Blended Librarianship: Exploring a Concept to Support Teaching and Learning in Sri Lankan Universities in the Digital Era

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The transition to student-centered pedagogy in Sri Lanka's higher education system raises the possibility of an increased role for academic libraries in supporting teaching and learning processes. However, the current literature demonstrates a significant lack of collaboration between libraries, academic staff, and faculties, leading to inadequate support for teaching and learning initiatives (Perera & Suraweera, 2023; George et al., 2019; Wickramanayake, 2016). In line with the future government vision, the National Education System is set to change from its strict structure, allowing for a more novel approach that supports 21st-century skills and competencies (*National Education Policy Framework of Sri Lanka*, 2023). Hence, the National Education Policy Framework in Sri Lanka 2023-2033 emphasizes an urgent need to digitally transform general education in Sri Lanka to become more globally competitive (*National Education Policy Framework of Sri Lanka*, 2023).

The library plays an essential role in assisting academics and connecting with students. Still, there is a notable gap in integrating novel technological competencies with instructional designer skills among librarians in Sri Lanka (Perera & Suraweera, 2023; George et al., 2019). Blended librarianship, a concept combining instructional design and new technological competence with traditional library practices, could address the challenges of digital transformation of the Sri Lankan higher education system.

This study will use qualitative research methods and constructivist grounded theory as the research strategy. The primary data collection tools will be semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and documentary analysis. An academic library is crucial for any educational institution. It plays a significant role in supporting teaching and learning in higher education. Therefore, this study aims to explore the potential of the blended librarian

concept and explore the experience and perception of librarians in supporting teaching and learning in Sri Lanka's higher educational institutions.