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Abstract

Academic librarians working in higher education institutions in Sri Lanka have been enjoying faculty status for the last forty years. The study explores their self-identity, and their perceptions about the teaching role. In total, there are 140 academic librarians working in universities in Sri Lanka. A survey was conducted among them. An analysis of thirty one responses revealed that a significant number of respondents consider themselves as professionals rather than faculty member. A section of the academic librarians believes that the society does not recognize teaching by librarians. Another section generally opines that librarians are reluctant to take up the task of teaching, but the survey found out that 80% of respondents voluntarily teach at their institutions. It was also found that, as reported by many other studies, the academic programs that many of them had attended in library schools did not provide enough training for teaching jobs.

Keywords: librarians' professional role, librarians' teaching role, librarians' perceptions, librarians' identity, librarians' faculty status, Sri Lanka

Introduction

Faculty status for academic librarians has been a burning issue since the 19th century in several countries. A review of scholarly literature shows that the librarians in colleges and universities have not yet achieved considerable success in achieving this status in its entirety. Even in the USA where extensive research has been going on in this regard and professional associations have been pushing for the case for the last several decades, only half of all the academic librarians enjoy the faculty status (Bryan, 2007; Coker, vanDuinkerken, & Bales, 2010; Walters, 2016). In certain instances, the faculty status is to some extent superficial as well, i.e. salary scales, tenure, etc. were not at par with the teaching faculty (Bolin, 2008; Cary, 2001; Dabengwa, 2018; Freedman, 2014; Hosburgh, 2011; Vix & Buckman, 2012; Wyss, 2010). In fact, a committee under the American Library Association (ALA) officially and formally endorsed the demand for faculty status for librarians in 1958. Later in 1971, Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) framed the 'Standards for Faculty Status for College and Research Librarians' (Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL], 1988). Interestingly, in the same decade, the government of one of the developing countries - Sri Lanka - granted faculty status for academic librarians with parity in pay and other service benefits of teaching faculty. The Universities Act, No. 16, 1978 of Sri Lanka states that librarians are deemed to be 'teachers' in all aspects (Universities Act 1978, section 79). The conferment of faculty status for academic librarians in the western world, whether partial or full, paved the way for considerable increase in academic discourses and research publications by librarians (Meskill & Meskill, 1975). And subsequently, academic librarianship changed qualitatively, resulting in the increased role in the construction of knowledge (Galbraith, Smart, Smith, & Reed, 2014; Galloway, 1979; Herring & Gorman, 2003). However, scholarly literature does not show evidence of significant impact of the faculty status of academic librarians on their teaching role in Sri Lanka.

Context of the study

The Universities Act, No. 16, of 1978 was a remarkable breakthrough in the history of Sri Lankan higher education. The promulgation of this act radically changed the dimension of higher education in the country. But from the point of view of librarians, that was not the only significance of the Act. The Act defined qualified librarians in universities as 'teachers' of the university ensuring parity with faculty members in status, pay, and service conditions. The specific part of the Act which deals with the 'appointments of the staff' states that "in this part 'teacher' shall be deemed to include Librarian, Deputy Librarian, Senior Assistant Librarian, and Assistant Librarian" (Universities Act 1978, section 79). This initiative in Sri Lanka has to be considered revolutionary because professional librarians in many countries, even in advanced countries, have not been able to achieve this status in all respects even today. At present, there are four categories of library staff in Sri Lankan Universities: academic librarians with teacher status, administrative staff, clerical & allied staff, and minor grade workers. As per the Universities Act, 1978, academic librarians with teacher status have four

designations: Assistant Librarian, Senior Assistant Librarian, Deputy Librarian, and Librarian.

The investigators of this study aimed at examining the perceptions of academic librarians about their teaching role after forty years of the Universities Act granted them the status of teachers. The specific objectives of the study were to examine: (a) how academic librarians express their self-identity, (b) whether the teacher status of academic librarians influenced them while choosing this profession, and (c) whether academic librarians consider teaching as a part of their responsibility.

