

Professional Goal Oriented Perceptions of ESL Teachers: Implications for Career Development

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Teacher Professional Development (PD) has been prioritised in education and given it a great importance. The provision of PD initiatives for English as Second Language (ESL) teachers in the university sector in Sri Lanka has become vital especially considering the growing need for graduates to have sufficient levels of English language proficiency in order to secure jobs upon graduation. Therefore, a thorough understanding of ESL teachers' perceptions of the need to engage in PD initiatives is a must for them to yield better outcomes from the existing PD opportunities. A qualitative case study was carried out with ten in-service ESL teachers in Sabaragamuwa University in Sri Lanka to examine the implications of PD initiatives for their career goals. Participants reported three professional goal oriented perceptions which position practitioners' employment and career trajectories as the core of PD initiatives. Under one perception, they considered PD an approach which could empower them to be well-informed of and compliance with employment context. This facilitated teachers to be aligned with the institutional procedures and practices. They also identified PD as a means for satisfying requirements, obligations and responsibilities imposed by their employers. However, participants noted this perception as an undesirable attempt to PD by the governing institutions. Thirdly, for them, PD was associated with instrumental significance. Thus, they could develop immense professional and social capital in which they may heighten their competitiveness and validity in the employment market. Finally, this phenomenon may lead practitioners to further establish in the positions, secure promotions or receive other remunerations from employers. Findings of the study have implications for providers and policy makers in terms of the design, delivery and framing of PD programs in ESL to harness for optimal learner outcomes through focused PD opportunities.

Key words: *Career, Development, Goals, Professional*