

# THE ROLE OF NEWLY APPOINTED TEACHERS IN ADVANCING SCHOOL GOALS IN SRI LANKA

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## ABSTRACT

*In the 21st-century education system, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping educational outcomes, with newly appointed teachers being particularly important in achieving school objectives as they bring fresh perspectives to the school environment. This study was expected to investigate the role of newly appointed teachers in advancing school goals in Sri Lanka. The specific objectives of this study are to: identify the current role and impact of newly appointed teachers within the school setting, understand the core responsibilities and duties expected of these teachers, explore the integration process for new teachers within the educational system, and identify systems and procedures that align newly appointed teachers with the strategic goals of the school. This study employed a multi-quantitative methodology, guided by positivist and deductive research approaches. A survey strategy and a case study approach were used to investigate the research problem, with data collected through questionnaires and interviews administered to both teachers and students. The survey sample consists of participants from 10 semi-urban schools in the Warakapola Education Division within the Kegalle Education Zone, including 90 newly appointed teachers and 40 students (20 male and 20 female). Participants were selected through both purposive and random sampling methods. Data were analysed using thematic analysis and descriptive statistical strategies. The findings indicate that newly appointed teachers are often assigned a range of co-curricular responsibilities, including sports, arts, productivity initiatives, sociology, media, language events, and counselling. However, some school principals do not fully recognise or accurately assess the capabilities of these teachers. As a result, teachers may feel undervalued, which can negatively impact their motivation and performance, ultimately reducing their effectiveness. Based on these findings, it is recommended that principals receive professional development in management and leadership to assess and utilize the strengths of newly appointed teachers effectively. Additionally, a structured guideline is proposed to assist principals in identifying and understanding the unique capabilities of each teacher. Principals are also encouraged to conduct introductory discussions with new teachers to gain insight into their academic backgrounds and prior experiences, facilitating more informed assignment of responsibilities that align with each teacher's strengths.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Newly Appointed Teachers, Attitudes and Capacity Development, Teacher Contribution, Role of the Teacher*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching is one of the professions which is coming from the revolution of human history including history, "Teacher" is the maker of all other professions. So teaching is considered a very honorable service. In this research, the researcher intended to study the impact of the teachers who come into the school system as newly appointed and the effect of their contribution towards achieving the objectives of the schools in Sri Lanka. Teaching is the main mechanism to build future citizens with the needs of the future generation who build the country. The Teaching-Learning process which is happened between students and teachers is the process that must cover all the things in the education process. However, in 21<sup>st</sup>-century education teacher are not only doing transmission and transaction roles, he or she have to play a transformation role with their students for a successful Learning-Teaching process. Through that teachers can make a citizen who is required for the country's needs. In Sri Lankan traditional education system, schools are mainly not ready for 21<sup>st</sup>-century education. Especially the traditional way of physical resources, traditional way of teaching and very low infrastructure facilities

are there. Also, schools are categorised mainly into national schools and provincial schools according to the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment of constitute in Sri Lanka. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the contribution of newly appointed teachers to achieving school goals.

## **2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

Teaching has always been a foundation in society; great respect goes to teachers as givers of life to the upcoming generations. Indeed, it was Aristotle who noted that those who educate are more honourable than those who give life since teachers instruct their students in the "art of living well." This research is related to newly appointed teachers in Sri Lanka and how they contribute to achieving school goals. It will primarily focus on adaptation to and support for educational missions. The teachers are also supposed to develop the students into better citizens who can be responsive to the needs of the Sri Lankan society. Modern educational systems view teachers as facilitators and mentors in developing the critical thinking and problem-solving abilities of their students. As Darling-Hammond (2006) notes, effective systems prepare teachers for an ever-changing learning environment; this indeed is a steep learning curve for novice or first-year, teachers. Thus, integration would be quite problematic in Sri Lanka, since many schools still utilize traditional teaching approaches with meagre resources. There are also resource disparities among national and provincial school divisions, complicating the integration process of new teachers at the rural level. Newly appointed teachers bring fresh perspectives but often require robust support, mentorship, and a school environment that can help them to thrive. According to research done by Ingersoll and Strong (2011), well-supported novice teachers show better performance and retention, which positively impacts student achievement. In Sri Lanka, where educational reforms emphasize teacher support in the interest of student growth, the present study explores how the role of novice teachers aligns with school objectives and their preparedness for such a role in contributing toward students' academic and holistic development. This study is, therefore, definitely of great value in providing knowledge of the functions that newly appointed teachers perform in Sri Lankan schools and the value they create for the attainment of educational objectives. Through an exploration of the challenges and opportunities newly appointed teachers face, this study is bound to shape policy decisions and management practices in schools to offer support to new educators. Determining the contribution of newly appointed teachers helps in establishing those areas where teacher preparation programs and professional development need further work.