Review of literature

Several studies discuss the subject of faculty status of librarians from different angles. The core of the issue is a craving for the recognition of academic competencies of librarians among the academia. By reviewing the related literature, Walters (2016) classified the major themes of hundreds of such articles into six groups: prevalence of faculty status, arguments for and against the status, differences in roles of librarians and faculty, librarians' academic freedom, standards for promotion, impact of faculty status, and its implications on library management. Similarly, Bolin (2008) reviewed the literature to study the ramifications of the concept of faculty status, and conducted a survey among the member institutions of Association of Research Libraries, land grant universities, and major state universities to identify typology of librarian status in the USA. Her study based on the prototype theory identified four types of librarians: those having faculty status with professorial ranks, others with faculty status and tenure, librarians having faculty status but no tenure, and another category without any faculty status.

As Bryan (2007) pointed out, the quest for this privilege can be found in literature published as early as 1878. Quoting a series of authors, she lists out some of the pros and cons of faculty status as well, and concludes that faculty status is preferable to non-faculty status. As stated by Silva, Galbraith, and Groesbeck (2017) one reason for favoring faculty status could be the protection in the form of academic freedom. Since the 1950s the ACRL and ALA have vehemently argued for this status, and developed policy documents at different intervals of time. The set of 'Standards for Faculty Status' (ACRL, 1988; 2007; 2011), and the 'Guideline for Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians' by ACRL are notable among them (ACRL, 2010).

While discussing the need for deconstructing the faculty status, Applegate postulates that the model of faculty status "is built on a series of logically connected assumptions ... (1) that teaching faculty have certain roles and benefits, (2) that administrators or other college staff do not have these roles and benefits, and (3) that librarians who are not considered faculty will be considered administrators or staff and thus will not have these roles or benefits" (1993, 158). This postulation could be the base for any argument in favor of faculty status.

However, studies that investigate self-identity of librarians and the perception of librarians in developing countries about their teacher role are very limited. Ameen and Ullah (2013) have made a country-specific study to gauge perceptions of librarians in Pakistan about getting faculty status. Professionals in Pakistan have not yet achieved the privilege of faculty status. In that country, the career structure of library professionals is not at par with the faculty in any higher education institutions. Generally, the librarians are part of the administrative staff. Of the 18 chief librarians working in Islamabad and Rawalpindi area, the authors interviewed 15. Out of the total respondents, 14 librarians favored faculty status for library professionals. However, only four (26.6%) had a clear understanding about the faculty status. Those librarians who supported faculty status believed that attaining that status will fetch benefits and privileges at par with the faculty. At the same time, some of the respondents raised the concern that, faculty status will increase the work load; and attending simultaneously teaching and research — the essential components of faculty status — will affect their library duties. The study also found that Library and Information Science (LIS) education had not contributed to the teaching competencies of the respondents. The study recommends that the Library Associations should take active initiative to achieve faculty status, and Library Schools should improve their MLIS curriculum to prepare librarians for 'librarian faculty' role.

Walter (2008) conducted a semi-structured interview among six academic librarians in the United States to elicit their personal narratives regarding their experiences as teachers and as librarians committed to their instructional role. The investigator divided the subject of study into a few sub-themes, and conducted a remarkable review of the literature. As stated by him, "the research on professional identity among librarians, i.e. the way in which librarians perceive their own work, is actually rather limited" (Walter, 2008, 17). However, as the author himself notes the limited sample size of only six respondents and a restricted study area make his study an introductory one, rather than a detailed exploration of the problem.

