COLOMBO JOURNAL OF MULTI-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Volume 09 - No. 01 & 02 - March & November 2024

Faculty of Graduate Studies - University of Colombo

Teachers' Perspectives on Factors Influencing Students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness in Secondary Education in Sri Lanka

K. Piratheeban [a] ✉, L. M. K. Bandara [b]

[a] *Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*
[b] *Department of Humanities Education, Faculty of Education, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Abstract

This study investigates teachers' perceptions of factors influencing secondary-level students' self-directed learning readiness (SDLR) in Sri Lanka, a critical skill for lifelong learning and 21st-century success. Despite its importance, limited research has examined this topic from teachers' perspectives. The study aims to identify key SDLR factors that teachers perceive and to explore how teacher demographics influence these perceptions. Employing a cross-sectional survey design within a quantitative framework, data were collected from 370 randomly selected secondary-level teachers in the Northern Province, selected as a representative sample due to Sri Lanka's centraliszed education system, using a validated 35-item questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.939$). Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that student-related, teacher-related, and contextual factors were perceived as the most influential in shaping SDLR. Technological, assessment, and curriculum-related factors were also significant but ranked lower. Teacher demographics, such as teaching experience and qualifications, influenced perceptions, with newer teachers and those holding advanced qualifications showing greater sensitivity to SDLR factors. The study highlights the need for targeted professional development and policy reforms to foster SDLR and create supportive learning environments.

Keywords: Self-directed learning readiness, Lifelong learning, Student-centred learning, Teachers' perceptions, Sri Lanka education system

Received:	Accepted revised version:	Published:
27 August 2024	22 October 2024	30 November 2024

Suggested citation: Piratheeban, K., & Bandara, L. M. K. (2024). Teachers' perspectives on factors influencing students' self-directed learning readiness in secondary education in Sri Lanka. *Colombo Journal of Multi-Disciplinary Research*, *09* (01 & 02), 26-53.

✉ Corresponding Author: kpiratheeban@univ.jfn.ac.lk

DOI: https://doi.org/10.4038/cjmr.v9i1-2.79
ISSN: 2362-0633

Introduction

The world is rapidly evolving due to technological advancements, creating a data-driven global environment where learners can acquire knowledge from diverse sources at any time and place. In this context, traditional teacher-centred approaches rooted in behaviourist learning theories are being replaced by learner-centred methodologies rooted in constructivist learning theories, emphasising student autonomy and active engagement in their learning process. These shifts have led to the growing prominence of Self-Directed Learning (SDL), which encourages learners to take responsibility for their learning by identifying suitable resources, setting their goals, monitoring their own progress, and evaluating the learning outcomes. Introduced in adult education by Houle in 1961 and formalized by Knowles in 1975, SDL is now recognised as an essential competency for thriving in today's world (Merriam et al., 2007; Popovic, 2011). It is integral to fostering lifelong learning, essential for personal and professional success (Gibbons, 2002).

Globally, various initiatives have been undertaken to enhance SDL. For instance, SDL is highlighted in Sustainable Development Goal 4 as a critical strategy for achieving inclusive, equitable, and quality education while promoting lifelong learning. Similar efforts have been made in Sri Lanka, particularly in higher education, with initiatives such as the credit system, outcome-based education, and the K-SAM model (Bandara, 2022). However, despite these reforms, the implementation of SDL in higher education remains limited due to challenges such as overcrowded lecture halls, exam-oriented educational systems, and academic resistance (Bandara, 2022).

Despite notable achievements in Sri Lanka's education system, including universal access to education, high literacy rates, and gender parity, systemic challenges persist. Issues such as low participation in higher education, emigration of skilled workers, and a lack of employability among graduates highlight the need for significant reform. These challenges stem from an outdated education system prioritising examinations and rote learning over creativity, critical thinking, and adaptability. In response, SDL has been positioned as a cornerstone of curriculum reforms to equip students with the skills to navigate modern challenges (Cabinet committee to prepare and submit the National Education Policy Framework to the Parliament, 2023).

Widanapathirana et al. (2016) also emphasises the pivotal role of SDL in achieving holistic and lifelong learning. The Commission advocates for a dynamic learning environment that transitions from a traditional teacher-centred model to one that supports cooperative and self-directed learning. Teachers are seen as facilitators, providing opportunities for students to construct knowledge independently and collaboratively. Additionally, formative assessments are encouraged to support skill development, personal growth, and the practical application of knowledge, aligning closely with the goals of SDL.

Although SDL was initially conceptualised for adult learning, it has increasingly been adapted to school-level education. Globally, several studies have examined SDL in primary and secondary education (Chen et al., 2022; Gooria et al., 2021; Hafizah Adnan & Sayadi,

2021; Jaleel & Anuroofa, 2017; Timothy et al., 2010). However, in Sri Lanka, research on SDL remains limited, with a handful of studies addressing the topic (Bandara, 2017, Bandara, 2022; Dharmasena et al., 2022; Galdolage, 2020; Munasinghe et al., 2020; Piratheeban, 2023; Samarasooriya et al., 2019). Most of these studies focus on SDL in higher education, leaving significant gaps in understanding its implementation at the school level.

Recognising the importance of SDL at the school level of education, the Sri Lankan government has also recently emphasised its integration at the secondary education level. The National Curriculum Framework for Secondary Education highlights the need to transition from traditional teacher-centred approaches to learner-centred, constructivist models that encourage student autonomy (Ministry of Education, 2020). These reforms promote authentic learning experiences, enabling students to engage with real-world contexts while fostering critical thinking and lifelong learning. By embedding SDL into the curriculum, the aim is to produce competent and adaptable citizens capable of meeting the demands of a rapidly evolving knowledge-based economic world.

