



Academic Library Directors' Strategic Decision-Making Process

Liisi Lembinen

University of Tartu Library, Estonia

liisi.lembinen@ut.ee, orcid.org/0000-0002-5176-2641

Abstract

Academic libraries are going through major changes and leadership of these libraries plays a vital role. In the past, academic library directors' strategic decision-making process has been infrequently researched. This study researched academic library directors' strategic decision-making process and resources. During this pilot project, seven LIBER member library directors from five different countries were interviewed. As a result, two main generalizations based on these interviews can be made. First, academic library directors use various resources to make strategic decisions and second, library directors are not individualists who make important decisions alone; instead, early in the decision-making process they involve their staff and library stakeholder as well as users.

Key Words: Academic libraries; strategic decisions; library management; library directors; decision-making

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the 21st century, academic libraries are facing faster and broader changes than ever in the history of libraries. Innovation of products and services, ease of getting information, and technological changes are just a few factors that make the need to change inevitable (Greenberg, 2013). Decisions and implementation of change must be made rapidly. According to

Greenberg, libraries tend to be conservative institutions, which do not greet rapid change positively. Libraries tend to analyse options for their future actions longer than business organizations and, in general, are viewed as organizations where strategic changes do not often take place. In recent years, however, libraries are facing various changes due to the evolving environment and user population and they are finding it difficult in many instances to adapt to the environment. Modern motivation theories state that all behaviour is motivated by "an attempt to adapt to the environment" (Franken, 2007, p. 5). The environmental stability or instability is directly related to the management of the decision process and this can have an impact on the decision-making process. "Managers have the power to influence the success of strategic decisions ... through the processes they use to make key decisions" (Dean and Sharfman, 1996, p. 389). This means that library directors are facing difficult decisions to implement change. Library directors have to make sure that the changes they implement in libraries are well thought through; various sources and possible impacts analysed; and right communication channels used. Changes do not come easy in libraries which means that before any change implementation can be started, it requires advance work to make the change adaptation acceptable.

Making decisions is a normal part of everyday life. There are three different types of decisions: short-term effects – operational decisions; mid-term effects – tactical decisions; and long-term effects – strategic decisions (Furnham, 2011). Strategic decisions are the least common decision and are generally not made daily because they carry change into organizations, disturb the existing status quo, and often face resistance. These types of decisions are usually not made lightly and the process involves various steps. According to Thompson (2003) decisions in general involve at least two components: first, there are "beliefs about cause/effect relations" and second, "preferences regarding possible outcomes" (p. 134). Depending on the decision, there are possibilities that one of these dimensions is not met, which influences the entire decision-making process.

In addition, it is also believed that the decision-making process is also influenced by cultural background as well as decision-specific characteristics (Elbanna and Child, 2007). Decision-specific characteristics are decision's familiarity; complexity; magnitude of impact; threat/crisis or opportunity; risky decisions; and decision type (Nooraie, 2012). Podrug (2011) researched

how national culture influences decision-making style among managers from three different countries and found that there is a positive correlation between social and cultural values and decision-making style. Weber, Ames and Blais (2004) brought out that decision-making end goals are influenced by the cultural context because in certain cultures (U.S. for example) individual end goals and motives are more important while in other cultures (Asian) collective goals are set as a priority. Their research also showed that people from Asian cultures are less analytical in their deciding. When it comes to top-down decision-making processes, the U.S. differs from many Western European countries like Sweden, Germany or the Netherlands. U.S. decisions are generally made top-down in organizations, whereas in the mentioned countries, decision-making processes involve many people from these organizations and the negotiation process can be quite time-consuming while the implementation after the decision can be quite quick (Meyer, 2017). In general, Weber et al. (2004) confirmed that decision modes are connected to situation as well as to functional demands; the latter being directly connected to culture thus influencing directly decision-making styles.