The promotional avenues for university librarians in Sri Lanka were explored by Jayasundara (2011). He interviewed a sample of ten academic librarians working in universities, and collected their opinions regarding 'major problems that hinder their career advancement', 'issues in combining research and publication requirements with professional duties', and 'problems of promotion'. Though the librarians attached to the higher education system in Sri Lanka have faculty status and parity with their teaching counterparts in areas such as selection criteria, pay, and other service conditions, the Deputy Librarians in the rank of Associate Professors do not have adequate promotional opportunities. In this background, the study sought to identify the existing career structure, obstacles faced by deputy librarians in promotions, and to propose strategies to solve these issues. The article extensively discusses the professional hierarchy inside the system and the current status of academic librarians. Interestingly, the author raises a serious question 'whether the university librarians are professionals or academics'. Without going deep into the theoretical issues, he states that the

librarians are academics because of the parity with teaching faculty granted by the Universities Act, 1978. The study recommends an increase in the number of chief librarian positions in universities and the creation of posts of 'Senior Professor Librarian' at par with Senior Professor.

Methodology

In Sri Lanka, at present there are 16 universities functioning across nine provinces. As per the directory of the University Librarians Association of Sri Lanka (University Librarians' Association [ULA], 2017), there are altogether 142 professionals. However, for the purpose of this survey only 140 professionals working as active librarians were considered (two faculty members associated with the National Institute of Library and Information Sciences were omitted). A survey was conducted among these academic librarians working in universities. The survey instrument with 14 questions was adapted from the one used by Walter (2008) for his seminal work. The questionnaire was prepared in Google Forms, and as part of a pilot study, a link of the questionnaire was sent by email to a few academic librarians listed in the directory of the ULA, Sri Lanka during the first week of November, 2017. On the basis of their responses, the questionnaire was revised. Then during the first week of August 2018, the questionnaire was distributed among the 140 academic librarians listed in the membership directory of the ULA of Sri Lanka. Even through three reminders were sent, only 31 responses were received by November, 2018. Three chief librarians, two deputy librarians, eighteen senior assistant librarians and eight assistant librarians participated in the survey. The questionnaire consisted of four profile-based questions and fourteen topic-based questions. A combination of multiple choice questions and open-ended questions was used. The responses were analyzed by using simple statistics as mentioned in the next section.

Analysis and Discussion

Qualifications

Of the 31 respondents of the survey, five had master's in LIS along with Ph.D degree, 24 had master's in LIS (two of them have masters' in other subjects as well), and two had master's in other subjects (without master's in LIS).

Gender

The respondents consisted of twenty two (22) females (71%) and nine (9) males (29%). In agreement with the common belief and findings of similar studies regarding the gender constitution of the profession (Kyrillidou & Morris, 2014; Galbraith, Fry, & Garrison, 2016), female librarians outnumber males in Sri Lanka as well. As per the membership directory of the ULA, excluding two faculty members working in National Institute of Library and Information Sciences, there were 90 women (64%) and 50 men (36%) working as academic librarians (ULA, 2017).

Designation

Among the academic librarians listed in the directory of the ULA there were 36 assistant librarians (ALs), 86 senior assistant librarians (SALs), 5 deputy librarians (DLs), 13 librarians (chief librarians), and two faculty members as on

28th of August 2018. As per the list, seventeen (17) academic librarians in Sri Lanka have Ph.D degree, and among them women constitute 65% (11). The majority of the respondents to this survey (85%) were in the category of assistant librarians (either assistant librarians or senior assistant librarians). Category-wise, three librarians (chief librarians), two deputy librarians, eight ALs and 18 SALs participated in the survey.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	9	29.00
Female	22	71.00
Qualifications		
MLIS with Ph. D	5	16.13
MLIS	24	77.42
Masters in other subjects (without MLIS)	2	6.45
Designation		
University Librarians	3	9.68
Deputy Librarians	2	6.45
Senior Assistant Librarians	18	58.06
Assistant Librarians	8	25.81

Identity of the Academic librarian

The teacher identity may be defined as "the way in which individuals think about themselves as teacher" (Walter, 2008, 9). While reporting on a study conducted among instructional librarians in Canada, Julien and Genuis comment that librarians have "concerns about their professional identity" (2011, 104). According to Hicks, identity can be defined as 'a description, or representation, of the self within specific practices" (2016, 12). The identity can affect everything from induction into the profession to effectiveness in the classroom. Each participant was given the question, 'How do you identify an academic librarian predominantly?' The intention was to understand the self identification of the professionals.