Teachers play a central role in the successful implementation of SDL in classrooms. While curriculum reforms set the framework for educational change, teachers are responsible for translating these reforms into effective practices. Teachers' beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes toward SDL significantly influence their teaching methods, their interactions with students, and the learning environment they create. These factors make teachers key facilitators of SDL, with the ability to shape how students engage with self-directed learning.

In Sri Lanka, the traditional teacher-centred model, influenced by the behaviourist learning theory, continues to dominate many classrooms. This approach prioritises lecture-based instruction and exam preparation and leaves limited room for student autonomy or independent learning, as evidenced in the Northern Province. However, with the emphasis on SDL in curriculum reforms, teachers are expected to transition from being transmitters of knowledge to facilitators of learning, as indicated by the proponents of constructivism. In this role, they are tasked with creating environments that encourage students to take ownership of their learning process.

For SDL to be effectively implemented, teachers must be prepared to understand and support this approach. Professional development programs focusing on SDL methodologies, innovative teaching strategies, and the use of technology are critical for equipping teachers with the skills necessary to foster SDL. Additionally, changing teachers' perceptions of SDL is important, as their attitudes toward student autonomy and independent learning can significantly impact how they approach teaching.

Understanding teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) is critical for addressing these challenges. Teachers' beliefs about what promotes or hinders SDLR can significantly shape their teaching practices and the opportunities they provide for students.

Despite the increasing recognition of SDL in Sri Lanka's curriculum reforms, there is a significant gap in research specifically focused on teachers' perceptions of the factors that influence SDLR. While much has been written about SDL in general, limited attention has been given to understanding how teachers perceive the factors that shape students' readiness for self-directed learning. Theoretical frameworks for SDLR in the Sri Lankan secondary-level education context remain underdeveloped, as most existing studies focus on higher education contexts. This lack of theoretical guidance will pave the way for the continuation of obsolete teaching practices, creating a significant theoretical gap. What factors do teachers perceive as most impactful for enhancing SDLR among secondary-level students, and how do their demographics shape these perceptions? This study addresses these questions by exploring teachers' perceptions within the Sri Lankan context, identifying the most influential factors, and examining how teacher demographics affect their views on factors influencing secondary-level students' SDLR.

The findings of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how SDL can be effectively promoted in Sri Lanka's education system by shaping students' SDLR. By focusing on teachers' perspectives, the study will provide valuable insights into the factors influencing SDL implementation at the secondary classroom level. Furthermore, the study's recommendations will guide educators and policymakers in creating strategies and policies that foster SDL, ensuring that secondary-level students have the skills necessary for lifelong learning and success in the 21st century.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing secondary-level students' Self-directed Learning Readiness in Sri Lanka.
2. To investigate how teacher demographics influence teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing secondary-level students' Self-directed Learning Readiness.

Research Questions

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing secondary-level students' Self-directed Learning Readiness in Sri Lanka?
2. How do teacher demographics influence teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing secondary-level students' Self-directed Learning Readiness?

Literature Review

Self-Directed Learning

Self-Directed Learning (SDL) is a transformative educational approach where learners take ownership of their learning process by identifying needs, setting goals, finding resources, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes. The concept of SDL, initially developed within the realm of adult education by Houle and later formalized by Knowles, has evolved to become a foundation of modern education (Merriam et al., 2007; Popovic, 2011). As Gibbons (2002) emphasises, SDL fosters adaptability and lifelong learning, equipping

individuals to navigate the complexities of contemporary global challenges. Within the current data-driven world, SDL is essential in fostering autonomy, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills among learners.

The Importance of SDL in the Sri Lankan Educational Context

Sri Lanka's education system has been celebrated for its achievements in universal access, high literacy rates, and gender parity. However, systemic challenges persist, including low participation in higher education and a lack of employability among graduates (Ministry of Education, 2020). Traditional teacher-centred methodologies prioritising rote learning over critical thinking and creativity have contributed to these shortcomings.

Recognising these issues, the Sri Lankan government has prioritised SDL in curriculum reforms. The National Curriculum Framework for Secondary Education advocates a shift from teacher-centred instruction to a learner-centred model emphasising SDL as a means to develop autonomy and real-world applicability (Ministry of Education, 2020). Furthermore, lifelong learning is a key objective, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which highlights inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Despite these efforts, barriers to SDL persist in Sri Lanka, particularly in higher education. Bandara (2022) notes that the academic culture in Sri Lankan universities often undermines SDL due to overcrowded lecture halls, exam-oriented practices, and academic resistance. Additionally, there is a notable lack of awareness regarding students' readiness to engage in SDL. These challenges underscore the importance of SDLR as a foundational element for implementing SDL effectively.

Self-Directed Learning Readiness

Self-directed learning Readiness refers to individuals' preparedness to engage in Self-directed learning, encompassing attitudes, aptitudes, and personal characteristics (Wiley, 1983) Key components of SDLR include self-motivation, goal orientation, time management, information seeking, self-regulation, and collaboration and communication (Piratheeban, 2023). Fisher (2001) revealed that self-management, self-control, and a desire for learning are components of SDLR. Williamson (2007) identified awareness, learning strategies, learning activities, evaluation, and interpersonal skills as the components of SDLR. Dulloo (2023) posited awareness, learning strategies and styles, Motivation, and team building as the elements of SDLR. However, research has shown that not all students are ready to take control of their learning to the same level of extent. O'Shea (2003) observes that some learners prefer structured environments and rely heavily on teachers for guidance.

