



# Bus drivers' attitudes toward people with intellectual disabilities

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## Background

- The right to move freely in one's environment is recognized internationally by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations 2006).
- The ability to travel on public transport is favorable in promoting for the self-determination and social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities (ID) (Falkmer et al. 2015).
- The attitudes of bus drivers may influence their use of public transport (Tillmann et al. 2013).

## Objective

To measure bus drivers' attitudes towards people with ID and compare with those of the general population in Quebec.

## Participants

N = **269 bus drivers** working for an urban public transport company (189 men and 86 women aged between 18 and 60 years of age).

## Instruments

- Sociodemographic questionnaire
- Attitudes Towards Intellectual Disabilities questionnaire (ATTID; Morin et al., 2013).

## Statistical analysis

- Attitudes of the bus drivers were compared to those of the general population using t-tests based on ATTID standards for each factor.
- Participant characteristics and attitudes were explored through ANOVA, and attitudes based on functioning levels of individuals with ID were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests.

## Results

Table 1. Bus drivers' ATTID scores compared with those of the general population

	Drivers (D)	General public (P)	Diff. between D and P	T	P
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)			
<b>Discomfort</b>	1.66 (0.56)	1.73 (0.52)	-0.071	-2.06	0.043
<b>Knowledge of Capacity and Rights</b>	2.25 (0.57)	2.14 (0.57)	0.114	3.29	0.001
<b>Interaction</b>	2.54 (0.67)	2.27 (0.63)	0.274	6.79	<0.001
<b>Sensitivity/Tenderness</b>	2.90 (0.84)	3.16 (0.79)	-0.264	-5.19	<0.001
<b>Knowledge of Causes of ID</b>	2.81 (0.70)	2.85 (0.69)	-0.045	-1.06	0.288

Note. Scores are rated on a scale of 1 to 5. The lower the scores, the more positive the attitudes toward people with ID. A score of 3 is considered a neutral attitude.

## Discussion and conclusion

- Results demonstrate that **bus drivers generally have positive attitudes** towards people with ID
- The **most positive attitudes** were on the **Discomfort factor**. We can hypothesize that this result is partly attributable to regular contact with people with ID.
- The **least positive attitudes** were on the **Sensitivity factor**. This is possibly related to the perception of increased vulnerability among this group and it may lead to an increased likelihood of engaging in overprotective behaviors.
- Similar to findings in other studies, **bus drivers' attitudes are more favorable when interacting with individuals with higher levels of functioning** (Morin et al. 2013, Pelleboer et al. 2021).
- The **sociodemographic variable** most strongly associated with attitudes is the **perception of the quality of their relationships** with people with ID.
- Bus drivers are key players in encouraging people with ID to use public transport (Tillmann et al. 2013). Training and awareness programs could aim at educating bus drivers on ways of interacting with this population that **will serve to promote autonomy, self-determination and social inclusion**.

For more information and references :

