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# Children enjoy sports club activities

*Achievement motivation and motor performance as  
determinants of sustained involvement in sport and physical  
activity settings*

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# Organized sport participation

- + Organized sport participation is one of the most popular leisure time activities and an essential context of physical activity in many countries.
- + In Finland, 62% of 9-15 -year-old children take part in sports clubs (Blomqvist et al., 2019).
  - + Participation is most common at the age of 11 years, as 71% of the children play sports in sports clubs .
- + Sport participation supports positive youth development (Fraser-Thomas & Côté, 2006).
  - + Increased physical activity
  - + Health benefits
  - + Psychosocial development
  - + Development of motor skills



# Why children play sports?

- + Children's participation in sport is mainly mediated by *fun and enjoyment, perception of competence, learning new skills, friends and peers, and parents* (Bailey et al., 2013 see for review).
- + The primary motive for children to participate in sports is to have fun and enjoyable experiences (Weiss & Amorose, 2008).
- + Sport enjoyment can be considered a subjective experience (McCarthy & Jones 2007).
- + Enjoyment has been recognized as one of the predictors of sport commitment (Scanlan et al., 1993).
- + Many children drop out of sport because of a lack of enjoyment (Gould & Horn, 1984).



# Enjoyment in sports

- + Coach is responsible for developing a positive learning environment that influences perceptions of enjoyment (Allen & Hodge 2006).
- + Coach support has been shown to affect children's enjoyment and motivation (Côté & Fraser-Thomas, 2007).
- + Positive relationships with peers (McCarthy & Jones, 2007) and coach predict children's enjoyment of sport participation (Scanlan et al., 1993).
- + Lack of interaction has been associated with non-enjoyment (McCarthy & Jones, 2007).



# Purpose

## To investigate

if children enjoy training in sports clubs

how children perceive their relationships with peers and coaches

if sport enjoyment is associated with peer and coach-athlete relationships



# Design and methods

## + Participants

- + 11-year-old primary school children in sports clubs (n=467)

- + girls n=224, boys n=243

- + Team sports (56%)

  - + Football, ice-hockey, basketball

  - + 74% boys, 26% girls

- + Individual sports (44%)

  - + dance sports, gymnastics, swimming, horse-riding, athletics, judo, taekwondo, figure skating, tennis