Globally, efforts to foster SDLR include pedagogy, assessment, and resource allocation reforms. In Sri Lanka, policy initiatives such as the Credit system, K-SAM model and outcome-based education have aimed to improve SDL skills in higher education (Bandara, 2022). However, these initiatives have largely overlooked the secondary education sector, where SDL and SDLR must be cultivated to ensure a smoother transition to higher education.

Factors Influencing SDLR

The factors influencing Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) are multifaceted. Over time, scholars have identified numerous factors that impact students' SDLR across different contexts. A systematic literature review conducted by Piratheeban and Bandara (2024) categorised 50 such factors into five primary themes:

1. **Student-Related Factors**: These include personal attributes such as age and gender; psychological factors such as self-efficacy, motivation, and emotional state; cognitive traits like learning styles and strategies, problem-solving skills, prior knowledge, learning goals; and behavioural aspects such as time management, collaboration and communication, interest in subjects and topics, academic performance, future goals, and leisure time (Piratheeban & Bandara, 2024).

2. **Contextual Factors**: These include environmental factors such as physical environment and access to resources; interpersonal factors such as family support, peer relationships, and the parent's engagement in education (Piratheeban & Bandara, 2024).

3. **Teacher-Related Factors**: These include instructional approaches such as teaching method and facilitative teaching style; and Support and feedback such as teacher support, and constructive feedback (Piratheeban & Bandara, 2024).

4. **Sociocultural Factors**: These include cultural influences, and academic landscape (Piratheeban & Bandara, 2024).

5. **Technological Factors**: These include access to technological resources, digital literacy, integrating technology, availability of online learning platforms, and prior experience in online learning (Piratheeban & Bandara, 2024).

In this study, contextual factors and socio-cultural factors were merged into a single factor, contextual factors. Additionally, two new factors, assessment-related factors (Harrison et al., 2015; Robinson & Persky, 2020) and curriculum-related factors (Kidane et al., 2020; Leatemia et al., 2016), were introduced alongside the four identified factors: student-related factors, contextual factors, teacher-related factors, and technological factors. Thus, teachers' perceptions of six factors influencing students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) were investigated.

Teachers' Role in Promoting SDLR

Teachers are central to fostering SDLR, acting as facilitators who guide students in becoming autonomous learners. In Sri Lanka, the traditional teacher-centred model remains prevalent, with teachers often seen as the primary source of knowledge (Ministry of Education, 2020). However, curriculum reforms encourage teachers to adopt a more facilitative role, promoting inquiry-based learning and SDL strategies.

Professional development is essential to equip teachers with the skills to foster SDLR. Training programs emphasising SDL methodologies, technology integration, and assessment practices can empower teachers to create conducive learning environments (Grow, 1991). Teachers' perceptions of SDL and SDLR also influence how they approach their roles. Teachers valuing autonomy and critical thinking are more likely to adopt strategies encouraging self-directed learning.

Barriers to Promoting SDL

Despite its potential benefits, several barriers hinder the promotion of SDL in Sri Lanka. Institutional challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, and exam-centric practices restrict teachers' ability to implement SDL strategies effectively (Bandara, 2022). Furthermore, traditional mindsets among teachers and students often resist the shift toward autonomy and self-regulation.

Student readiness for SDL also varies significantly. Factors such as low motivation, lack of self-regulation, and limited access to resources hinder students' ability to engage in SDL (Ramli et al., 2018). Addressing these barriers requires systemic reforms and targeted interventions to build student and teacher capacity for SDL.

Research on Teachers' Perceptions of SDLR

Understanding teachers' perceptions of Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) is critical to identifying the enablers and barriers to its promotion, as teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' learning experiences and fostering SDL practices. While global research has explored teachers' roles in promoting SDL, studies in Sri Lanka remain limited. Existing research has primarily focused on SDL and SDLR in the higher education system, leaving a significant gap in understanding these concepts in the school-level educational system, particularly from the teachers' perspective. This gap underscores the need for studies that examine teachers' insights and experiences within the unique sociocultural and educational context of Sri Lanka.

Methodology

Research Design

This study investigates teachers' perceptions of factors influencing students' self-directed learning readiness in Sri Lanka. It was quantitative and based on the positivist approach. It employed the cross-sectional survey method, which aims to reveal an event or situation as it is (Creswell, 2009).

Population and Sample

The study's population consists of 9854 teachers who teach secondary-level students in the northern province. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. At

a 95% confidence level and 5% marginal error, the sample size was 370. So, considering the data screening process, 385 teachers were selected as respondents for this study.

Data Collection Tool

The data were collected from the respondents using a self-generated questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed based on the factors identified after the literature review of factors influencing SDLR (Piratheeban & Bandara, 2024). The questionnaire consists of two sections. Section 1 includes six questions related to the demographical variables of teachers. Section two of the questionnaire consists of 37 items with five-point Likert scales: Very High, High, Moderate, Low, and Very Low. During the validation process, two items from 37 items were removed. So, the data with 35 items were used for further analysis.