## **3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Subsequently, in the evolving educational setting in Sri Lanka, the three major emphasis areas for school goals include the delivery of quality and effective education, co-curricular/extracurricular activities, and the enhancement of physical resources. Newly appointed teachers can play an important role in helping realize these goals, as they can contribute new enthusiasm and ideas toward fulfilling those ideals established for the school. They would be aware of and abide by the culture and goals of the school and actively support them to make meaningful contributions. On the other hand, it also may mean that something may be wrong with how well these newly appointed teachers are supported in their roles and how well their roles are aligned with the overall institutional objectives. This study, therefore, intended to investigate the root causes of this mismatch and identify those areas of development that would help newly appointed teachers contribute more to moving the goals of schools forward.

## **4 OBJECTIVES**

- To identify the current role and impact of newly appointed teachers within the school environment.
- To recognize the core responsibilities and duties expected of school teachers.
- To probe the integration process for newly appointed teachers within the educational system.
- To find systems and procedures that align newly appointed teachers with the strategic goals of the school system.

## **5 LITERATURE**

Johnson (2017) has found in conducting research titled "The role of teachers in motivating students to learn". This researcher found that students are motivated to learn for various reasons, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Moreover, Johnson (2017) revealed how teachers can provide critical motivation to students. This study identified that learning and motivation identifies several approaches that teachers can take to increase students' motivation. While students may have an inherent motivation to learn, what matters most is support and guidance by the teacher. Teachers also provide environments supporting autonomy, personal relevance, or relatedness. More specifically, the competence provided by the teachers to students interested in a subject and developing students' self-efficacy is a significant factor influencing motivation; it does not measure how each factor increases students' motivation toward the subject of study. Datnow (2020) revealed the teachers' essential role in educational reform, covering their motivation, commitment, beliefs, professionalism, networks, and development. This article reflects on 20+ years of research on teachers' influence in reforms, exploring themes of agency, power, and social justice. It examines teachers' roles across various reform models, from grassroots changes to top-down

initiatives, and highlights the significance of teacher collaboration and participation as partners in educational research and practice. Branden's (2016) research study addresses the often-overlooked role of the teacher in task-based language teaching (TBLT) from three perspectives: as a mediator aiding students' language development, enhancing TBLT's effectiveness; as a key implementer and change agent in TBLT innovations; and as a researcher actively refining TBLT as a pedagogical approach. These roles underscore the teacher's central contribution to both the practice and ongoing development of second language education through TBLT.

Datnow's (2020) study, through touching on motivation, commitment, beliefs, professionalism, networks, and development, puts great stress on the teacher as indispensable in reform. This study, in retrospect to a career spanning over two decades of work, explores the impact of agency, power, and social justice on various forms of reforms to rethink teachers' functions. It discusses teachers' agency in grassroots and externally driven changes, with key focuses being the terms collaboration and research partnerships, and thereby draws out implications for future research, policy, and practice within education reform. Timm and Barth (2021) create a weightier discussion of competence models, integrating findings from experienced teachers of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The main contributions of the study are the validation of pedagogical content knowledge and content knowledge in ESD teaching; the illustrative example of ESD from Germany; and an investigation of teachers' perspectives on ESD, drivers, barriers, and structural competencies. The interviews with 12 German elementary ESD teachers describe two types of teachers having competencies for encouraging social change. As investigated by Thompson et al. (2013) in 2011, New Zealand introduced computer science into high schools, refocusing from user training to computer science education. Despite limited time for preparation, the new standards were immediately and widely taken up by teachers, supported through peer interactions and online communication. A survey of 91 teachers indicates motivated, similarly skilled, but low confidence teaching of computer science, pointing to the need for further professional development. The study offers pointers for other countries contemplating similar changes in schooling.