  - + 78% girls, 22% boys

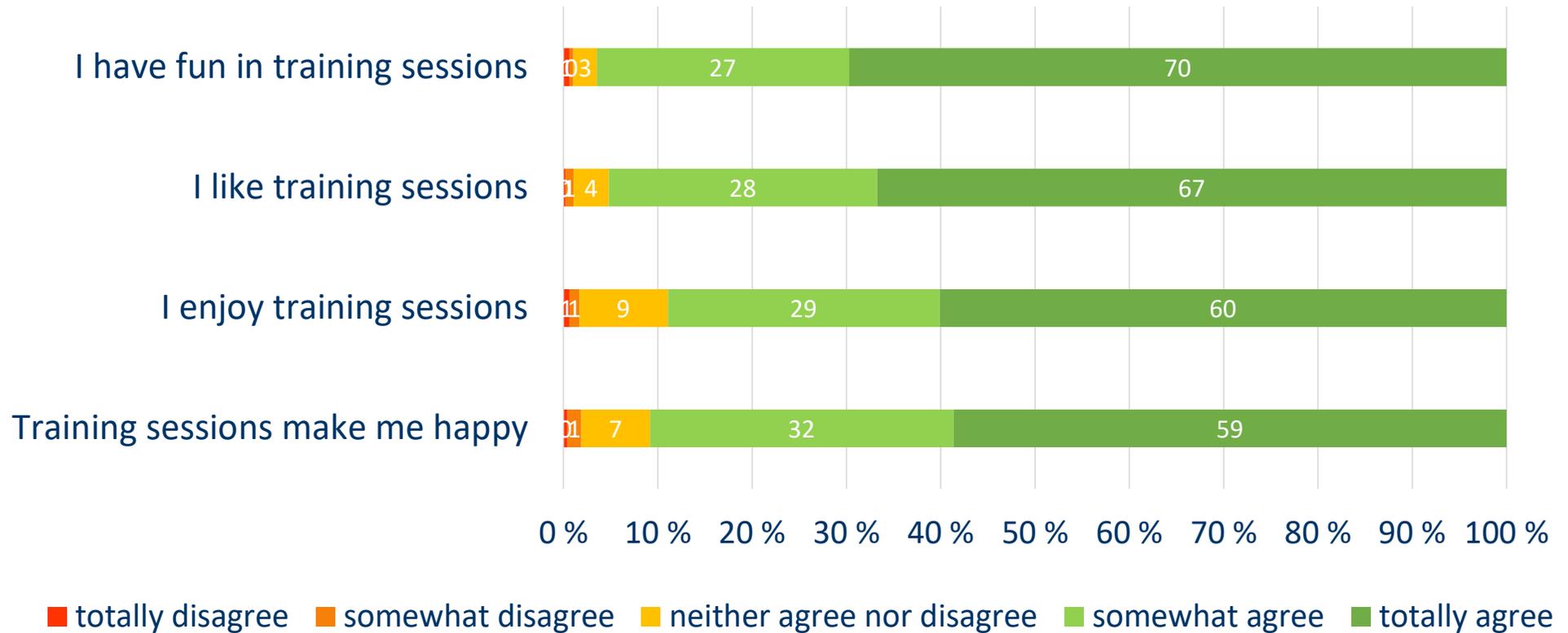


# Questionnaire

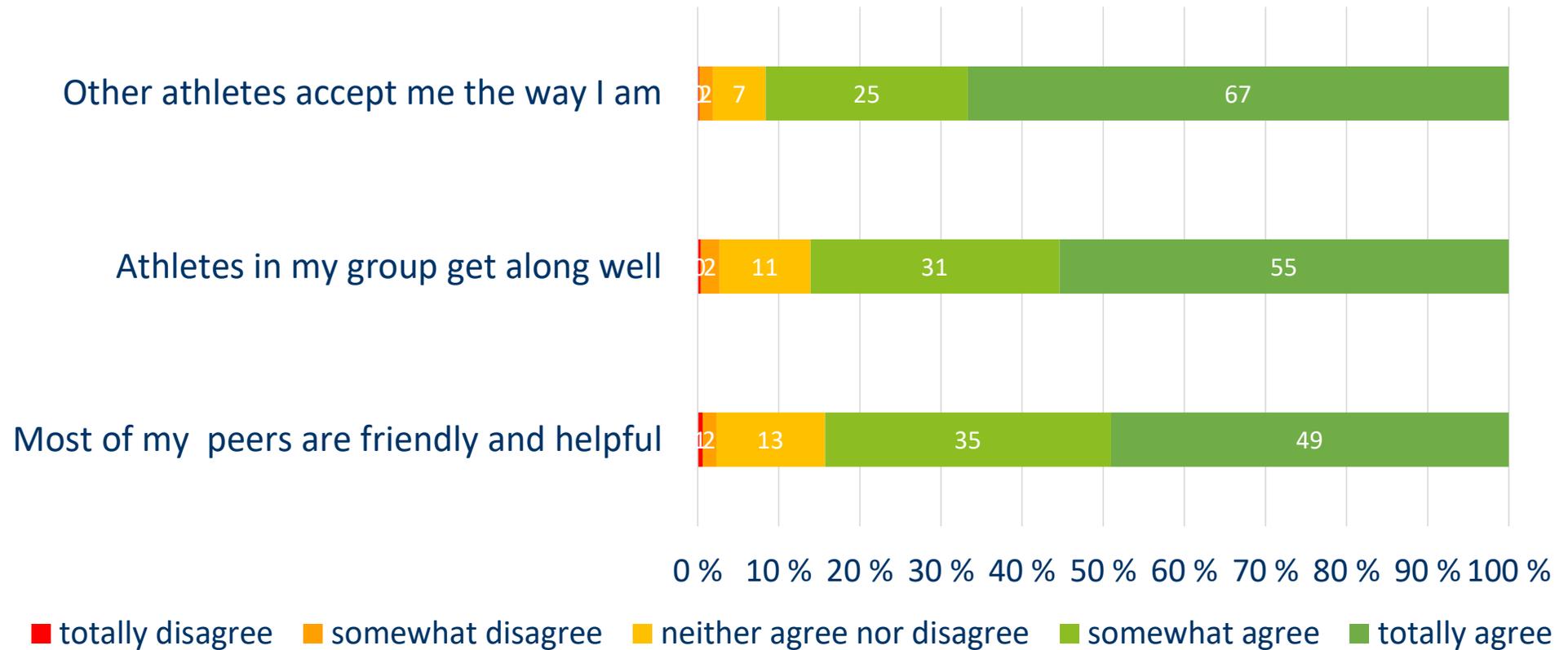
- + 12-item 5-point Likert scale (1=totally disagree... 5=totally agree)
- + Enjoyment
  - + 4 items (A modified version of the Sport Enjoyment Scale of Scanlan et al., (1993) see Soini et al., 2007)
- + Peer relationships
  - + 3 items (A modified version of Students School Perception questionnaire, Konu 2002; Tiirikainen 2012)
- + Coach-athlete relationships
  - + 5 items (A modified version of Students School Perception questionnaire, Konu 2002; Tiirikainen 2012)