The Cronbach Alpha coefficient is the most appropriate measure of reliability for the questionnaire with Likert scale items (Robinson, 2010, as cited in Taherdoost, 2016; Whitley, 2002, as cited in Taherdoost, 2016). No absolute rules exist for internal consistencies; however, most agree on a minimum internal consistency coefficient of 0.70 (Whitley, 2002, as cited in Taherdoost, 2016; Robinson, 2009, as cited in Taherdoost, 2016). Hinton et al. (2004), as cited in Taherdoost (2016) proposed four categories for evaluating reliability levels: excellent reliability for scores of 0.90 and above, high reliability for scores between 0.70 and 0.90, moderate reliability for scores ranging from 0.50 to 0.70, and low reliability for scores below 0.50. The reliability analysis was conducted on a 35-item questionnaire to investigate teachers' perceptions of factors influencing SDLR and each dimension included in this questionnaire. The results are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Reliability Analysis of the Questionnaire Dimensions and Overall Scale

Dimension	No of items	Cronbach alpha value	Interpretation
Student-related factors	13	0.881	High reliability
Contextual factors	5	0.781	High reliability
Teacher-related factors	4	0.697	Moderate reliability
Assessment-related factors	4	0.831	High reliability
Technological factors	5	0.800	High reliability
Curriculum-related factors	4	0.743	High reliability
Overall	35	0.939	Excellent Reliability

The Cronbach's alpha values for the questionnaire indicate strong internal consistency across the dimensions and the overall scale, demonstrating its reliability. According to Whitley (2002, as cited in Taherdoost, 2016) and Robinson (2009, as cited in Taherdoost, 2016), a minimum reliability coefficient of 0.70 is generally accepted, with 0.60 being suitable for exploratory studies (Straub et al., 2004, as cited in Taherdoost, 2016). Based on the

guidelines provided by Hinton et al. (2004, as cited in Taherdoost, 2016), the overall Cronbach's alpha value of 0.939 reflects excellent reliability, confirming the robustness of the questionnaire as a whole.

The validity of the questionnaire was assessed using the item-total correlation method. Results indicated that all 35 items demonstrated observed correlation coefficients greater than the critical table value of 0.102 ($df = 368$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $p < 0.001$). These findings confirm that each item contributes significantly to the overall construct of the questionnaire, providing strong evidence of its construct validity. The results support using this questionnaire as a valid tool for assessing teachers' perceptions of factors influencing students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR).

Data Collection

The data was collected from 385 respondents, 15 of whom were removed during the data screening process. Finally, the data collected from 370 respondents were used for the data analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Mean, standard deviation and Garrett Ranking techniques were used as descriptive techniques. Independent sample *t*-tests; the Mann-Whitney U test, one-way ANOVA tests, Kruskal Walis H test, Welch's test, and Dunn's test with Bonferroni correction were used as inferential statistical techniques for this study.

Interpretation of the Results Using Descriptive Statistical Measure: Mean

A systematic technique was applied to interpret the mean values. First, the possible lowest value was subtracted from the possible highest value. The resulting difference was then divided by five to create equal intervals. Starting from the possible lowest value, the calculated interval was successively added until the possible highest value was reached, thereby forming five categories of mean value ranges.

These categories were labelled very low, low, moderate, high, and very high. The obtained mean value for each instance was then compared with these predefined ranges to determine its interpretation. Since the possible lowest and highest values depend on the number of items in the analysis, the mean value range varies for each instance. This method ensured consistency and accuracy in interpreting the mean values across different datasets.

Findings

Teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions of the selected factors influencing students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR), including the mean, standard

deviation, and range of scores observed. These statistics provide an overview of the central tendency and variability in teachers' perceptions.

Table 2

Teachers' perception level of the factors influencing students' SDLR

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Perception Level	370	97	174	133.19	16.37

The results indicate that the overall mean score of teachers' perceptions of the selected factors influencing students' SDLR is 133.19, with a standard deviation of 16.37. Given the possible score range of 35 to 175, this mean falls within the high perception category, indicating that teachers generally perceive these factors as having a significant influence on students' SDLR. The range of scores, from a minimum of 97 to a maximum of 174, reflects variability, with some teachers perceiving these factors as moderately influential and others viewing them as very impactful. This variability could be influenced by teacher-related factors such as gender, teaching experience, or professional qualifications, warranting further analysis to explore these differences.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Influence of Student-related Factors on SDLR

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions of the influence of student-related factors on students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR). The table provides the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores, offering an overview of the respondents' perception level.

Table 3

Teachers' Perception Level of the Influence of Student-related Factors on SDLR

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Perception Level	370	26	65	49.71	6.88

The mean score of 49.71 out of a possible range of 13 to 65 for the factor 'Student-Related Factors' indicates that, on average, teachers perceive this factor as having a relatively high influence on students' SDLR. Given that the scale ranges from 13 (low perception) to 65 (high perception), a mean of 49.71 suggests that teachers generally view student-related factors as significantly contributing to the development of SDLR in students.

The standard deviation of 6.88 reflects moderate variability in teachers' responses. While most teachers hold similar perceptions, there is some diversity in how much influence they attribute to these factors. The minimum score of 26 and the maximum score of 65 indicate

that while some teachers perceive student-related factors as having low influence, others consider these factors to be very highly impactful in fostering SDLR.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Influence of Contextual Factors on SDLR

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions of the influence of Contextual Factors on students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness. The table provides the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores, offering an overview of the respondents' perception level.

Table 4

Teachers' Perception Level of the Influence of Contextual Factors on SDLR

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Perception Level	370	11	25	19.10	3.12

The mean score of 19.10 out of a possible range of 5 to 25 for the factor 'Contextual Factors' suggests that teachers perceive this factor as having a high influence on students' SDLR.

The standard deviation of 3.12 reflects relatively low response variability, suggesting a consensus among teachers. The minimum score of 11 and the maximum score of 25 highlight a range of perceptions, with most teachers viewing this factor as low to very highly influential.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Influence of Teacher-related Factors on SDLR

Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions of the influence of Teacher-related Factors on students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness. The table provides the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores, offering an overview of the respondents' perception level.