Six specific choices, 'administrator', 'clerk', 'non-teaching staff', 'professional', 'teacher', and 'technician', were given. While three respondents (9.7%) chose the option 'administrator', 21 respondents (67.7%) selected the option 'professional'. Only 22.6% (n=7) identified academic librarian as 'teacher'.

While discussing whether librarians in Sri Lanka should be treated as academic staff or professional staff, Jayasundara states that "the librarians are classified under teachers by the university act and none of the other legal

documents including UGC circulars have mentioned that the librarians are professional staff" (2011, 105). It is true that the Library Schools prepare librarians primarily as professionals. In this context that researchers discuss the emergence of blended librarianship where academic librarians' roles cut across both professional and academic domains (Bell & Shank, 2004; Dabengwa, 2018). Apparently, librarianship as a community of practice claims to be a profession, and is clearly eligible for that status in accordance with scholarly definitions. According to Luthans (1976, 18), a community should satisfy a few characteristics to identify itself as a profession. These characteristics are having a) body of specialized knowledge or techniques, b) formal standardized education and training, c) a representative organization with the purpose of professionalization, d) priority given to service rather than financial returns, and e) following an ethical code of conduct. Similarly, Cameron (2003) studied the views of a few scholars about characteristics of those professions with professional status, and reported a list of common attributes. This list also conforms to the major characteristics mooted by Luthens as above.

Truly, the categorization 'professional' is perfectly suitable for librarianship as it follows the characteristics of a profession. However, the university system does not recognize a category other than teaching, non-teaching and technical staff for the purpose of pay, status, and other service benefits. While discussing the case of Pakistan, Ameen and Ullah (2013) also reported about the confusion of academic librarians in choosing between administrator and faculty member. The primary reason why some respondents identified themselves as professionals might be the impression that professional status is preferable to administrator or non-teaching or teacher status. Walter also points out that "the way that librarians perceive their own work, is actually rather limited" (2008, 17).

Should the academic librarian be known as faculty member by the public?
Earlier, a question on the perception of self-identity revealed that only 22.6% of them considered themselves as teachers, and 67.7% identified themselves as professionals. It is a fact that the public image and socio-economic status of a profession influences the career choices of potential employees (Alansari, 2011; Majid & Haider, 2008; Prins & de Gier, 1995). A study by Prins and de Gier (1995) found that public perception about the librarianship was negatively influenced by a few factors such as lack of awareness about the duties and responsibilities, poor services offered by some libraries, conception that the profession is poorly paid one, problem in distinguishing professionals from other employees in a library etc. According to Alansari (2011), the general public and librarians alike consider the status of librarians lower than that of even journalists and school teachers.

In this context that respondents were asked 'whether the academic librarian should be known as faculty member by the public'. Interestingly, as depicted in the figure 1, majority (71%) of the respondents opined that academic librarians should be known as faculty members by the public. This implies that even those academic librarians who identified themselves as professionals rather

than teachers wish that the public should consider academic librarians as faculty members. However, as Prins and de Grier stated (1995) it is difficult for the public to distinguish academic librarians with faculty status from a group of staff work in academic libraries.

Figure 1: Do the academic librarian be known as a faculty member by the public?
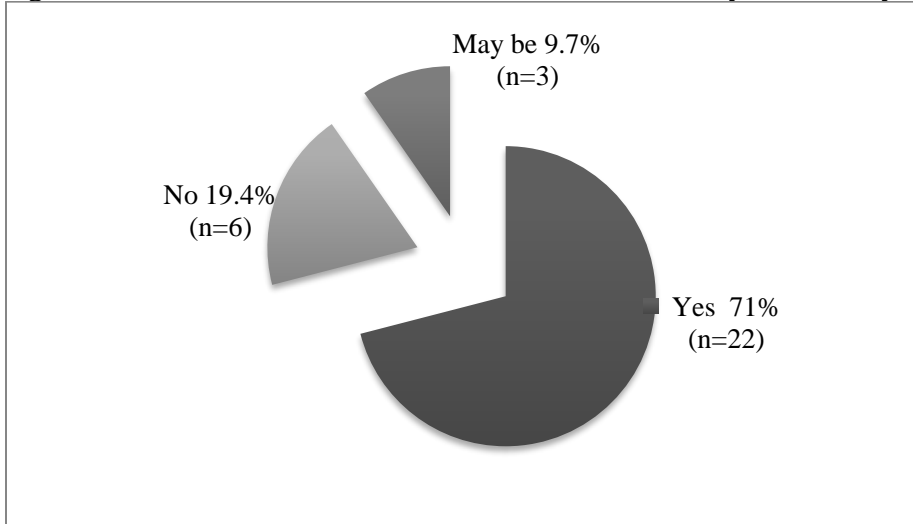
The factors that influenced their selection of Librarianship as a career

