaf, blind, paralyzed or intellectually disabled. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 34(2), 855–863. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2012.11.004>
- Freer, J. R. (2023). Students' attitudes toward disability: A systematic literature review (2012–2019). *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 27(5), 652–670.
- George, D., & Mallery, P. (2010). *SPSS for Windows step by step: A simple guide and reference, 17.0 update* (10th ed). Allyn & Bacon.
- George, D., & Mallery, P. (2019). *IBM SPSS Statistics 26 Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference* (6th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429056765>
- Georgiadi, M., Kalyva, E., Kourkoutas, E., & Tsakiris, V. (2012). Young children's attitudes toward peers with intellectual disabilities: Effect of the type of school. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 25(6), 531–541. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-3148.2012.00699.x>
- Gething, L., & Wheeler, B. (1992). The interaction with disabled persons scale: A new Australian instrument to measure attitudes towards people with disabilities. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 44(2), 75–82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049539208260146>
- Gherguț, A. (2005). *Sinteze de psihopedagogie specială: Ghid pentru concursuri și examene de obținere a gradelor didactice*. Polirom Iași.
- Gherguț, A. (2013). *Sinteze de psihopedagogie specială: Ghid pentru concursuri și examene de obținere a gradelor didactice* (Ediția a 3-a, revăzută și adăugită). Polirom.
- Hayes, A. F. (2017). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. Guilford publications.
- Hellmich, F., & Löper, M. F. (2018). Primary school students' attitudes and their perceived teacher behavior towards peers with special educational needs. *Empirische Sonderpädagogik*, 10(2), 151–166. <https://doi.org/10.0.100.56/01.16003>

- Himmelberger, Z. M., Faight, G. G., Tungate, A. S., Conners, F. A., & Merrill, E. C. (2023). Personality traits predict attitudes toward individuals with intellectual disability. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, 69(6), 906–914. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20473869.2022.2044594>
- Hodge, D. R., & Reynolds, C. (2019). Spirituality among people with disabilities: A nationally representative study of spiritual and religious profiles. *Health & Social Work*, 44(2), 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hsw/hly035>
- Högberg, T., Magnusson, A., Lützén, K., & Ewalds-Kvist, B. (2012). Swedish attitudes towards persons with mental illness. *Nordic Journal of Psychiatry*, 66(2), 86–96. <https://doi.org/10.3109/08039488.2011.596947>
- Huțul, T.-D., Huțul, A., & Holman, A. C. (2025). The Social Representations of Pornography Consumers Among Individuals in Romantic Relationships: Exploring the Roles of Gender, Relationship Satisfaction, and Sexual Satisfaction in a Romanian Sample. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 54(2), 761–774. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-024-03025-x>
- Huțul, T.-D., & Karner-Huțuleac, A. (2024a). The Role of Social Conservatism and Family Values Regarding the Use of Pornography Among Romanians: A Moderated Mediation Model. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19317611.2024.2364642>
- Huțul, T.-D., & Karner-Huțuleac, A. (2024b). The Roles of Frequency of Pornography Use, and Moral Incongruence in the Relationship Between Sexual Satisfaction, and Psychological Distress Related to the Use of Pornography: A Moderated Mediation Model. *International Journal of Sexual Health*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19317611.2024.2349592>
- Huțul, T.-D., Pachîța, I.-C., Karner-Huțuleac, A., & Gherguț, A. (2022). Attitudes towards psychotherapy in relation to self-stigma of seeking help and coping style. The role of interactions with disabled people. *Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty: Social Sciences*, 11(2), 32–44. <https://doi.org/10.18662/lumenss/11.2/68>
- Karner-Huțuleac, A., & Huțul, T.-D. (Eds.). (2023). *Adicțiile în societatea contemporană. De la acceptare la schimbare*. Polirom.
- Laird, L. A. E. (2016). *A little bit more the same than yesterday: A mixed methods exploration of choir member empathy and attitudes toward individuals with disabilities*. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln.
- Maftci, A., & Gherguț, A. (2023). Are Attitudes Towards Disability Different When We Refer to Children Versus Adults? *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 70(6), 1041–1051. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2021.1952937>
- Maftci, A., Gherguț, A., Roca, D., & Dănilă, O. (2023). Transitioning from decades of segregation: Religiosity and the attitudes towards intellectual disability in Romania. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 44(3), 334–348. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13617672.2022.2125674>
- Maggi, L., Ferrara, P. E., Aprile, I., Ronconi, G., Specchia, A., Nigito, C., Amabile, E., Rabini, A., Piazzini, D. B., & Bertolini, C. (2012). Role of spiritual beliefs on disability and health-related quality of life in acute inpatient rehabilitation unit. *European Journal of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine*, 48(3), 467–473.
- Maneesriwongul, W., & Dixon, J. K. (2004). Instrument translation process: A methods review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(2), 175–186. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2004.03185.x>
- McWhirter, A. C., & McIntyre, L. L. (2021). Associations between religion/spirituality, family characteristics, and mental health among parents with children with developmental delay. *Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 14(3), 301–317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19315864.2021.1909680>
- Nowicki, E. A. (2006). A cross-sectional multivariate analysis of children’s attitudes towards disabilities. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 50(5), 335–348. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2788.2005.00781.x>
- Paloutzian, R. F., & Ellison, C. W. (1982). *Spiritual Well-Being Scale* [Dataset]. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t00534-000>
- Phillips, B. A., Fortney, S., & Swafford, L. (2019). College students’ social perceptions toward individuals with intellectual disability. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 30(1), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1044207318788891>
- Power, M. J., & Green, A. M. (2010). The Attitudes to Disability Scale (ADS): Development and psychometric properties. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 54(9), 860–874. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2788.2010.01317.x>
- Rosenberg, M. J., Hovland, C. I., McGuire, W. J., Abelson, R. P., & Brehm, J. W. (1960). *Attitude organization and change: An analysis of consistency among attitude components. (Yales studies in attitude and communication.)*, Vol. III (pp. x, 239). Yale Univer. Press.

- Rusu, P. P., Hilpert, P., Beach, S. R. H., Turliuc, M. N., & Bodenmann, G. (2015). Dyadic coping mediates the association of sanctification with marital satisfaction and well-being. *Journal of Family Psychology, 29*(6), 843–849. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000108>
- Shalev, R. A., Asmus, J. M., Carter, E. W., & Moss, C. K. (2016). Attitudes of high school students toward their classmates with severe disabilities: A pilot study. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities, 28*(4), 523–538. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-016-9489-x>
- Sheridan, J., & Scior, K. (2013). Attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities: A comparison of young people from British South Asian and White British backgrounds. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 34*(4), 1240–1247. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ridd.2012.12.017>
- Sousa, V. D., & Rojjanasrirat, W. (2011). Translation, adaptation and validation of instruments or scales for use in cross-cultural health care research: A clear and user-friendly guideline. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice, 17*(2), 268–274. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2753.2010.01434.x>
- Stamm, H. (2004). Deformity and disability: A Graeco_Roman perspective. *History of Medicine Days, 25*.
- Treloar, L. L. (2002). Disability, spiritual beliefs and the church: The experiences of adults with disabilities and family members. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 40*(5), 594–603. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.2002.02417.x>
- Xavier, F. T., & Esperandio, M. R. G. (2023). Spirituality and caregiver burden of people with intellectual disabilities: An empirical study. *International Journal of Latin American Religions, 7*(1), 17–35. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41603-023-00196-8>
- Yazbeck, M., McVilly, K., & Parmenter, T. R. (2004). Attitudes toward people with intellectual disabilities: An Australian perspective. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 15*(2), 97–111. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10442073040150020401>