It is observed that leaders have different decision-making styles and they are motivated by various factors, even though certain skills and characteristics are common to leaders. Various research with executives has shown that leaders can be compared to sensation seekers who make quick decisions based on limited information, move on to new projects if current ones do not produce results quickly and cannot commit to one activity for a long time. Pelton, Sackmann and Boguslaw (1990) interviewed American top 50 CEOs and these interviews with executives showed that the skills to see the bigger picture and to adapt rapidly to change are two common characteristics. In general, executives tend to adapt to the environment. According to Smith and Graetz (2012), leaders in general approach change based on their assumption on how the result of change implementation will work out. Their assumptions may be based on their own personal previous leadership experience or management models. Stenström's (2012) study looks at Cialdini's theory of influence (2009) and shows that public library funding decisions made by politicians often come down to merely personal relationships. At the same time, other studies show that high impact decisions are approached more rationally and that a structured decision-making process is often followed (Guillemette, Laroche, & Cadieux, 2014). A new trend in library management in recent years is called "evidence based library management" (hereafter

EBLM) which consists of the beliefs, experience, realities and stakeholders which are all elements that influence decision making in EBLM (Yildiz, 2015).

Based on the organizational culture of academic libraries, it should be easier to set stability goals (keeping current situation unchanged) versus change goals (Ryan, 2012). Research has also shown that librarians are sensitive towards micro-managing (meaning that library's top management is being over-controlling) and library leadership plays a vital role in the general organizational culture (Koufogiannakis, 2015). The key element in change management and strategic planning in academic libraries relies heavily on the directors of these libraries and often on their leadership skills and willingness to make tough choices. Strategic decisions which bring change to the organization always involve the risk of failing, which according to some research is up to 80–90% of all change initiatives (Gilley, Gilley & McMillan, 2009). Change is often met by both internal and external resistance (especially when it comes to libraries). To deliver deliberate change into libraries, directors are facing both individual and organizational barriers to change which they need to overcome in order to implement the change (Greenberg, 2013).

Weiner (2003) brings out how roles and responsibilities as well as perception of academic library directors have changed; as a result, their management styles have also changed. In her research, based mainly on survey methods, Weiner brings out the list of characteristics of an effective academic library director. Mech (1993) describes a study that examined decision styles of academic library directors using Decision Style Inventory developed by Alan Rowe. The study shows that library directors are mainly idea oriented and not action oriented in their decision style. Lakos (2007) found out that libraries are in general used to collect data and statistics and understand the value of using these in decision-making processes (EBLM); however, in practice data collection and later usage tends to be less systematic. It is also observed that strategic decisions cannot only be made based on facts and figures but also involve an intuition aspect. In a stable environment, one can count on data but when it comes to strategic decision making, which also involved an element of unknown future prediction, complete and timely information cannot be achieved (Khatri & Ng, 2000). In general, it has been also shown (Stumpf & London, 1981) that better decisions, especially in the complex situations with limited amount of information, are achieved in a group rather than individually because of the opinion justification requirement.

2. The Research Project

2.1. Research Objectives

Very little is known about how academic library leaders handle their strategic decision-making process and if they use any kind of resources during that process. The current pilot research had two major objectives: first, to explore academic library directors' strategic decision-making process and resources to make strategic decisions. The second, to pilot test the research questions through an interview process that will be used to conduct a large-scale research investigation. The results of the pilot project are not generalizable, but the data collected from the seven (7) subjects reveal additional objectives.

2.2. Research Methods and Sampling

The study was based on grounded theory which "involves formulating new theoretical ideas from the ground up instead of testing existing theoretical ideas." It is a method used in qualitative research in abstract theory and is based on a "systematic set of procedures." It can be used to compare "empirical observations" (Neumann, 2014, p. 70–71). The grounded theory sets limits to sampling. When it comes to grounded theory sampling, random sampling will not give the best results. It is important to have well selected and sought participants. "The inherent bias" is an important factor in grounded theory sampling (Morse, 2011). Inherent bias allows researchers to choose participants who have knowledge and can contribute to the research topic in the best way (Posthumus, 2015). All the participants were approached personally in advance and provided with an explanation about the purpose of the study, the process and what will be done with the results. The selection was narrowed down to directors whose libraries are members of the Association of European Research Libraries (LIBER). LIBER has over 400 member organizations of which approximately 80% are university libraries bringing the selection pool to around 300 directors. To achieve the defined objectives, interviews with seven LIBER member academic library directors from five different countries were conducted.