Table 5

Teachers' Perception Level of the Influence of Teacher-related Factors on SDLR

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Perception Level	370	8	20	15.60	2.34

The mean score of 15.60 out of a possible range of 4 to 20 for the factor 'Teacher-related Factors' indicates that teachers perceive this factor as having a high influence on students' SDLR.

The standard deviation of 2.34 reflects moderate variability, with responses ranging from 8 to 20. This suggests that while some teachers consider this factor less impactful, many view it as a most important contributor to SDLR.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Influence of Assessment-related Factors on SDLR

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions of the influence of Assessment-related Factors on students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness. The table provides the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores, offering an overview of the respondents' perception level.

Table 6

Teachers' Perception Level of the Influence of Assessment-related Factors on SDLR

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Perception Level	370	7	20	15.19	2.71

The mean score of 15.19 out of a possible range of 4 to 20 for the factor 'Assessment-related Factors' suggests that teachers view this factor as having a high influence on students' SDLR. Teachers recognise the importance of effective assessment practices, such as utilising various assessment strategies, such as project-based assessments and other formative assessment techniques, continuous evaluation, and corrective feedback, in fostering SDL.

The standard deviation 2.71 indicates moderate response variability, with perceptions ranging from 7 to 20. This reflects that while some teachers consider this factor low impact, many view it as a most important contributor to SDLR.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Influence of Technological Factors on SDLR

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions of the influence of Technological Factors on students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness. The table provides the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores, offering an overview of the respondents' perception level.

Table 7

Teachers' Perception Level of the Influence of Technological Factors on SDLR

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Perception Level	370	5	25	18.88	3.07

The mean score of 18.88 out of a possible range of 5 to 25 for the factor 'Technological Factors' suggests that teachers perceive this factor as having a high influence on students' SDLR.

The standard deviation of 3.07 reflects low variability, with scores ranging from 5 to 25. While some teachers consider this factor less impactful, many view it as a major contributor to SDLR.

Teachers' Perceptions of the Influence of Curriculum-related Factors on SDLR

Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions of the influence of Curriculum-related Factors on students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness. The table provides the mean, standard deviation, and range of scores, offering an overview of the respondents' perception level.

Table 8

Teachers' Perception Level of the Influence of Curriculum-related Factors on SDLR

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Perception Level	370	7	20	14.69	2.32

The mean score of 14.69 out of a possible range of 4 to 20 for the factor 'Curriculum-related Factors' suggests that teachers perceive this factor as having a high influence on students' SDLR.

The standard deviation of 3.07 reflects low variability, with scores ranging from 7 to 20. While some teachers consider this factor to have a very low impact, many view it as a very highly impactful contributor to SDLR.

Ranking of Teachers' Perceptions on the Influential Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

The Garrett Ranking Technique is a statistical method used to convert respondents' rankings into scores, allowing for a comparison of the relative importance of each factor. The scores for each rank are summed and averaged to determine the mean score for each factor. The factor with the highest score is considered the most influential. This technique effectively prioritises factors based on teachers' collective perceptions and was used in this study to identify the key factors influencing students' readiness for self-directed learning.

Table 9 presents the results of the Garrett Ranking Technique, which analysed teachers' perceptions of the relative strength of six identified factors influencing students' readiness for engaging in Self-directed Learning. Respondents ranked these factors based on their perceived level of influence, and the rankings were converted into Garrett scores to determine the mean score and rank for each factor.

Table 9

Ranking of Influential Factors Influencing Students' SDLR as Perceived by Teachers

Factors	Total	Garrett Mean Score	Mean Rank
Student Related Factors	24509	66.24	1
Teacher Related Factors	20089	54.29	2
Contextual Factors	18863	50.98	3
Assessment and Evaluation Related Factors	15570	42.62	5
Technological Factors	16276	43.99	4
Curriculum Related Factors	15493	41.87	6

According to teachers, the Garrett Ranking Technique results indicate that Student-related Factors received the highest mean score of 66.24, making them the most influential factor affecting students' SDLR. This highlights the significant role of psychological factors such as self-efficacy, motivation, and emotional state; cognitive traits like learning styles and strategies, problem-solving skills, prior knowledge, learning goals; and behavioural aspects such as time management, collaboration and communication, interest in subjects and topics, academic performance, future goals, and leisure time in fostering SDL.

Teacher-related factors ranked second with a mean score of 54.29, emphasising the importance of facilitative teaching styles, teacher support, feedback, and teaching methodologies in enhancing SDLR. Contextual Factors ranked third with a mean score of 50.98, reflecting the influence of external conditions such as family and peer support, parents' engagement in education physical environment, and access to learning resources.

Technological Factors (43.99), Assessment-related Factors (42.62), and Curriculum-related Factors (41.87) ranked fourth, fifth, and sixth, respectively. While these factors were perceived as less influential than student-related and teacher-related factors, their contributions to SDLR remain noteworthy, particularly in integrating technology and designing effective assessment methods.

Overall, the findings underscore the critical role of student- and teacher-related factors in influencing SDLR while highlighting the need to address contextual, technological, and curriculum-related aspects to support self-directed learning effectively.

Influence of Teacher Demographics on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

This study considers gender, age, teaching experience, the section to which teachers are assigned, their teaching subjects, and their professional qualifications. Appropriate statistical techniques were employed to determine whether these factors influence teachers' perceptions of the factors affecting students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR). The results of these analyses are presented in this section.

