

Institutional Readiness for Neurodiversity Inclusion in Higher Education in Sri Lanka: A Case Study of the Open University of Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Background: Neurodiversity encompasses neurological differences, including autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, dyspraxia, and other cognitive variations, which are increasingly recognised as natural forms of human diversity. Although neurodiversity has become an important focus of workplace diversity and inclusion initiatives globally, there is limited evidence regarding awareness, attitudes, and institutional readiness for neurodiversity inclusion in Sri Lankan higher education.

Aim: This study aims to explore awareness, attitudes, workplace experiences, and perceptions of institutional readiness for neurodiversity inclusion among academic and professional staff at the Open University of Sri Lanka.

Methods: A qualitative exploratory design will be employed using convenience sampling. Data will be collected through open-ended written responses and/or semi-structured interviews. Participants will be invited to share their understanding of neurodiversity, experiences within the workplace, perceived barriers and facilitators to inclusion, and recommendations for creating a more neuroinclusive institutional environment. Data will be analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Expected Outcomes: The study is expected to provide insights into staff awareness and attitudes towards neurodiversity, identify perceived organisational strengths and gaps, and highlight opportunities for improving institutional support, staff development, and inclusive workplace practices. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of organisational readiness for neurodiversity inclusion in higher education and inform future policy and practice in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: Neurodiversity; workplace inclusion; higher education; institutional readiness; qualitative research; Sri Lanka.