Prior to the interviews, these directors received a consent form which explained the purpose of the study, the interview process, and their rights.

Participants had to sign and send the form back to the researcher. Interviews were done either face-to-face or via Skype. All interviews were recorded and notes were taken during the interviews as well. Each interview had 16 open-ended questions (Annex 1) based on grounded theory which asked about directors' strategic decision-making process and their use of resources during this process.

Interviews were transcribed using Express Scribe Transcription software. Personal as well as country and other identifiable information which would help to identify the participants were removed from the transcripts. Participants were numbered: Participant 1, Participant 2, etc. Data were analysed using stages of grounded theory (Neuman, 2014). First, open coding was used to label categories, followed by axial coding where initial lists of categories were analysed. Then selective coding followed where a single category was identified. Only the main ideas and concepts of these interviews were analysed from audio recordings. Wording was not analysed because interviews were held in English (or translated into English from their original language) which was not the first language of all the respondents. Thus, analysis of word choices and linguistics could have been misleading. Qualitative data analysing software QDA and Excel were used to organize and analyse the data and to further narrow down the coding (Annex 2). R was used to do the multidimensional scaling (MDS). Multidimensional scaling was used to "obtain quantitative estimates of similarity among" (Hout, Papesh, & Goldinger, 2013) responses and to visualize these results. For MDS, coding made it possible to divide respondents' answers into three groups: YES (the option was mentioned), NO (the option was declined), and N/A (the option was not mentioned). In general, the researcher tried to influence the responses as little as possible. Very little additional or explanation questions (follow-up questions) were asked. If the director could not come up with the answer immediately, no helping or hinting questions were given in order not to influence the responses. This influenced directly the "Not applicable" category in the MDS.

Conducting interviews enabled the researcher to gather individual insights from each director; however, the process was time-consuming due to the scheduling conflicts and the interview process, which did not allow getting more respondents. Interviews themselves took between 14 minutes (shortest) to 1 hour and 20 minutes (longest). For future research – if the

interview method is used, it would be useful to send questions to directors in advance to help them think through their process and not to receive “not applicable” replies because the answers were not produced on the spot. Strategic decisions require a thorough process and cannot be produced on spot. Many important concepts or issues may not have been mentioned since the researcher did not probe the respondents for additional information.