Impact of Gender on Teachers' perceptions of the Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

To investigate whether teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR varied by gender, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk normality test were first conducted. This test assessed whether the data for male and female teachers were normally distributed. The results of the normality tests are presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Test of Normality for Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR by Gender

Gender	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Male	0.050	115	0.200*	0.989	115	0.516
Female	0.042	255	0.200*	0.992	255	0.161

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality were conducted to assess the distribution of teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR based on gender. The results indicated that the data for male teachers were normally distributed, as both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (p = 0.200) and the Shapiro-Wilk (p = 0.516) were non-significant. Similarly, the data for female teachers were normally distributed, as both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (p = 0.200) and the Shapiro-Wilk (p = 0.161) were non-significant. Given that the data for male and female teachers met the normality assumption, an independent samples *t*-test was employed to assess whether gender impacted teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR. The results of the independent sample *t*-test are presented in Table 11.

Table 11

Impact of Gender on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	Upper
Total	Equal variances assumed	0.085	0.770	-0.627	368	0.531	-1.15	1.84	-4.77	2.47
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.628	220.63	0.531	-1.15	1.84	-4.77	2.47

Levene's test for equality of variances was non-significant, indicating that the assumption of equal variances was met, F (1, 368) = 0.085, p = 0.770. The independent samples t-test results revealed no significant difference in teachers' perceptions based on gender, t (368) = -0.627, p = 0.531. The mean difference between male and female teachers' perceptions was -1.15 (95% CI [-4.77, 2.47]), suggesting that gender does not significantly influence teachers' perceptions of the factors affecting students' SDLR.

Impact of Age on Teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR

To investigate whether teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR varied by teachers' age, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk normality test were first conducted. This test assessed whether the data for various age groups were normally distributed. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Tests of Normality for Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR by Age Category

Age	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
21-30	0.103	53	0.200*	0.971	53	0.231
31-40	0.041	224	0.200*	0.988	224	0.048
41-50	0.103	75	0.049	0.980	75	0.281
51-60	0.149	18	0.200*	0.949	18	0.417

The results indicated that the data for teachers aged 21-30 (*Kolmogorov-Smirnov* p = 0.200, *Shapiro-Wilk* p = 0.231), 41-50 (*Kolmogorov-Smirnov* p = 0.049, *Shapiro-Wilk* p = 0.281), and 51-60 (*Kolmogorov-Smirnov* p = 0.200, *Shapiro-Wilk* p = 0.417) were normally distributed. For teachers aged 31-40, the Shapiro-Wilk test was significant (p = 0.048), suggesting a slight deviation from normality, while the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (p = 0.200) indicated normality. Given that the data for most age groups were normally distributed, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was deemed appropriate to examine whether there were significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR across age categories. A one-way ANOVA was conducted; the results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13

Impact of Teachers' Age on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness

			Test of Homogeneity of Variances		ANOVA	
Age Category	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Statistic	Sig.	F	Sig.
21-30	133.06	16.57	2.394	0.068	2.236	0.084
31-40	134.67	16.89				
41-50	129.08	15.22				
51-60	132.17	11.15				

A Levene's test was conducted to assess the equality of variances across the age groups. The results showed that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not violated, as the Levene statistic was non-significant for all tests: based on the mean (F = 2.394, p = 0.068), based on the median (F = 2.372, p = 0.070), with adjusted degrees of freedom (F = 2.372, p = 0.070), and based on the trimmed mean (F = 2.414, p = 0.066). Since these results indicate no significant differences in variances, the assumption of homogeneity was met.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR across different age groups. The results indicated no significant difference in perceptions between the age groups, F (3, 366) = 2.236, p = 0.084. The between-group variance (593.36) was compared to the within-group variance (265.35), but the difference was not statistically significant. Thus, age did not significantly impact teachers' perceptions of factors influencing students' SDLR.

Impact of Teaching Experience on Teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR

To investigate whether teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR varied by teaching experience, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk normality test were first conducted. This test assessed whether the data for selected teaching experience categories were normally distributed. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 14.

Table 14

Tests of Normality for Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR by Teaching Experience

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
Tea. Exp	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
0-10	0.052	264	0.083	0.991	264	0.089
11-20	0.130	106	0.000	0.969	106	0.013

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests were conducted to determine whether the data for teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR were normally distributed based on teaching experience. For teachers with 0-10 years of teaching experience, both tests indicated that the data were normally distributed *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* $p = 0.083$, *Shapiro-Wilk* $p = 0.089$. However, for teachers with 11-20 years of teaching experience, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ($p < 0.001$) and the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p = 0.013$) suggested a deviation from normality.

Given the non-normal distribution of data for the 11-20 years of teaching experience group, the Mann-Whitney U test, a non-parametric alternative, was employed to examine whether there were significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR across teaching experience categories. The results of the Mann-Whitney U test are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Impact of Teaching Experience on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

Teaching Experience	N	Mean Rank	U	Z	*p*
0-10	264	193.74	11816.6	-2.340	0.019
11-20	106	164.97			

The results indicated a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $U = 11{,}816.6$, $Z = -2.34$, $p = 0.019$. Teachers with 0–10 years of experience (mean rank = 193.74) reported higher perceptions than those with 11–20 years of experience (mean rank = 164.97). Thus, the null hypothesis of no difference in perceptions across the two teaching experience groups was rejected. These findings suggest that teaching experience influences teachers' perceptions of factors affecting students' SDLR.

Impact of Teaching Grade Level on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

To investigate whether teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR varied by teaching grade level, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk normality test were first conducted. This test assessed whether the data for teaching grade-level categories were normally distributed. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Tests of Normality for Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR by Teaching Grade-Level

Grades	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Grade 6-11	0.038	288	0.200*	0.993	288	0.167
Grades 12 &13	0.089	82	0.167	0.978	82	0.166

A Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test of normality were conducted to assess the distribution of teachers' perceptions of factors influencing students' SDLR based on the grade levels they teach. For teachers teaching Grades 6-11, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (p = 0.200) and Shapiro-Wilk test (p = 0.167) indicated that the data were normally distributed. Similarly, for teachers teaching Grades 12-13, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (p = 0.167) and Shapiro-Wilk test (p = 0.166) also suggested normality.