In the past, scholars investigated the major factors that motivated individuals to choose librarianship as their career (Dewey, 1985; Gordon & Nesbitt, 1999; Issa & Nwalo, 2008; Olawanle & Abayomi, 2010; Oliver & Prosser, 2017). They have identified a few reasons such as contact with a librarian, love for books, previous working experience in libraries, kind of responsibilities, serviceability, intellectual challenge etc.

Figure 2: Reasons for choosing librarianship
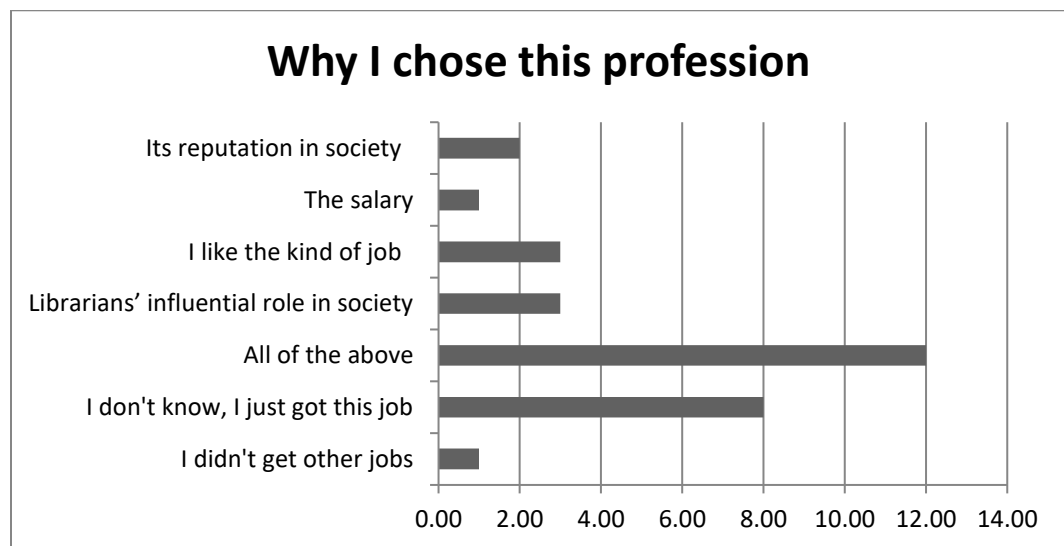
For this study, the participants were requested to mark as many responses as they wished against a set of possible options provided with the question – 'What aspects of librarianship influenced you to opt for this profession?'

Of the 30 responses received for this question, 12 persons (40%) commented that they were influenced by several factors together such as the reputation of the profession, the salary, and the duties of librarians. Similarly, another nine persons (30%) were motivated by either of the factors such as the reputation or the salary or the kind of duties. The responses were as depicted in the figure 2. It is plausible to infer that, while choosing this career, respondents believed that the profession had the 'reputation', 'attractive responsibilities', and 'capable to influence individuals'. Interestingly, a few respondents (n = 9; 30%) joined this profession by chance only as they did not get other jobs.

