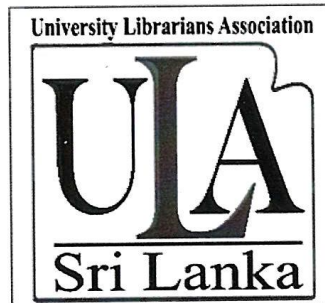


**2019 PROCEEDINGS OF  
10<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF  
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION  
OF SRI LANKA**

**Reinvigorating Libraries: Smart Responsiveness for Sustainability**

**Colombo, Sri Lanka  
18<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

# PROCEEDINGS



**10<sup>th</sup> International Conference  
of  
University Librarians Association  
of  
Sri Lanka  
(ICULA-2019)**

*Reinvigorating Libraries: Smart  
Responsiveness for Sustainability*

**18<sup>th</sup> September 2019  
Mount Lavinia Hotel  
Colombo  
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**ENHANCING THE STUDENTS' LIBRARY BORROWING SKILLS  
IN UNIVERSITY COLLEGES IN TECHNICAL VOCATIONAL  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) SECTOR IN SRI LANKA:  
PRESENT PROBLEMS AND FACTORS AFFECTING**

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**Abstract**

Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector is one of the major sectors which is based on job oriented learning system that produce skilled labour into the job market in Sri Lanka. The "University Colleges" are newly established area in TVET sector, which is essential and has significant contribution for producing skilled middle level technical and managerial personnel for filling the gap of labour markets in Sri Lanka. The 09 courses offered by "University College of Matara (UCM)", focus on teaching and giving training on industrial-specific skills. The Library facility is very important for providing essential support for teachers and students, for achieving their information needs under the workplace-based environment. The purpose of this paper is to identify factors affecting in enhancing students' borrowing skills of library books and identifying the main problems students face when borrowing.

This research is based on Hypothesis testing used for four independent variables (examination reference purpose, Laboratory/Workshop practical module reference purpose, teacher's guide book reference purpose and additional reference reading purpose) that were examined for their relationship



with students' borrowing skills. The sample consists of top borrowers, and 60 students had been selected from University College of Matara during the period from 2016 to 2018. The population of the study is University Colleges in the TVET sector in Sri Lanka. The structured interviews method which used five-point scale weighted questions were used for the data collection in this study.

The study demonstrated that statistical evidence to teacher's guide books was significantly associated with enhancing students' borrowing skills. Lack of English language skills and lack of reading interest were identified as problems for students' borrowing. The study suggests the need of changing teacher's teaching behaviour, such as using a reference book, guide book or any text materials for the daily lessons, which assists to enhance students' borrowing skills.

**Keywords:** Borrowing skills, Borrowing factors, Borrowing problems, University college, Technical vocational education

## **Introduction**

The Sri Lankan tertiary education system consists of national universities, postgraduate institutes, higher education institutes and technical and vocational education and training centers. The Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector is one of the major sectors in Sri Lanka based on job oriented learning system which produce skilled labour markets in Sri Lanka. TVET is a job-based learning system that promotes the productivity of apprentices with improving their working capacity. TVET is defined by Sri Lankan Government Gazette as "education and training imparted to persons for the acquisition of knowledge, operative skills, technical or craft skills or experience needed for the pursuit of an occupation

or trade" (Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 1995). UNESCO Glossary define it as "Technical and vocational education refers to all forms and levels of the educational process involving in addition to general knowledge, the study of technologies and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes and understanding relating to occupations in the various sectors of economic and social life" ("UNESCO-UNEVOC TVETipedia," n.d.). Specially, Sri Lankan government has understood the importance of youth energy and building their knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour that are required within the workplace. These qualifications are the most capable skills for enhancing the productivity of the industrial sector in developing countries today.

The University of Vocational Technology (UNIVOTEC) was established under the parliamentary act no. 31 of 2008. According to the act, the university of vocational technology can provide higher education at the university level on vocational technology and it granted the permission to the establish, maintain and administer as a university (Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, 2008). UNIVOTEC fundamental aim is to deliver higher education in the Technical Education and Vocational Training System with support in the personal development of students in achieving knowledge, skills and attitudes that were needed for building a professional trainer.

The six (06) University Colleges have been established in the year 2014 by the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocational Training of Sri Lanka, under the provisions in the University of Vocational Technology. University College of Matara (UCM) is established to produce globally competitive and productive middle level technical and managerial personnel to meet the demand in both domestic and foreign labour markets ("About Us,"

2015). UCs will also help to produce a skilled labour force that is needed to acquire national economic development with the ability to manage and adapt global technology changes. The University College of Matara (UCM) offers 09-course programmes in the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 6 (Higher National Diploma) qualifications under the evaluations of Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) Sri Lanka. Nowadays more than 400 students are following the courses in UCM and only 238 students registered in the library and 94 students (39.5% by registered students) have borrowed items from library within past 3 years. The UCM library collections include more than 3000 books and other printed materials. The entire ministry has annually allocated nearly Rs. 2 million Sri Lankan rupees capital allocation for each University Colleges to purchase subject relevant printed materials to the library and UCM library staff is always working to increase the students' library books borrowing percentage up to 70 % by registered students before the end of year 2020. This study was aimed to examine the factors that affect to enhance students' borrowing skills at UCM and its results could be adapted to minimize the borrowing problems of the students in all the University Colleges in the TVET sector in Sri Lanka.

