

Continuing Professional Development Practices of University Librarians in Sri Lanka: A Needs Assessment Survey

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Many libraries focus on the increased emphasis on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and actively encourage their staff to engage in activities that enhance and deepen their knowledge. In order to provide efficient and effective library services, library professionals need to acquire advanced knowledge with a new set of skills. This study examines the current status of CPD for university librarians in Sri Lanka and the future requirements in CPD. The study adopted the survey method and a structured questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. The collected data was analysed using SPSS (21.0). The questionnaire was distributed among all the university library professionals (128). Out of 128, a total of 57 responses were received. It was revealed that Library & Information Science (LIS) professionals in Sri Lanka showed a high level of engagement with different types of CPD programmes and, most of them participated in conventional forms of CPD programmes namely conferences (96%), seminars and workshops (82%). Among the reasons for participation in CPD, ‘stay current with developments in the profession’ (72%) and ‘for tenure and/or promotion requirements’ (63%) were the highest reported reasons. The study found that the majority preferred to have CPD programmes on newly developed current topics such as Open access and digital repositories, Publication writing and Bibliometrics which had the highest mean scores of 4.63, 4.58 and 4.22 respectively. The results further established that the university libraries have employed various strategies to encourage staff development such as paying some of the costs associated with attendance, allocating time to attend (56%) and bearing the cost of the course/ registration fee (53%). The findings and implications for this survey can therefore serve as a source of information for CPD programme planners in their efforts to develop programmes that are responsive to the needs of the librarians in the country.

Keywords: Continuing professional development, Information professionals, Staff development, University libraries, Sri Lanka