Perceptions about the role of teaching

The scholarly literature acknowledges the importance of teaching by librarians (Bell & Shank, 2004; Bewick & Corral, 2010; Bryan, 2016; Cisse, 2016; Julien & Genuis, 2011). Among these studies, the remark of Julien and Genuis (2011) needs special attention. According to them academic librarians hesitate to teach in many situations because of two reasons: their lack of training opportunities, and ambiguities on the part of instructional librarians regarding their teaching role.

Irrespective of their teaching skills or pedagogical knowledge, respondents of this survey were asked to comment on "If you knew that 'teaching' was a major component of the job, would you have joined?" 96.8% respondents (n= 30) replied positively which implies that a large majority of the respondents were interested in teaching, and they joined the profession with the impression that being in the faculty rank they would be responsible for teaching.

Perception about the reasons for non-involvement of librarians in teaching

Obviously, the librarians have a range of responsibilities to deal with such as acquisition, technical processing, database development, reference services, etc. to name a few. Many of such duties could be considered either technical or clerical or administrative. The same person could act as a technical librarian, or as a reference librarian or as an administrator at different intervals of a day, depending on the designation, status, size of the library, or staff pattern of the institution. In Sri Lanka, no academic librarian is designated as full-time instructional librarian. Teaching or instructional services could be one component of any librarians' job. Becoming a teacher is different from learning to teach (Britzman, 2003) and developing that identity is a process involving own experiences and experience with role models.

It is irrelevant and meaningless to put a profession with its own identity into the frame of another one. The very nature of librarianship is that it has to approach several areas with logic or a stint of intelligence. It is in this background that the investigators sought the opinion of the survey participants regarding "reasons for librarians' lack of involvement in teaching". Only 28 persons

responded to this question. A major section of the respondents, i.e., 46.4% (n=13) held the view that, 'the society doesn't demand teaching by librarians'. This comment is a reflection of the general perception of the society regarding the job of librarians. One reason for such an assumption is the failure of the public to adjudge the members of a community of practice on the basis of their competency. Another issue may be the common nomenclature (i.e. librarian) for all categories of library professionals irrespective of their corresponding sectors of activity (for example, public libraries or academic libraries), or qualifications, or nature of duties. In similar context, researchers such as Bryan (2007) and Wilson (1982) studied the problem of 'stereotyping of librarians.' Wilson tries to analyze the pervasiveness of stereotyping in the profession and the ways in which it affected the librarians and their behavior. Stereotyping is "the general inclination to place a person in categories according to some easily and quickly identifiable characteristic such as age, sex … and then to attribute to him qualities believed to be typical of members of that category" (Tajfel, 1969, 423). According to Wilson (1982), librarians handle their identity as bestowed on by the stereotype. Also, Robert D. Leigh and Kathryn W. Sewny think that "librarians want to be recognized as part of an intellectual profession, but feel that public perception relegates them to the role of clerks" (quoted by Walter, 2008, 17).