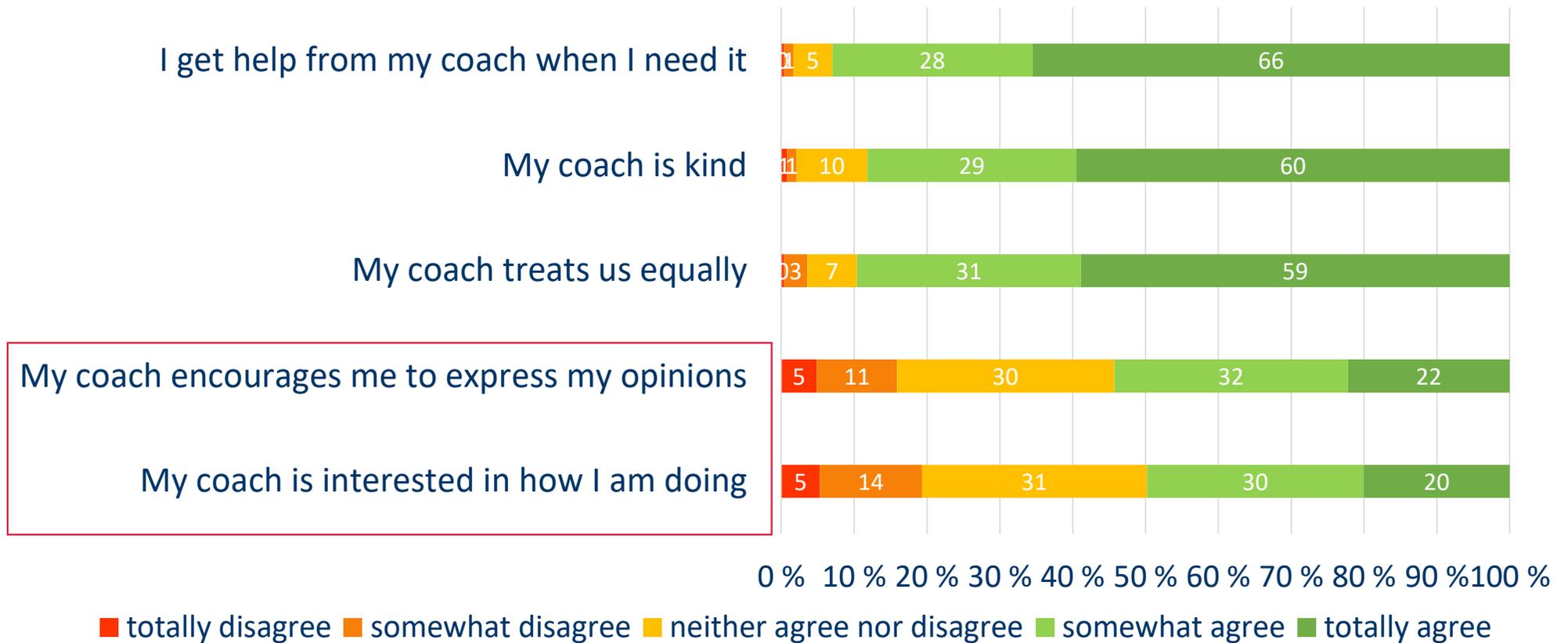
## Results - Enjoyment (M=4,55; SD= 0,60)