As explored by Aldrup et al. (2024), theoretical approaches underline that the management of teachers' emotions forms the core of successful teaching and students' good outcomes. Such a conclusion is supported by four key research lines: emotion regulation, coping, emotional labour, and emotional intelligence. The study of Aldrup et al. (2024), is integrated with an overview of 68 studies which identify three key strategies: adaptive external/internal regulation, expressive regulation, and general regulation ability. Results point out that there are mixed effects: expressive regulation often bears a negative impact on teaching, while external/internal regulation is linked positively with effectiveness; however, the findings are reliant on heavy usage of teacher self-reports. Zhang (2022) explored research on the influence of relationships between teachers and learners on English as a Foreign Language learners' academic performance. Results showed that good relationships with teachers are positively and significantly associated with the learners' academic success. The feeling of belonging is fostered, as is grit, well-being, self-efficacy, engagement, motivation, and enjoyment of language. There are implications for EFL learners, teachers, and trainers underlined by the role of rapport, teacher immediacy, and positive interactions in necessary conditions for effective language learning. Hajovsky et al. (2020) explored how teacher self-efficacy influences teacher-student relationships from second to sixth grade, focusing on closeness and conflict. Findings indicate that teacher-student conflict remained stable over time, while closeness showed a declining trend, especially for students with higher initial conflict levels. Teachers reported closer, less conflictual relationships with female students, though racial and gender alignment effects were inconsistent. Higher teacher self-efficacy correlated with greater closeness and less conflict. These insights suggest enhancing teacher self-efficacy to improve classroom relationship quality.

Young et al. (2005) have also demonstrated that greater student achievement in schools makes the positions more desirable to potential employees. However, this study found that beginning teachers with less than-average performing schools had higher initial working condition satisfaction when compared with teachers in higher-performing schools, as would be anticipated by cognitive dissonance theory. By the end of the school year, however, overall satisfaction between high- and low-performing school teachers levelled out, eliminating the previous difference. Raba's (2016) study has investigated problems faced by newly appointed teachers in public schools in Palestine, in managing their classrooms in light of attitudes and behaviours about gender and academic qualifications. From the 150 teachers in the Qabatia governorate of the West Bank, 30 teachers were randomly selected and each responded to a 14-item questionnaire during the 2014–2015 school year. Results indicated that competency in classroom management skills was at 53.7% for these teachers. It suggests that there needs to be the inclusion of classroom management theory during pre-service education, and the provision of structured mentoring for new teachers by their more experienced colleagues. Appiah investigated (2021) how the induction

system is carried out in the public basic schools in the Adansi North District, Central Region, and assesses implications for induction on teaching and learning. In this respect, the specific objectives of the study are to identify the training programs, appreciate the causes of ineffective induction practice, and assess the effects of effective induction. The design used for the study is a descriptive survey; data were sourced from 82 head teachers and assistant head teachers through simple random sampling. Results indicate that some of the issues to be found in induction programs include problems with teachers' behaviour and handling conflicts. Reasons found for induction programs not to be effective incorporate work overload and pressures with negative attitudes from other veteran teachers. Induction programs, when they are successful, promote professional development and socialize new staff into the work environment. The research concludes that head teachers' workload should be lessened to make induction programs more effective.