Figure 3: Reasons for choosing librarianship
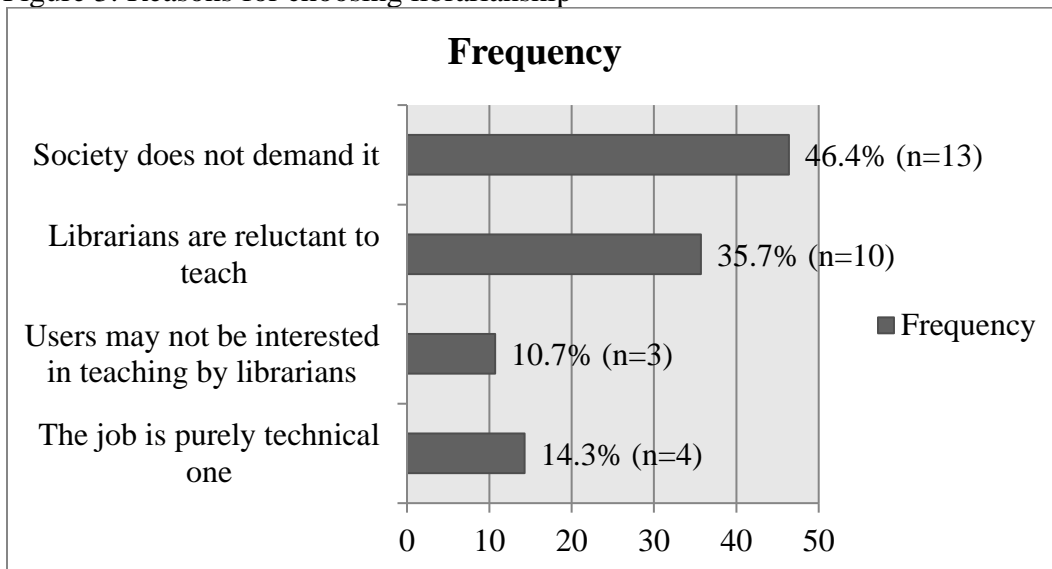
Among the 28 responses, a striking view was that 'librarians are reluctant to take up this task'. As shown in the figure 3, ten respondents (35.7%) raised this point. Another 14.3% (n=4) commented that teaching is not part of librarians' job because they consider 'librarians' job as purely technical one'. No respondents favored the option 'teaching by librarians is irrelevant because students belong to other domains'. Qualified librarians know that teaching students/ users of information handling by librarians is not irrelevant in higher education institutions. The next comment i.e., 'users may not be interested in teaching by librarians' was raised by 10.7% (n=3) respondents. It indirectly suggests that, if users had demanded information-literacy-instruction by librarians, respondents

would have taken up that responsibility. This comment represents a sense of lack of belongingness. Librarians believe that their service or knowledge is not at all valued by their clients. The other side of the issue is that users might be ignorant of the competencies of librarians, and they could not presume the benefits of instruction by librarians or they may not even know about the IL services.

While discussing the faculty status of librarians, the remark that 'librarians are reluctant to take up the task of teaching' is thought provoking. Even professionals who have most vigorously advocated for full faculty status have recognized the serious defects in the image they present to their teacher counterparts (Smith, 1970). The librarians have great difficulty in demonstrating to the faculty, and even to themselves, that they perform certain responsibilities that justify academic status. The faculty support is pivotal to getting the recognition for librarians as teachers.

Voluntary teaching
Information literacy instruction may not demand full-time teaching in classrooms. Instead, it could be face to face interaction or instruction to groups of different sizes. As Julien and Genuis rightly stated "this instruction ranges from individual, short-term assistance with a student who wishes to conduct a quick database search, to longer-term assistance for graduates students or researchers seeking to conduct extensive in-depth literature reviews or semester long credit-bearing research courses" (2011, 104). The academic librarians under the study also might be offering such sessions. Hence they were asked 'if teaching is not recognized as mandatory component of your job, do you voluntarily teach at your work?' As per the data received, majority of the 30 respondents, i.e. 80% (n=24) voluntarily teach at their institutions.

As per the data collected, 46.15% (n=12) respondents spent between 25% and 49% of their time on administrative functions, and 34.62% (n=9) respondents allotted 50% to 74% of their time on technical functions. However, only 5 librarians spent more than 25% for teaching assignments.

Recognition of 'teacher role' by employers
Even two decades ago, in 1996, a committee under the Instruction Section of the American College and Research Libraries (ACRL) investigated the attitude of employers towards library instruction. They had the assumption that employers would place some value on such skills, and librarian-hiring decisions would by influenced by those skills. This survey conducted by Avery and Ketchner (1996) among 42 employers in the United States of America found that, 75% of employers considered instruction skills as a preferred qualification for selection. Besides, 86% employers reported that they had asked the candidates about their teaching experience if any. It was also found that almost 50% of employers demanded some sort of presentations from the candidates during the interview. Similarly, Herring and Gorman (2003) stated that while they were selecting professionals for positions having faculty status, they had placed emphasis on evidences of scholarly pursuits of the candidates. However, the response by the

participants of the present study revealed that universities in Sri Lanka do not consider this competency as an important requirement for librarians.