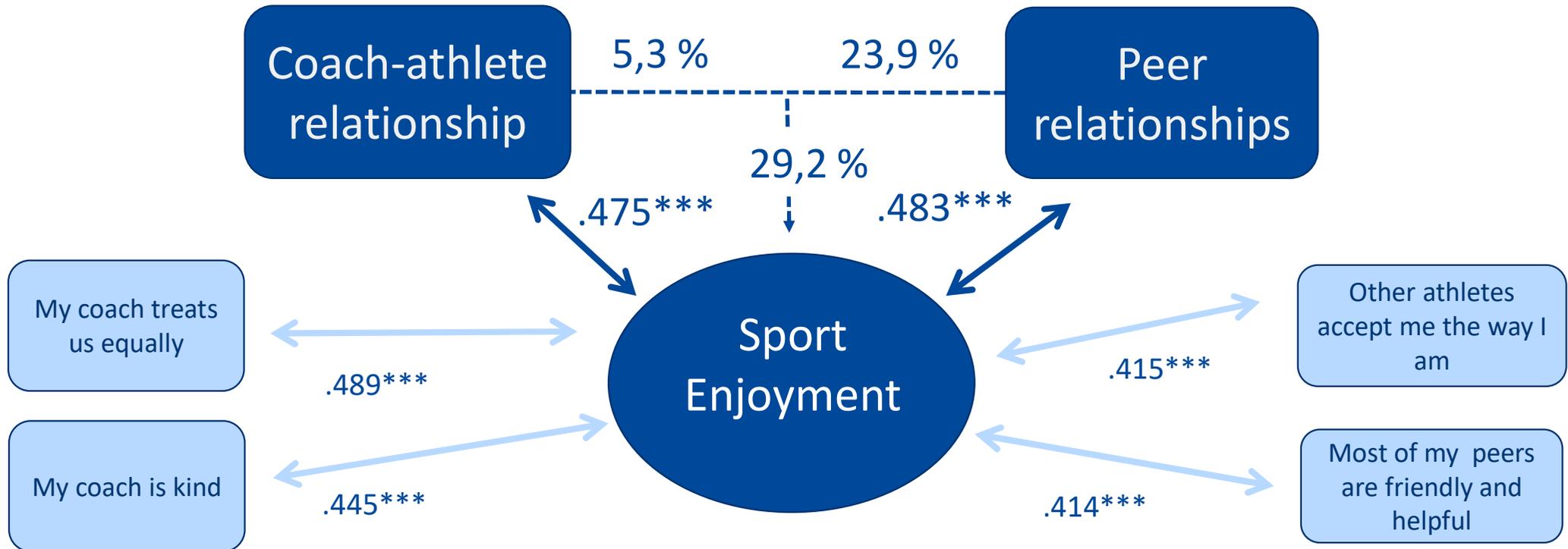
## Results - Peer relationships (M=4,41; SD= 0,65)



# Results - Coach-athlete relationship (M=4,09; SD= 0,69)



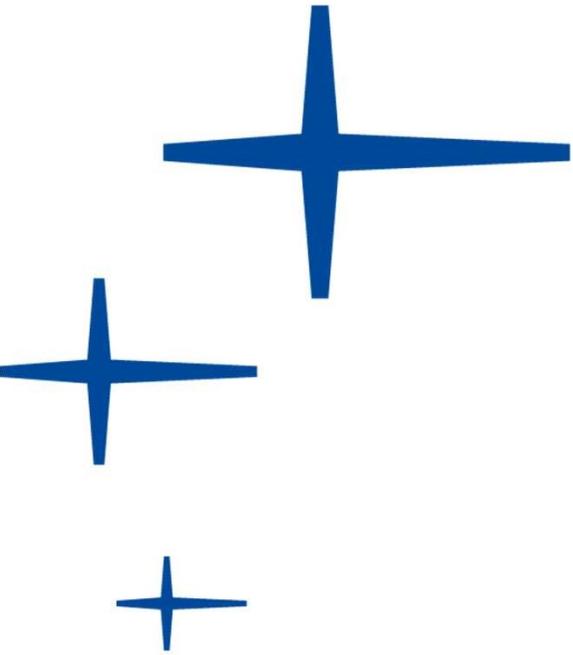
# Associations between variables



# Implications

- + *Children should be provided with the time and opportunity to develop friendships.*
  - + In late sampling years, social recognition and acceptance from peers become more important.
  - + Developing relationships through getting to know, trust and respect each other is likely to foster the care and security in interpersonal relationships (Côté 2010).
- + *Children need to be given individual attention and encouragement.*
  - + To coach in a child-centered way, coaches must take into account children's individual development and needs.
  - + Individual attention makes you more aware of what each child thinks and feels.





Thank you!