### **Literature Review**

Many researches have indicated that TVET sector plays a very important role in Sri Lankan education sector. The TVEC sector consists of many different types of educational institutes such as University Colleges, College of Technology, Technical Colleges and Vocational Training Centers, established widely in Sri Lanka. The TVEC website recently showed that 233 different types of educational institutes were established Island wide ("Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission – Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission," n.d.).



According to the Sri Lanka University Grant Commission statistics 2017, between 2010 and 2017 59% students who were eligible to enter the University by passing G.C.E. (A/L) examination were not selected to the universities. The actual selected percentage during 2010 - 2017, is less than 18% (University Grants Commission - Sri Lanka, n.d.). According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 877,605 students were eligible to higher education during 2010 to 2016 but had admitted only 155,020 students (17.7%) to the universities (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2017). However, the same report shows that 13,514 (1.5% per eligible students) students enrolled for Advanced Diploma level (NVQ 5 & 6) to the vocational education sector such as College of Technology and Technical Colleges in the same period. Thus it shows that the balance 80.8% of qualified students do not have an avenue to continue their higher education needs due to the restricted opportunities in the recognized universities or vocational education institutions. A study of conducted under International Labour Organization as a part of the National Skill Sector Development Programme (SSDP) 2014-2020, suggested that the development of cognitive skills through the school system is particularly important as it determines the extent to which individuals can acquire both technical and soft skills (Chandrasiri & Gunatilaka, 2015). The results show that limited opportunities available in education and the importance of TVET sector development in Sri Lanka.

The Labour Demand Survey conducted in 2017 by Department of Census and Statistics shows the existing gap of specially in middle level and top level skilled or semi-skilled labour demand in Sri Lanka. According to the statistics of a survey, there was a very smaller percentage in middle level and top level skilled or semi-skilled workers as Professionals (8.6%), Associated Professionals (6.2%) and Managers (7.8%) fitting the labour market (Department of Census and Statistics, 2017). As Suraweera, and Edirisooriya

(2008) have highlighted in their study, TVEC has discovered that 84% of labours haven't followed a proper training. The Central Bank of Sri Lanka - Annual Report 2017 also highlights that "A large gap has been created between the requirements of job creators and the expectations of job seekers, leading to labour shortages in the domestic market" (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2018). All these factors show the validity of TVET education and middle-level skilled labour gap in Sri Lankan labour market. Therefore, the government should establish the new TVET institutes to produce the opportunities for those who need higher education after the G.C.E. (A/L) examination, Sri Lanka. The education national policy designed by National Education Commission Sri Lanka proposed to establish new institutions and expand existing technical and vocational education institutions to provide more educational opportunities for school leavers. ("National\_Policy - 1997," n.d.) This policy report indicated the importance and future demand for skill basis vocational degrees more than conventional degrees. Especially it is required to establish the institutions to offer Higher National Diploma (HND) for those who passed G.C.E. (A/L) examination and not selected to the government universities.

The Library facility is very important to an institution for all the academic activities. Further, Sri Lankan Education framework identifies the strategies policy implementation such as "Library facilities necessity for state universities and higher education institutions as a learning support units encourage to students' study discipline, acquire generic skills, a positive work ethic and ability to adapt to the world of work" (National Education Commission - Sri Lanka, 2009). The literature discusses the evidence for relations between student attainment and their library activities such as library usage, library borrowing and e-resource usage. An Australian study was conducted by Wells (1995) to examine the positive correlation between



academic attainment and the practice of the different types of library resources. This study shows the role of the library and demonstrates that when students use library resources, they can achieve success in their academic activities such as examination and assignments (Wells, 1995). Similarly, the University of Wollongong (UOW) in New South Wales, Australia, conducted a study and found a very strong relationship between students evaluations and the use of library resources (Cox & Jantti, 2012). A study conducted with 33,074 undergraduate students through eight U.K. universities found a positive relationship between library resource used and level of degree results (Stone & Ramsden, 2013). In that study, library usage data was measured by total number of library resources borrowed from the library, total number of logins to e-resource/database and counting the number of times that students entered to the library. Another study conducted by the Hong Kong Baptist University Library found evidence of a positive relationship between student library resource usage and their grade point average (GPA) results (Wong & Webb, 2011). The University of Cape Town conducted a study comparing the students' library resource usage with students' success rate in a particular exam and their cumulative GPA value. The study indicated that more library resource usage associates positively with enhanced students' educational success (de Jager, Nassimbeni, Daniels, & D'Angelo, 2018). Those studies highlight the importance of library resources usage by the student and it encourages the institutions to provide the proper borrowing facilities, at the institutional level.