Hammond (2000) This report summarizes data from a comprehensive 50-state survey, case studies, and national assessments to investigate the link between teacher qualification and student achievement. Perhaps the most important finding reported is that investments in teaching quality yield returns in terms of improved student achievement. Quantitative findings reveal teacher preparation and certification as the strongest correlates of reading and mathematics achievement, even when gains in poverty and language status are controlled. Analyses show that state policies regarding teacher education, licensure, hiring, and professional development explain teacher qualifications. Implications for how such findings might raise the quality and equity of public education are discussed. Hamid et al. (2012) found that, as instruction has moved from teacher-centred to student-centred teaching, new skills are needed to teach effectively. Effectiveness cannot be measured only by students' achievements or their perceptions of teachers. This study investigates one model for teacher effectiveness, focusing on some of the aspects of cognitive ability, namely assessment skills and IT, and interpersonal or soft skills. 2000 experienced teachers in Malaysia were used as the source of data, whereby 1366 questionnaires were analyzed using structural equation modelling. Results provided that both cognitive ability and personality were significant predictors of classroom management; effective teaching thus required a balance between cognitive competencies and interpersonal skills.

The study of Mensah (2018) aimed to explore the challenges faced in the induction of newly appointed teachers within Public Junior High Schools within Manso Nkwanta Circuit, Amansie West District, Ghana. Among the main activities were determining how induction programs are organized; finding the causes for ineffective practice; and assessing the effects of effective induction on teaching and learning. The survey is descriptive and cross-sectional. In this survey, 195 participants were head teachers and newly appointed/veteran teachers. Induction programs were there, but due to work overload, negative attitudes from existing teachers, and also financial constraints, they suffered. Effective induction has been found to assure the placement of new teachers into the school environment. It is, therefore, recommended by the study that very costly induction programmes should receive financial support from the Ghana Education Service. Kyrou et al. (2020) explored the critical role of principals and teachers' associations in the reception and acclimatization process of newly appointed teachers within schools. Whereas many studies emphasize that receiving a teacher effectively is important, both for school functioning and for the development of the teachers themselves, there are still many problems in practice. The results point out that positive attitudes of principals and teachers' associations are of decisive importance for the improvement of the reception process. The study supports the extension of more such efforts in extending better support to newly appointed teachers during transition.

Antwi (2020) investigated the challenges that induce newly appointed public basic teachers in Abofour Circuit A. The study adopted a descriptive research design using a mixed-method approach. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 71 participants comprising 64 teachers and 7 head teachers. Data collection was done through questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data analyses were done through descriptive statistics, while qualitative data was analyzed thematically. It was, therefore, realized that induction included topics such as professional code of conduct and lesson preparation, and induction, therefore, influenced the professional development of teachers positively. However, some of the identified problems included inadequate time and poor communication with no induction blueprint. The study recommends that the Ghana Education Service develop a standardized induction policy to make the process effective for newly appointed teachers. As found by Usta (2023) in Turkey, the appointments of teachers are centrally carried out by the Ministry of National Education, and teachers are generally appointed to places far from their cultural backgrounds, which may decrease their motivation and organizational commitments. A draft scale was formed for the evaluation of the adaptation of newly appointed teachers to the profession; it comprised 28 items obtained from legal texts and relevant studies. To check the construct validity, the rotated principal component analysis was used. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.949, while the Bartlett test was significant. After analysis, two items were discarded since their load values were low, retaining 26 items with three factors. These factors

were labelled "Compliance with the profession," "Environmental compliance," and "Compliance with the school." The first factor accounted for 22.55% of the variance, while the second accounted for 19.13%, and the third for 18.11%. The total scale also showed high reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.955, and its internal consistency coefficients for all factors were 0.91.

## **6 METHODOLOGY**

The main research methodology in this study is multi-quantitative, and especially, positivism and deductive research approaches were used. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a complete understanding of a research problem" (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). A survey strategy and a case study approach were used to study this research problem. The case study approach can be used to investigate actual contemporary life settings and life cycles of people, and it allows researchers to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events of people (Yin, 2009) and it provides the researcher with a holistic understanding of a problem, issue, or phenomenon with its social context (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). "Survey research provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection with the intent of generalizing from a sample to a population" (Fowler, 2008 In Creswell, 2017). Questionnaires and interviews were the main data collection methods that were administered for gathering data from teachers as well as students.