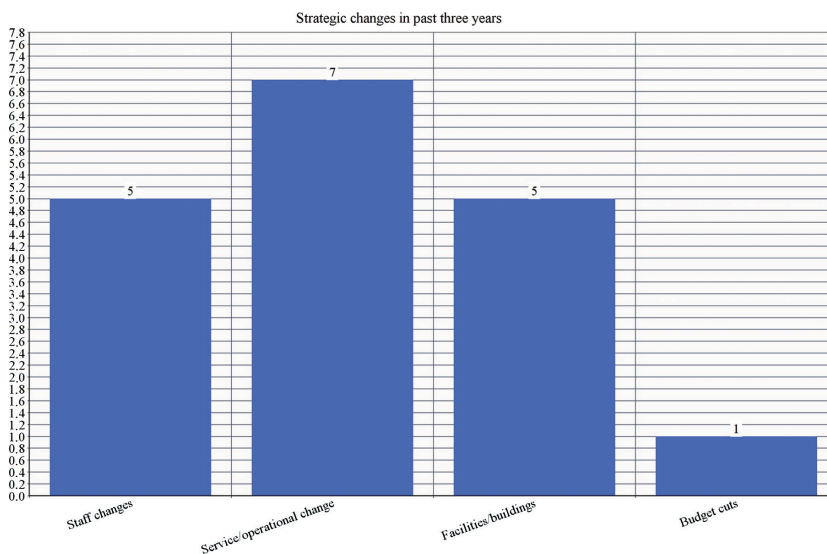
3. Results

The main goal of the study was to find out how academic library directors make their strategic decisions. In general, the expectation prior to the study was that the directors do not differ a lot from the others in their decision-making process and no extreme variations in answers were expected. It was also expected that library directors are not in general sensation-seeking individualists who make strategic decisions based on their own opinion and experience without involving different interest groups in the process.

The initial question used in each interview focused on the length of time the director had been in his/her current position as well as general leadership experience. Answers were divided into four categories: up to 5 years, 6–10 years, 11–19 years and more than 20 years of experience. No one in the sample group had more than 20 years of experience in the current position while 3 participants had worked less than 5 years in their current position, and 3 participants had been in their current leadership position for 11–19 years. In general leadership experience, one person had 6–10 years of experience and the other participants were equally divided between the other three categories.

Participants were asked to identify some major strategic changes they had implemented in their library in the past three years (Figure 1). Four major changes were identified: staff changes including restructure; new services or operations; physical library changes; and budget cuts. The change implemented most often (100% of participants) was the introduction of new services or operational changes.

Fig. 1: Identify a strategic change that you have brought into your library in past three years.



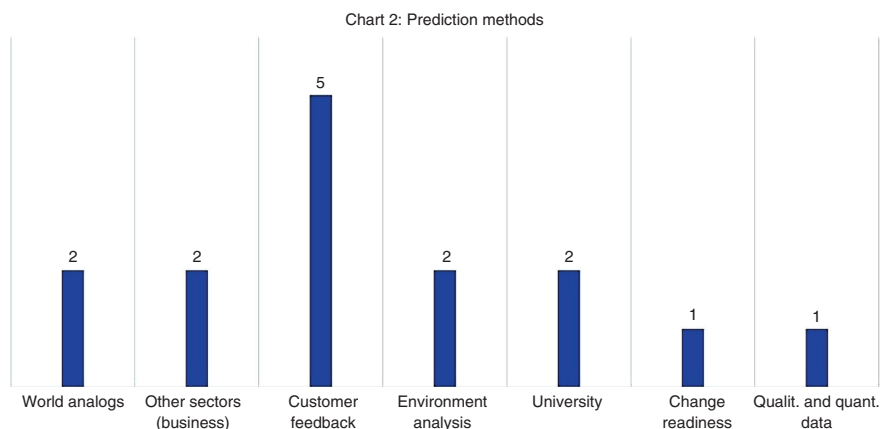
Three major patterns of the strategic decision-making process can be identified based on the research: first, as all participants were directors of university libraries, they logically follow the direction and strategic plans of the university. Second, as other questions also show, most directors discuss strategic matters with their staff as part of their decision-making process. Third, directors also consult users' feedback. Findings show that during the process of strategic decisions, directors generally look at where the university is going, what users want, and the opinion of the library staff. All directors admitted that strategic decisions are not usually made alone and they all use at least some level of consultations with their library staff. The level of consultation differs from the close circle of management staff up to and including the entire library staff in discussions and roundtables. Six out of 7 participating directors indicated that after consulting their staff as early as possible during the decision-making process, they are the ones who make the final decision.