Given that the data for teachers teaching Grades 6-11 and Grades 12-13 met the normality assumption, an independent samples t-test was employed to assess whether the grade level taught impacted teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether the grade level taught influences teachers' perceptions of the factors affecting students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR). The results of the t-test are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Impact of Teaching Grade Level on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total	Equal variances assumed	0.220	0.639	-1.306	368	0.192	-2.675	2.047	-6.700	1.351
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.273	126.144	0.205	-2.675	2.100	-6.831	1.482

The results of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances (F = 0.220, p = 0.639) confirmed that the assumption of equal variances was met. Therefore, assuming equal variances, the independent samples *t*-test assessed whether the grade level taught influences teachers' perceptions of the factors affecting students' SDLR.

The t-test results indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in teachers' perceptions between those teaching Grades 6-11 (M = 132.60, SD = 16.19) and those teaching Grades 12-13 (M = 135.27, SD = 16.95), t (368) = -1.306, p = 0.192. The mean difference was -2.67 (95% CI [-6.70, 1.35]).

This reveals that teaching grade level does not significantly impact teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR.

Impact of Teaching Subjects on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

To investigate whether teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR varied by teaching Subject, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk normality test were first conducted. This test assessed whether the data for teaching subject categories were normally distributed. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

Tests of Normality for Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR by Teaching Subject Category

Subject	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Science	0.060	85	0.200*	0.984	85	0.398
Social Science	0.091	75	0.200	0.971	75	0.084
Maths	0.092	61	0.200*	0.975	61	0.252
Technological Subjects	0.161	43	0.007	0.958	43	0.119
Languages	0.080	73	0.200*	0.973	73	0.112
Aesthetic and Physical Education	0.107	33	0.200*	0.956	33	0.199

Based on the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of normality, the data for most subject categories, including Science (*Kolmogorov-Smirnov p* = 0.200, *Shapiro-Wilk p* = 0.398), Social Science (*Kolmogorov-Smirnov p* = 0.200, *Shapiro-Wilk p* = 0.084), Mathematics (*Kolmogorov-Smirnov p* = 0.200, *Shapiro-Wilk p* = 0.252), Languages (*Kolmogorov-Smirnov p* = 0.200, *Shapiro-Wilk p* = 0.112), and Aesthetic and Physical Education (*Kolmogorov-Smirnov p* = 0.200, *Shapiro-Wilk p* = 0.199), indicated normality.

However, for Technological Subjects, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was significant (p = 0.007), suggesting a deviation from normality, while the Shapiro-Wilk test was not significant (p = 0.119), indicating normality.

Given that the data for most subject categories were normally distributed, one-way ANOVA was deemed appropriate to examine whether there were significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR across subject categories. A One-way ANOVA was conducted; the results are presented in Table 19.

Table 19

Impact of Teaching Subject Category on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

			Test of Homogeneity of Variances		ANOVA		Welch	
Subject Category	Mean	Std. Deviation	Levene's Statistic	Sig.	F	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
Science	135.55	14.56	2.631	0.024	0.738	0.595	0.795	0.555
Social Science	131.32	16.90						
Maths	132.82	15.17						
Technological Subjects	134.91	15.48						
Languages	132.14	16.15						
Aesthetic and Physical Education	132.10	22.56						

The results of the one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences between groups, F (3, 366) = 0.738, p = 0.595. This p-value is above the conventional significance level of 0.05, suggesting that teachers' perceptions of factors influencing SDLR do not significantly vary across the different subject categories.

Given the violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances, as indicated by Levene's test (Table 19), which showed significant results ($p < 0.05$), a Welch's test was performed as a robust alternative to the traditional ANOVA. The results of Welch's test, also presented in Table 19, confirmed these findings (F (3, 238.55) = 0.795, p = 0.555). Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, it indicates no significant differences in teachers' perceptions across subject categories when considering unequal variances.

The ANOVA and Welch's test yielded non-significant results, suggesting that teachers' perceptions of factors influencing SDLR do not differ significantly across subject categories. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected, and we conclude that there are no significant differences between subject categories regarding teachers' perceptions of SDLR.

Impact of Teachers' Professional Qualifications on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

To investigate whether teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' SDLR varied by teachers' professional qualifications, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-

Wilk normality test were first conducted. This test assessed whether the data for categories based on teachers' professional qualifications were normally distributed. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 20.

Table 20

Tests of Normality for Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' Self-Directed Learning Readiness by Teachers' Professional Qualifications

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
Professional Qualification	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
MEd	0.125	43	0.089	0.953	43	0.074
PGDE	0.062	159	0.200*	0.980	159	0.022
BEd	0.117	78	0.010	0.943	78	0.002
Dip in Teaching	0.080	68	0.200*	0.973	68	0.139
Trainied	0.134	22	0.200*	0.952	22	0.342

Normality tests were conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk (S-W) tests for five professional qualification groups. For the MEd, Diploma in Teaching, and Trained groups, *p*-values for both tests were above the significance threshold of 0.05 (*Kolmogorov-Smirnov* $p = 0.089$, $p = 0.200$, $p = 0.200$; *Shapiro-Wilk* $p = 0.074$, $p = 0.139$, $p = 0.342$), suggesting that the data for these groups were normally distributed.