In quantitative research, relevant research data is obtained through the operation of variables, and facilities are provided to measure them. Creswell (2009) indicates that the main purpose of quantitative research, in most cases is to test for relationships between variables. Especially, the researcher sets limits for the investigation before starting the research, and data collection is done according to the relevant variables along those limits. The researcher can control the relevant variables through which the effect of the relevant phenomenon can be properly detected. Therefore, although it is presupposed that quantitative research often takes place in a controlled environment, not all quantitative research can be called observational. Various research strategies are used in quantitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2008). Since this study aims at collecting some significant quantitative aspects associated with the participants' understanding of the role of newly appointed teachers in advancing school goals in Sri Lanka., survey research strategy as a quantitative research strategy is thought to be more appropriate to gather quantitative data.

In this research, a survey research strategy was used to collect quantitative data. The case study was used for gathering qualitative data in this study. In research studies where the survey research approach is used, various respondents provide information about the relevant phenomenon and as such, rich information about the research variables can be expressed (Baudap, 2011). However, it is very important to select an appropriate sample to represent the entire population of the study. Questionnaires and structured interviews can be administered for data collection, and it is possible to collect a large amount of data from a large number of respondents at once. In this study, questionnaires and interviews were administered to gather data. The data collected from a representative sample allows for generalization for the entire population. The total number of participants, 90 teachers and 40 students for the questionnaire survey were selected. The survey sample comprises participants from 10 semi-urban schools in the Warakapola Education Division within the Kegalle Education Zone. A total of 90 newly appointed teachers, along with 20 male and 20 female students from these schools, were selected to participate in the study.

To select a sensible sample and also to gather rich information, the participants of this study were selected purposively as well as randomly. The researcher personally mediated in the data-gathering process. Thematic analysis and descriptive statistical strategies were used in analyzing the data in this study. To maintain trustworthiness and ethical consideration, various measures were taken by the researcher during the research process. The primary data required for this study was collected through a survey which is conducted in the targeted population of this study, which was newly appointed teachers and students, they were asked to voluntarily participate in this survey aimed at measuring their commitment to achieving the objectives and academic performance. Before responding to the survey questionnaire, all participants were informed about the confidentiality of the information they provided and about keeping their anonymity. Participants are also informed that the data they provided is used for research purposes only and all ethical guidelines are followed in this regard. 90 newly appointed teachers and 40 conveniently available students were requested to participate in the survey and upon their free consent, they were provided with the questionnaire.

## **7 RESULTS**

It has focused primarily on observing the role of newly appointed teachers in semi-urban schools and specifically those within the Warakapola Education Division, taking into consideration their roles and responsibilities, their engagement, and their contribution to attaining the goals of schools. The newly

recruited teachers mainly have the classroom-teaching load, typically in one or two subjects, but all of them significantly involve themselves in several co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Out of 90 teachers, 48 teachers were assigned additional responsibilities like cadet corps, environmental clubs, media units, and sports teams, which include athletics, depending on the size and facilities of the school. Sports coaching, with a great focus on athletics, is another broad area in which schools actively engage these teachers. While some teachers contribute to aesthetic subjects like music, art, drama, and dance, few (five teachers in this sample) are tasked with such roles. Most importantly, only four teachers have management-related responsibilities, which serves as another indication that schools often limit the involvement of newly appointed teachers in strategic decision-making. This little participation in school management, therefore denies schools the chance to capitalize on innovative capabilities these teachers have in respect of the use of the latest technology amongst others that could otherwise be beneficial to their school management.

The classrooms continue to remain the principal workplace for the teachers under consideration given the priorities of the principal. Such a teaching focus leaves little room for new teachers to engage in administrative or leadership activities. From the responses obtained on the questionnaire 78 teachers out of the total of 90 believe that they should be active contributors to school objectives beyond mere teaching, but they, in turn, feel that principals are insufficiently willing to either give authority to take part in broader school management activities. Only 12 of the teachers indicated that their work responsibilities centre around teaching alone, which also is a disconnect between their roles and their potential contribution to school development. The awareness of the competencies by the principals is also irregular. A sum of 54 teachers claimed the principals are aware of their competencies; however, there was still a lack of systematic methods to properly analyze those skills. Further, 36 teachers felt that their principals did not fully understand their skills, and such an environment may influence the performance in schools to a greater extent on the embedment of 21st-century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving. The gap suggests that the principals are in a better position to try criteria-based approaches to assessing teachers' skills, which can help them exploit a teacher's competency areas more effectively.