Directors' idea production mainly included brainstorming (4 out of 7), staff feedback in different forms, like unlimited ideas, out of box thinking, etc. (4 out of 7) and getting ideas from outside resources (3 out of 7). Six participants of the sample indicated that they confer with sources outside the organization during

the strategic decision-making process. Most commonly, directors consult with other directors and gain insight from users (readers, students, scientific community). All directors consider statistics as one of the outside resources to use while decision-making. When asked what kind of outside resource had proven to be most effective, the top two named sources were: stakeholders'/ users' feedback (like surveys) and outside statistics like international or market impact data. Seventy-one percent of directors also acknowledged that users' feedback is the best way to predict future clients' behaviour and environmental change. Two participants indicated that it was difficult to highlight only one resource because of problem-method dependency (they choose the method based on the individual problem); however, they declared that whatever data they used, it needed to come from a trustworthy source. This confirms Elbanna's and Child's (2007) findings that decision-specific characteristics have a significant value in strategic decisions. Similar resources were stated in the clients' or environment's change prediction question (Figure 2).

Directors considered the most important factors in strategic decision-making to be a final goal or bigger picture (37%), and the impact-value relation of the final decision (25%). The respondents indicated that subjective criteria from the personal feelings and opinions of those outside the decision-making process were the least important factors to consider (equally 25%). When it

Fig. 2: What methods do you use to predict clients' behaviour/feedback and environmental change that will influence strategic planning?



comes to influencing decisions from outside, 71% of participants acknowledged that they have been forced to make a decision that they would not have made themselves without outside pressure. For example, participants described how they had been forced to decrease the staff or restructure. They also concluded that it was often a financial impact that forced them to decide reluctantly. In addition, both the intensity (for example time pressure) and importance of the situation affect directors' decision-making process. Forty-two percent of the participants indicated that in intense situations they gather necessary information and decide faster and 29% added that they prefer to avoid unstable situations during the strategic decision-making process.

The findings showed that directors generally avoid pursuing their forerunners' leadership style and ways; 71% noted that their leadership style differs from their forerunner. Decision making behaviour was also observed through a hypothetical question where the directors were asked if they had ever been in a situation where there are two equally great opportunities to achieve one goal. Seventy-one percent of participants noted that they have never encountered such a situation. Participants' hypothetical answers, however, emphasized that they would use similar methods as in situations with unfavourable choices.

When asked about the least important factor in strategic decision-making, two major factors could be observed: subjective personal empathies and outside influences (people, previous legacy, and tomorrow's profit).

4. Discussion

The results of the data from the pilot survey supported previous findings on strategic decision-making processes. Three areas of change were identified by all respondents: changes with staff, buildings, and services. Only one person indicated dealing with major cuts, which was interesting considering that funding has always been one of the major issues among libraries. On the other hand, other major changes that were indicated could have been directly connected with funding issues and were considered more important or influential.

As previous studies showed, the current pilot also confirmed that directors consider seeing the bigger picture or end goal as one of the most important

factors in strategic decision making. Based on this research, library directors cannot be considered sensation seekers even though many of them noted that they could and sometimes have enjoyed making decisions quickly and with limited information. In general, academic library directors rather take time, collect data, and discuss matters with their staff and other relevant people before making important decisions. Not a single respondent said that they were making major strategic decisions alone and with no resources. Roots here could be connected to libraries as organizations. As mentioned previously, libraries are considered quite static and not quickly changing environments, so sensation seeking and autocratic leadership is most likely not a long-term and vital option for academic libraries. It is important that the leadership style of the academic libraries fits well with the organizational culture and behaviour as well as expectations. Based on that, it is important to realize that library leadership plays a vital role in the change process of academic libraries. It influences most *how* things are done and not necessarily *what* is done. Respondents' replies also confirmed that belief.

