

## LIBRARIANS COLLABORATING WITH TEACHING FACULTY: SUCCESSFUL WAYS

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### ABSTRACT

Ways of accessing information is changing due to ever increasing volume of information and to the rapid development of technology. Librarians need to find out solutions to handle this scenario. One successful method is to work collaboratively with teaching faculty. Survey research method was applied in this study. Though there are different ways to librarians to collaborate with teaching staff in Sri Lankan universities, a systematic study has not been carried out locally to find out different ways based on their perception. A randomly selected sample of 36 teaching faculty and librarians from 3 universities; Peradeniya, Moratuwa and Ruhuna were tested in this study. Interview script consisting of 14 questions was the main data collection instrument. Qualitative data analysis was carried out using software package SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys TM 2.0. Managing and refining 81 elements of raw data ended up with 11 meaningful categories. These categories were the identified ways of collaborating librarians with teaching faculty in this study. Information literacy instruction, team teaching, curriculum reviewing, designing assignments, co-supervision of research projects, collection development, and collaborative research are some of the themes that extracted under faculty-library collaboration. Information literacy programmes scored the highest value (89%) whereas the curriculum development method scored the lowest value of 17%. Further this study will facilitate authorities to identify the expectations of collaborators and to address the issues concerned by them ensuring effective faculty-library collaboration in universities.

**Keywords:** Faculty-library Collaboration, Teaching Faculty, Librarians, Library Services

### INTRODUCTION

Collaboration leads to achieve goals which cannot make in isolation and it helps to leverage compatible expertise. Collaboration is working together by two or more individuals or organizations to achieve common goals. In order to equip students with abilities of life-long learning and critical thinking, university teachers need to work collaboratively with librarians. This process is called faculty-library collaboration. Faculty-library collaborators bring many benefits to the university system. Building strong relationships with faculty and other campus professionals is a necessary building block to librarians' success. Jaguszewski and Williams (2013) have identified the need for collaboration as one of the new library roles and models emerge. Ever increasing volume of information, rapid development of technology, the abundance of digital information in different formats, different research methods adopted by scholars and their different practices in communicating and disseminating research and creative work have accelerated the role of librarians. Sacharand (2012) identifies the need of faculty-library collaboration is due to changes in the higher education environment, paradigm shift in the library and information profession and the teachers' and librarians' changing roles.

Faculty-library collaborative activities cover a wide range of area belongs to the library as well as to the faculty. Faculty-library collaboration enhances the academic success of students and increases research capacity (Thi Pham & Tanner, 2013). Information

literacy instructions, team teaching, curriculum reviewing, designing assignments, co-supervision of research projects, collection development, and collaborative research are some of the activities that come under faculty-library collaboration. This study is important for the library profession, potential collaborators, university authorities and policy makers of higher education sector. The objective of this study is to find out the ways of collaborating librarians with teaching faculty. Results of this study may pave the way to the development of effective collaborative activities between teaching faculty and librarians.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Survey research method was applied in this study. Opinions and attitudes of teaching faculty and librarians towards faculty-library collaboration were gathered through the survey. Survey was carried out at 3 selected universities in Sri Lanka; Peradeniya, Moratuwa and Ruhuna. Randomly selected 36 teaching staff of Engineering faculties and librarians of those universities were the respondents. Main data collection instrument was an interview script. It consisted of 14 open ended questions. In conducting interviews, the communication media can be of face to face, telephone or electronic. Since this study was expecting to get individual views, face to face interviews were used as the communication media.

There were both short and long open-ended answers in the data collected through interviews. Due to less complexity and fewer ambiguous words in the short open-ended answers made it easy categorization. Longer open-ended answers were high in complexity and most of the answers were in this nature as the respondents in this survey were educated and motivated towards new concepts and they were attempted to answer and describe in detail. Though the manual approach of text analysis is more accurate than automated text analysis due to human understanding of text is good, an automated text analysis method was applied to eliminate the biasness of the researcher towards interpretation of certain terms. In addition to that, usage of automated text analysis saves time and labour. Results were obtained through text analysis using software package SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys™ 2.0. Text analysis is a qualitative data analysis method and it extracts useful information from text so that the main ideas contained within the text can be grouped into an appropriate number of categories.

Data entered into MS Excel sheet was imported in to SPSS Text Analysis for Surveys™ 2.0. Researcher's familiarity of working in MS Excel was the reason to enter data to Excel at the initial stage. Imported data was used to perform extraction as this is an integral part of the text analysis.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The extracted results are important as those serve as the building blocks for themes or categories. Hence fine-tuning of extraction from terms from the beginning ensures accuracy and continuity in response categorization. Unrecognized synonyms (e.g. likeness, interest), mistyped terms, insignificant terms (e.g. more, good, new), incorrect matches and non-extracted terms were given emphasis to review the results.

A set of categories is the end result of a text analysis. This can be obtained using automated classification system, creating manually or combination of both techniques. SPSS Text analysis Manual (2000) states that by applying combined techniques will capture the full range of responses. Hence the categories were obtained using both automated and manual techniques in this study. 'Managing and refining categories' and 'Creating categories manually' options in the software were used for manual technique.

A total of 81 terms were extracted from the raw data of this study. Managing and refining interview data ended up giving 11 main categories and they are given with the percentage value of preferences in Table 1. These 11 categories were obtained using the automated classification system of the software and these are the ways identified to collaborate librarians with teaching faculty. Information literacy programs scored the highest value (89%) whereas the curriculum development method scored the lowest value of 17%. This reveals that majority of librarians and teaching faculty do information literacy programs collaboratively and on the other hand librarians involvement is minimal on curriculum development process in Sri Lankan universities.

Table 1: Categories of faculty-library collaboration

Category	Percentage value
Information literacy instructions	89
Bibliographic instructions	79
Team teaching	71
Collection development/ Resource selection	58
Designing assignments	52
Co-authoring	50
Joint research	36
Co-supervising	34
Module teaching	30
Organizing events	26
Curriculum development	17

## CONCLUSION

Identification of different ways to collaborate by librarians and teaching faculty is very vital in designing and maintaining collaboration projects. This will lead to quality research output in universities. Teaching faculty need to be made aware of the processes which their librarians can be involved. It is paramount important that the authorities of the universities need to think about the process of collaboration in designing activities among teaching faculty and librarians. Librarians' presence in meetings like faculty boards, research management and supervision, financial, corporate and strategic planning is essential to get their expertise. If librarians are given the opportunity to work with teaching faculty, they will support with their skills and competencies in entrepreneurialism, creativity, project management, leadership, fund raising and risk taking even at the initial decision making process. Future research can be geared in investigating how to improve the effectiveness of each process of faculty-library collaboration identified in the university environment. This study is important for the library profession, potential collaborators, university authorities and policy makers of higher education sector.

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