

Dyslexic Knowledge: The Perceptions and Awareness among Tamil Language Teachers

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Abstract

Dyslexia is a learning disorder that manifests itself as a difficulty with reading and spelling. The prevalence rate of dyslexics in Sri Lanka is unknown. However the prevalence is evidenced. Despite the number is increasing with years, the understanding about dyslexia among school teachers is poor. Therefore, this study primarily focuses on to create and validate a scale measuring beliefs regarding dyslexia, to use the scale to investigate the beliefs of language teachers regarding dyslexia, and to investigate the factors influencing on their beliefs. For this purpose descriptive survey research design was used and the sampling was made from Tamil medium schools of Piliyandala Educational Zone in Colombo district. Sample comprised of 30 Tamil Language teachers of secondary classes who were selected using a stratified sampling technique. The questionnaire was developed based on the Dyslexia Belief Index (DBI). It has two sections of which the first part includes teacher demographics and the second part consisted of dyslexia belief scale. The scale has 20 items and the responses were made using 4 point Likert type scale. The Cronbach's coefficient alpha of the scale was established at .86. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-test and one-way ANOVA. The results showed that the majority of the participants were found to be with poor understanding about dyslexia. When considering differences in gender, age, teaching experience and educational qualifications that were found to be statistically insignificantly related to the scores of DBI. However, type of schools, professional qualifications and participation in the special education training were found to be statistically significantly related to the perceptions of dyslexic knowledge. Recommendations were made to providing more opportunities to learn about dyslexia through avenues such as organizing and participating in a dyslexia awareness programs, observing dyslexics in a simulated environment and organizing workshops to get hands-on field experiences of dyslexics.