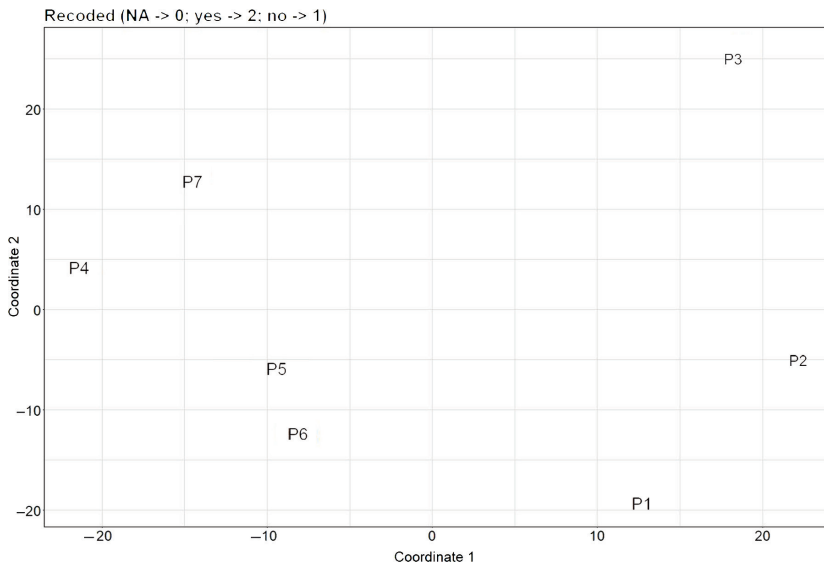
One of the main goals of the current research was to find out if and what kind of resources academic library directors use in their strategic decision-making process. As predicted, library directors do not live in a bubble; they do use different kinds of outside sources to receive input for their strategic decisions. This finding confirms Lakos' (2007) research that libraries are used to collect data and statistics. According to directors, they use statistics as an input in their decision-making and all respondents mentioned this as the main source in their decision-making process. In addition, all respondents admit that they consult smaller or larger groups of people before making strategic decisions. This complements well Stumpf's and London's (1981) research about group decisions being superior to individual decisions. In many cases, these smaller groups of staff were usually a management team or a director's hand-picked team of library staff. At the same time, many directors also admitted that they also consult on certain topics with people from outside the library. These people could be other library directors, expert groups, or university higher management. All directors stated that student feedback is always important as well. Responses from interviewed directors also confirmed Roknuzzaman and Umemoto's (2009) study held among various LIS practitioners that directors gather their personal prior knowledge and information from seminars, professional conferences, and workshops. Interestingly, very few directors mentioned personally reading professional literature or doing research themselves.

Directors described in detail their process of making decisions as well as what kind of resources they use; however, they gave very little indication whether their decisions were effective and reached the result or wider goal, something they themselves referred to as the most important part of strategic decision-making. Based on the current research, it is not possible to say if their strategies are successful. Prior research has shown that decision success is directly connected with the decision-making process as well as with environmental factors. In addition, prior information gathering has also shown a positive impact on decision effectiveness (Dean & Sharfman, 1996). All this should indicate that interviewed directors' strategic decisions could be potentially successful, at least their decision-making process indicated this. In the case of academic libraries, as also came out from these interviews, the main stakeholder was the university. Directors brought out in many cases how the university's development, interests as well as opinions influence directly library strategy and development. Most respondents brought out that politics played a massive role in the decision-process. Remarkably, prior research had shown that political behaviour has a negative impact on decision effectiveness (Dean & Sharfman, 1996). This could also be an indication for the further research through following a process of strategic decisions from the root until the result.

The most thought-provoking patterns resulted during the multidimensional scaling, which ended up being the most unexpected part of the research. Multidimensional scaling allowed visualizing results in a 2D format as a map where each P corresponded to one participant of the research. MDS made it possible to show "the relationship among items, where similar items are located proximal to one another, and dissimilar items are located proportionately further apart" (Hout et al., 2013). Based on responses, two major groups of participant views could be drawn (Figure 3).

Even though, during the interviews, the participants' country was not recorded, considering the small number of participants, the most logical explanation for similarities among the responses was cultural background, since participants displayed no other similarities. If to believe the theory that cultural background does influence the decision-making style; one could draw a similar conclusion: Participants 5 and 6 are from the same country and their responses were closest to each other. It could also be influenced by the fact that the resources they use in their decision-making process were similar (statistics, national surveys etc.). This could be even further confirmed

Fig. 3: Multidimensional scaling.



because two other participants (Participant 4 and Participant 7) in their proximity were from the Western European (“old world”) countries.