The current study explored the four major avenues to enter the educational system in Sri Lanka: the selection of school graduates by competitive examination or interview; the holders of National Diploma from Colleges of Education; nonschool-trained assistant teachers appointed on an ad hoc basis; distance and blended learning routes into professional upgrade. Each of these four avenues provides teachers with a different kind of preparation and skills, which has implications for developing a coherent teaching standard within the school system. What will close this gap is continuous professional development and targeted support. Teachers stated that a regimented schedule of work-6:30 AM to 3:30 PM would enable them to meet the goals of the school. Most teachers currently work from 7:30 AM to 1:30 PM, but many were ready to extend hours if guidance and structured roles were provided. A disposition like this demonstrates flexibility in new teachers and points to an area where school leadership can optimize their contributions with supportive frameworks.

Using McGregor's X-Y Theory as a reference, it is evident that the teachers in this sample would prefer a democratic and supportive work environment more than the autocratic approach. Most of the teachers consider themselves optimistic and proactive professionals who respond better to constructive motivation than to rigid administrative control. They believe in participative governance and opportunities for professional growth. Such an environment, they argued, would enhance job satisfaction and performance significantly. Accordingly, professional development programs, especially through the implementation of the SBTPD model, provided the key to increasing teaching effectiveness. Professional development programs maintain teachers in high spirits and, simultaneously, help schools to achieve their strategic goals. Principals can promote job satisfaction through a collaborative and supportive school culture, which can provide full empowerment to teachers and afford them to contribute positively toward school development.

## **8 CONCLUSION**

This study confirms the centrality of newly appointed teachers to move forward the interests of a school. However, this study showed that too many teachers were underutilized in their skills and potential because of a mere lack of recognition and strategy that aligns them with the school's needs. The teachers will have a greater impact on school functions and student outcomes if there is a more systematic method of recognizing their teaching skills. Findings show that newly recruited teachers, in particular the diploma and degree holders, are full of enthusiasm and ready to be a great help for nearly all aspects of school management. The majority can participate in cocurricular activities in sports, aesthetics, counselling, media, and language education. Even though they may be enthusiastic and multifaceted in their skills, principals commonly fail to make full utilization of such teachers due to not considering their strengths. This negligence can have disastrous effects on demotivating teachers, reducing involvement,

and ultimately any potential influence on the development of the school. A disconnect between teachers' skills and the roles entrusted to them underlined a critical gap in management practices. Assigning responsibilities effectively involves the principal understanding the strengths different teachers bring into the school and delegating duties accordingly so that duties match competencies. This may, in turn, encourage schools to adopt other measures that could lead to enhanced teacher satisfaction, a greater overall output, and a far more vibrant and supported educational environment in which the potential of newly appointed staff is being utilized to its fullest degree.

## 9 RECOMMENDATIONS

Training in management and leadership skills that highlight the competencies of newly appointed teachers would thus be a core aspect of effective school management. Knowledge of competencies in specific areas would enable the principals to assign duties that are consistent with the competencies and objectives of the school to create a perception of purpose and productivity. For instance, some could be good in aesthetics and be put in charge of beautification projects while others are knowledgeable about the environment and could spearhead the management of waste. Strategic tools range from SWOT and TWOS analyses to help the principals in making predictions on which obstacles may arise and align strategic teachers' contributions toward school goals. A stimulating, democratic work environment would be more appropriate. It allows teachers to make creative contributions and become involved in decision-making on some issues, thus investing in the school's success. The focus of professional development should be innovative teaching techniques, including topics on how to transfer towards interactive, student-centred learning as an approach that engages and motivates students. Schools need to take the lead with 21st-century skills and encourage new teachers to employ technology and new teaching methods to keep learning current. Ongoing professional development through self-directed learning and school-based initiatives would ensure that teachers continue to grow with the times and evolving demands of education. Capacity in educators, a work environment that is collaborative in nature, and continued development will enable schools to take their achievements in education to higher levels and contribute to better student success.

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