Researchers from the University of Minnesota demonstrate the value of library resource usage in the first year students for their daily academic activities and how that practice support to achieve the academic success. This study suggested the importance of arranging the academic counselling and orientation programmes to promote the first year students' awareness on

library resources and services. It was identified four positive library resource factors that affect the students' academic success such as usage of library materials, usage of online databases, usage of electronic periodicals, and books borrowing (Soria, Fransen, & Nackerud, 2013). Huddersfield University in UK conducted a study and found the importance of library books borrowing and accessing electronic resources. This study also demonstrates the positive relationship between those two factors and students' academic performance (Goodall & Pattern, 2011). Porat and Fine (2009) examined the information seeking behaviour of Inter Library Loan and Document Supply (ILDS) users and Non-ILDS users. The study found that, ILDS users regularly borrow books and they are the profound type of information seekers. Further, the study revealed that, the Non-ILDS users rarely borrow books and they are shallow type information seekers. Those studies explained the importance of library books borrowings and how it positively associated with students' academic achievements.

In summary, most of the literature points out the importance of library usage for student attainments. But there are very limited studies were conducted on library usage of the HND education institutes in Sri Lanka.

### **Objective of the Study**

This study was aimed to identify the potential factors that affect students' borrowing skills and to identify the main problems which faced by the students when borrowing materials at the University Colleges in TVET sector in Sri Lanka.

Objectives of the study are,

1. To identify the students' borrowings of subject materials in UCM.
2. To analyze the relationship between borrowing skills and related factors

3. To identify the major problems which students face when borrowing the materials

## **Methodology**

Regression analysis is the statistical research method used for this study. Hypothesis testing was used for identifying the potential factors that affect students' borrowing skills and made conclusions. University College of Matara (UCM) offered 09-course programmes and 94 students borrowed library books within last 3 years were selected as the key informant interviewee in the study. 60 students (top 60 borrowers selected from 94 borrowers during the period of the year 2016 to 2018) were selected as sample from UCM for the study. This study was only based on primary data. The structured interviews method was selected for the data collection in this study. Five-point scale structured questions under the several borrowing purposes used to weigh for managing and coding the data. SPSS version 22.0 statistical data analysis package was used to analyze the collected data for testing and achieving objectives of the study.

## **Hypotheses**

H1: There is a positive relationship between students' borrowing skills and examination reference purpose.

H2: There is a positive relationship between students' borrowing skills and Laboratory/Workshop practical module reference purpose

H3: There is a positive relationship between students' borrowing skills and teacher's guide book reference purpose

H4: There is a positive relationship between students' borrowing skills and additional reference reading purpose



## **Results**

There were 73.3% (44) female respondents and 26.7 % (16) male respondents among the total number of sixty (60) interviewers. All the respondents were below the age 29 years. Among them, 30.0% (18) of the respondents were 3<sup>rd</sup> year students of 2015 batch and 23.3% (14) of the respondents were 2<sup>nd</sup> year students of 2016 batch. Other 46.7% (28) of the respondents were 1<sup>st</sup> year students of 2017 batch.

As displayed in table 1, the mean of the data distribution was 4.05. Thus, the result displays that the subject textbook borrowing of respondents was "high". The skewness and Kurtosis test value of the data distribution showed as -0.059 and -0.730, both well within  $\pm 1.96$  limits. The distribution was highly skewed. The data recorded for ability of subject textbook borrowings were approximately normally distributed.

In multiple regression analysis, examination reference purpose, additional reference reading purpose, Laboratory/Workshop practical module reference purpose, and teacher's guide book reference purpose were significantly and independently associated with students' borrowing skills.

**Table 1: Ability of subject textbook borrowing**

N	Valid	60
	Missing	0
Mean		4.05
Median		4.00
Mode		4
Std. Deviation		0.675
Skewness		-0.059
Std. Error of Skewness		0.309
Kurtosis		-0.730
Std. Error of Kurtosis		0.608

According to the bivariate analysis which includes correlation analysis (Table 2) found that there was a positive relationship between students' borrowing skills and teacher's guide book reference purpose. The Pearson correlation value was 0.452 significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed) and that result indicated a positive relationship between these two variables. In stepwise regression model, R<sup>2</sup> value showed as 0.204 indicating 20.4% of the variance in the skills of subject textbook borrowing.

