

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

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## Abstract

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 needs to change from its strict structure and allow for a more novel approach that upgrades 21st-century skills and competencies (National Education Policy Framework of Sri Lanka, 2023). Hence the National Education Policy Framework in Sri Lanka 2023-2033 mentioned 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). The possibility of blended librarianship, which is a concept combining instructional design and new technical competence with traditional library practices, could address these challenges and enhance the impact of academic libraries within the higher education system. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore how the blended librarian concept supports collaboration between libraries and academic stakeholders and enhances teaching and learning in Sri Lanka's higher educational institutions.

This study will use qualitative methods using semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. An academic library is crucial for any educational institution. It plays a significant role in supporting teaching and learning in higher education in Sri Lanka. The goal is to promote collaboration between libraries and academic stakeholders and improve teaching and learning in the country's higher educational institutions. This can be considered a theoretical

contribution and a practical course of action in the field of library and information science. These factors can support the Sri Lankan higher education system to improve the teaching and learning environment, especially in the digital environment.