For the PGDE group, the K-S test indicated normality ($p = 0.200$), but the S-W test showed a potential deviation from normality ($p = 0.022$). Similarly, for the BEd group, the K-S ($p = 0.010$) and S-W ($p = 0.002$) tests indicated significant deviations from normality.

Given that the assumption of normality was violated for the PGDE and BEd groups, the data were not fully consistent with the requirements for parametric tests like ANOVA. Therefore, a Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences among the five professional qualification groups in their perceptions of factors influencing students' SDLR. The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test are presented in Table 21.

Table 21

Impact of Teachers' Professional Qualifications on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

Qualification	N	Mean Rank	H Value	Sig.
MEd	43	207.44	13.77	0.008
PGDE	159	201.56		
BEd	78	153.35		
Dip in Teaching	68	178.39		
Trainied	22	162.50		

The Kruskal-Wallis H test results showed a statistically significant difference in perceptions among the groups (H (4) = 13.77, p = 0.008).

The mean ranks indicated that the MEd group had the highest mean rank (207.44), followed by the PGDE group (201.56), the Diploma in Teaching group (178.39), the Trained group (162.50), and the BEd group (153.35). This suggests that the MEd and PGDE groups perceived the factors influencing self-directed learning readiness more positively than the BEd, Diploma in Teaching, and Trained groups.

Since the test was significant, post hoc pairwise comparisons using Dunn's test with Bonferroni correction were conducted to determine which groups differed significantly. The results are shown in Table 22.

Table 22

Pairwise Comparisons of Professional Qualifications on Teachers' Perceptions of Factors Influencing Students' SDLR

Sample 1-Sample 2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.
BEd-Trained	-9.154	25.812	-.355	0.723	1.000
BEd-Dip in Ed	-25.044	17.740	-1.412	0.158	1.000
BEd-PGDE	48.217	14.781	3.262	0.001	0.011
BEd-MEd	54.096	20.309	2.664	0.008	0.077
Trained-Dip in Ed	15.890	26.227	.606	0.545	1.000
Trained-PGDE	39.063	24.323	1.606	0.108	1.000
Trained-MEd	44.942	28.028	1.603	0.109	1.000
Dip in Ed-PGDE	23.173	15.493	1.496	0.135	1.000
Dip in Ed-MEd	29.052	20.833	1.395	0.163	1.000
PGDE-MEd	5.879	18.379	.320	.749	1.000

Post hoc analyses using Dunn's test with Bonferroni correction revealed a statistically significant difference between the BEd and PGDE groups (p = 0.011), indicating a disparity in their perceptions of factors influencing self-directed learning readiness. No significant differences were identified for the other pairwise comparisons (p > 0.05). This result suggests a distinct perception gap between the BEd and PGDE groups. In contrast, the other professional qualification groups exhibited similar perceptions.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore teachers' perceptions of the factors influencing students' Self-SDLR in Sri Lanka, identify the most influential factors impacting SDLR, and investigate how teacher demographics influence these perceptions. The findings provide valuable insights into the significant role of various factors in shaping students' readiness for self-directed learning and the impact of teacher demographics on perceptions of SDLR.

Firstly, the results highlight that teachers generally perceive student-related, teacher-related, and contextual factors as the most influential in fostering students' SDLR. Student-related factors, including psychological traits, cognitive attributes, and behavioural aspects, were perceived as the most significant contributors to SDLR. This is consistent with the understanding that students' personal attributes and abilities are central to developing self-directed learning skills. Teachers also recognised the substantial impact of their own teaching-related factors, such as teaching methods, facilitative teaching styles, feedback, and support, which further emphasised the importance of a supportive and responsive learning environment in fostering SDLR. Contextual factors, including family and peer support, access to resources, and the physical learning environment, were viewed as highly influential, demonstrating that external conditions are essential in students' readiness to take responsibility for their own learning. Technological, assessment, and curriculum-related factors were perceived as having a somewhat lower, yet significant, influence on SDLR. Integrating technology in the learning process and designing effective assessments were key in encouraging students to engage in self-directed learning. This suggests that the educational system is beginning to embrace the potential of digital tools and innovative assessment methods in enhancing SDLR.

Secondly, the ranking of teachers' perceptions indicates that while student-related factors are universally seen as the most influential, teacher-related factors follow closely behind. This finding underscores the pivotal role of teachers in shaping SDLR, mainly through their teaching methods, feedback, and overall support for students. Contextual factors were ranked third, suggesting that while external factors are influential, the teacher-student interaction and the student's personal traits are seen as having a more direct impact on SDLR.

Thirdly, the study found that teacher demographics, such as teaching experience and professional qualifications, influenced their perceptions of SDLR. Specifically, teachers with fewer years of experience (0–10 years) reported higher perceptions of the factors affecting SDLR, indicating that newer teachers may be more attuned to the importance of these factors. Teachers with advanced professional qualifications, such as those holding MEd or PGDE degrees, perceived these factors as more influential, particularly compared with BEd or diploma-level qualifications. This suggests that higher levels of professional training may enhance teachers' awareness of and sensitivity to the factors contributing to students' SDLR.

In conclusion, the findings of this study emphasise the multifaceted nature of SDLR, highlighting the significant roles played by student-related, teacher-related, and contextual factors. While certain factors, particularly those related to the student's attributes and the quality of teaching, are viewed as most influential, technological, assessment, and curriculum-

related aspects also play an essential role. Furthermore, teacher demographics' impact on SDLR perceptions underscores the importance of professional development of secondary level teachers in Sri Lanka, in equipping educators with the knowledge and skills necessary to foster self-directed learning in students. Future research could explore the role of specific teacher interventions and examine how these perceptions translate into actual practices in the classroom.

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