It was identified as a weak positive correlation between students' borrowing skills and borrowing purpose of Laboratory/Workshop practical module reference. The Pearson correlation showed the value as 0.272 significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

There was no correlation between students' borrowing skills and borrowing purpose of additional reference reading. The Pearson correlation showed the value as 0.077 which was not significant.

There was no correlation between students' borrowing skills and borrowing purpose of examination reference. The Pearson correlation showed the value as 0.100 which was not significant.

This study was to identify the problems faced by students while they access the library to borrow books. According to the responses, lack of English language skills (81.7 % - 49 respondents) was the prominent problem faced by them. Lack of time management with busy lecture schedules (56.7 % - 34 respondents) and lack of reading interest (21.7 % - 13 respondents) were identified as other major issues of the students in university college when they access the library to borrow books.



**Table 2: Correlation between dependent variable and four independent variables**

	Subject Text book Lending	Additional Reading	Guidebook	Practical	Examination
Subject	1	0.077	0.452**	0.272*	0.100
Textbook		0.280	0.000	0.018	0.223
Lending		60	60	60	60
Additional	0.077	1	0.045	0.067	0.000
Reading			0.366	0.307	0.500
			60	60	60
Guidebook	0.452**	0.067	1	0.099	0.143
				0.226	0.138
				60	60
Practical	0.272*	0.067	0.099	1	-0.112
			0.226		0.198
			60	60	60
Examination	0.100	0.000	0.143	-0.112	1
			0.138	0.198	
			60	60	60

\*\* - Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

\* - Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed)

## **Discussion**

This study demonstrates the impact of some factors on the borrowing of library books and that will help to enhance students' borrowing skills at the University Colleges in the TVET sector in Sri Lanka.

According to the hypothesis test, H3 is accepted. It was shown that there was a 20.4% impact of teacher's guide book borrowing on the skills of subject textbook borrowing which was significant at 0.000. ( $0.010 < 0.05$ ). Thus, this result displays that there was a significant impact of teacher's guide book on the borrowing skills of the students of University Colleges in the TVET sector in Sri Lanka

Lack of English language skill, lack of reading interest, lack of time management with busy lecture schedule were identified as the major barriers and challenges faced by students when they access the library to borrow books.

This study was used to identify only four variables under the borrowing purpose. But there are some other purposes which are related to the students' borrowing skills. Therefore, selecting only four borrowing purposes is a limitation of this study. Also, data were collected only from University College at Matara. But there are five (05) other University Colleges in Sri Lanka. Other university colleges are established in different areas in the country. The long distance and the time needed to reach to other four university colleges were the main reasons for not selecting remaining four university colleges in this study.

## **Conclusion**

This study was to identify the "high" responses of students' on subject textbook borrowing selection at UCM. According to the results of the study,

teacher's guide books was significantly associated with enhancing students' borrowing skills at University Colleges in the TVET sector in Sri Lanka. Also, the result has shown that there is a positive relationship between teacher's reference guide books and students' borrowing skills. This factor could be used to enhance the students' borrowing skills in University Colleges in TVET sector in Sri Lanka. Lack of English language skills, lack of reading interest, lack of time management with busy lecture schedules were identified as the major issues faced by the students when they borrow library books.

### **Recommendations**

According to the study, there are several recommendations for university colleges to enhance their students' borrowing skills related to the academic activities.

This research would be very important for all the University Colleges in the TVET sector in Sri Lanka. The research provides guidance to change the teacher's behaviour and attitudes towards improving better practices of their students' borrowing interest. First, the study was recommended for changing the teacher's teaching behaviour, such as using a reference book, guide book or any text material for the daily lessons and it assists to enhance students' borrowing skills. This will provide important information to all the educational institute in the TVET education sector in Sri Lanka for enhancing their own academic performance. Secondly, it is highly recommended to conduct laboratory/workshop practical modules with supporting library textbooks. That practice will make some assistance to enhance students' borrowing skills in University Colleges in TVET sector in Sri Lanka.

Thirdly, the study is recommended to design and conduct the awareness programmes on library resources and services for the students to



indicate the importance of library books borrowings that highlighting how these materials help to students' daily academic activities. The fourth recommendation is to modify the new students' orientation programme as a set priority to library sessions and activities. The study conducted by Wong and Cmor (2011) has indicated that delivering of library awareness programmes has a positive relationship with students' performance.

Final recommendation is to re-schedule the annual academic activity plan with increasing English language learning hours and allocating fixed time slot in master time table for the library hours. That adjustment will help to reduce major barrier and challenges of students when they visit the library to borrow materials in University Colleges in TVET sector in Sri Lanka.

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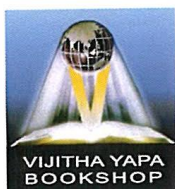
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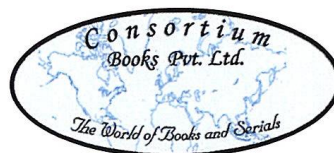
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