Participants of this survey were asked whether 'the employer had assessed their teaching competency during their recruitment processes'. Only five persons (16%) were assessed for his/ her teaching competency during the recruitment process. All others (84%; n=26) replied that their teaching competency was not at all assessed.

Support received from Library and Information Science programs for the teaching job

Considerable research has been conducted in the past regarding the training for academic librarians generally, and the education for instructional librarians specifically (Bryan, 2016; Patterson & Howell, 1990; Mandernack, 1990; Walter, 2008; Westbrock & Fabian, 2010). Recognizing the increased role of instruction librarians in academic libraries, the ACRL published 'Standards for Proficiencies for Instruction Librarians and Coordinators: A Practical Guide' (ACRL, 2008), and 'Roles and Strengths of Teaching Librarians' (ACRL, 2017). Later, Westbrock and Fabian (2010) explored 'where from instruction librarians acquired their proficiencies for instruction roles' and found that librarians preferred acquiring most of their proficiencies (i.e. 39 out of the 41 proficiencies suggested by ACRL) from library schools. The survey by Bryan (2016) also found that MLS programs did not provided sufficient instructional skills to the academic librarians. This has to be examined in the specific context of Sri Lanka also. Hence, participants were requested to respond on 'how LIS program (MLIS or similar ones) prepared them for teaching jobs?' Among the 21 responses received, seven comments were positive.

A few representative answers deserve special mention:
- 'Not sufficient, need more emphasis'
- 'It is the self ability of an individual. Any course or program cannot prepare us for teaching'
- 'My teaching was improved by attending CTHE and SEDA offered by the University of Colombo Staff Development Center'
- 'No. The LIS syllabi should be changed'
- 'IL should be added to the LIS curriculum'

This finding i.e. the reluctance of Library Schools to be inclusive of IL teaching is in agreement with the findings of previous studies as well (Avery & Ketchner, 1996; Bewick & Corrall, 2010; Bryan, 2016). Although LIS teachers in Sri Lanka were not approached for their views on granting faculty status for academic librarians, a survey conducted by Wyss (2010) among faculty members of ALA accredited LIS schools in the USA found that they were almost neutral to the demand for faculty status for academic librarians. In fact, the present study didn't seek any responses regarding the extent of the coverage of 'Information literacy' components in the syllabi of LIS programs.

Conclusion

As the entry requirements, promotion criteria, pay and other fringe benefits of academic librarians are the same as those of their faculty counterparts of the corresponding level, there is no ambiguity in the 'teacher status' granted by the universities to librarians in Sri Lanka. The faculty status acknowledges the increased role and competencies of academic librarians as educators in higher education. As Julien and Genuis stated, "librarians assist in the co-construction of knowledge" (2011, 104). As mentioned earlier, a large section (67.7%) of academic librarians surveyed for this study identify themselves as 'professionals'. As long as the members of a community of practice are trained to perform as professionals, that identity gets inherited by all of its members. Within that category, the teacher identity will be applied to those who are in the academic sector. The responses indicate that, the preferred identity is a highly personal one. The reasons for self-identification of a few professionals as 'administrator' and 'non-teaching staff' have to be explored in future studies. The attitude of respondents towards the teaching role is positive. Nearly 80% of the respondents voluntarily teach at their institutions. Besides, about a quarter of the respondents engage in teaching for more than 10 hours in each term. However, it is a concern that, a section (20%) of respondents is not yet ready to take up the task of teaching. Unless it is due to their over-engagements with the technical or administrative functions, this should be an eye-opener for employers and library schools. The universities should change their recruitment procedure in such a way that the teaching skills of candidates are evaluated at the time of recruitment. Similarly, library schools should teach at least subjects like 'principles of instructional design', 'pedagogical skills', etc. to adequately prepare the students for teaching jobs.

The challenges in balancing teaching, research, and publication responsibilities along with the routine professional activities of academic librarians who have faculty status is an area need to be further explored in the context of Sri Lanka.

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