On the other hand, one could argue, that since the results were given by the directors themselves and not picked from offered lists, the results have also a category “Not applicable.” This means that directors could have potentially used or not used offered categories in their decision process, but they did not mention these themselves. This could be an interesting input for further studies as well as future hypothesis to find out if cultural background actually plays a role in strategic decision-making among academic library directors.

5. Conclusion

A pilot project conducted among seven academic library directors from five different countries achieved two proposed goals (refer to Research objectives). The first established goal was to initially map academic library directors’

behaviour during strategic decision-making processes and the second goal to test practical aspects of the research process. Academic library directors tend to have a rational strategic decision-making process that includes gathering information in advance from various sources like qualitative and quantitative data, library staff, stakeholders and users, as well as outside experts. Participating library directors also possess at least one common characteristic of a leader indicated by previously mentioned research among executives: they consider the most important factor in decision making to be "having a larger vision or bigger picture in mind throughout the process." Library directors recognize the need for resources, data, statistics and great employees to implement strategic changes. Indications from the pilot study participants, however, offered new insights to redefine the initial set of questions. Interviews should be more interactive and include follow-up questions that were originally excluded. In further studies, respondents could also reflect on specific strategic decisions rather than only on hypothetical situations in order to improve the understanding of the strategic decision-making process in practice.

Since the pilot project sample group was chosen among directors of LIBER academic libraries, it could be valuable to develop the future research by including more LIBER libraries' members. LIBER has already developed an exclusive leadership program called LIBER *Journées* for library directors. Further studies could be helpful for academic library directors to align resources and objectives with strategic planning processes or in senior management training programs. Since the pilot study included personal feedback and opinions of participants, it would be beneficial to include more evidence based input to develop any further training programs. Strategic decisions made in academic libraries should be investigated from various aspects. In addition to gathering personal feedback from directors (current study), the decision-making process should be explored throughout the strategic change, starting from initial idea generation, decision-making process and methods, followed by the evaluation of effectiveness of the decision which was not included in the current study.

The sample size and depth of the survey questions did not enable the researcher to draw generalizable conclusions. Findings of this study also did indicate that further study is needed to investigate the influence of the cultural background in strategic decision-making. If further studies among LIBER library directors prove a positive correlation between cultural

background and strategic decisions, further studies should be expanded beyond the borders of LIBER libraries. If cultural background as well as effectiveness of strategic decisions could be included in further studies, the findings of academic library strategic decision-making processes could be significantly improved.

References

- Cialdini, R. (2009). *Influence: Science and practice* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Dean, J.W., Jr., & Sharfman, M.P. (April 1996). Does decision process matter? A study of strategic decision-making effectiveness. *The Academy of Management Journal*, 39(2), 368–396. www.jstor.org/stable/256784.
- Elbanna, S., & Child, J. (2007). Influences on strategic decision effectiveness: Development and test of an integrative model. *Strategic Management Journal*, 28(4), 431–453. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smj.597>.
- Franken, R.E. (2007). *Human motivation* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA, Australia: Thomson/Wadsworth.
- Furnham, A. (2011). *The psychology of behaviour at work. The individual in the organization* (2nd ed.). Hove [England]: Psychology Press.
- Gilley, A., Gilley, J.W., & McMillan, H. (2009). Organizational change: Motivation, communication, and leadership effectiveness. *Performance Improvement Quarterly*, 21(4), 75–94. <https://doi.org/10.1002/piq.20039>.
- Greenberg, J. (2013). *Managing behavior in organizations* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Guillemette, M., Laroche, M., & Cadieux, J. (2014). Defining decision making process performance: Conceptualization and validation of an index. *Information & Management*, 51(6), 618–626. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2014.05.012>.
- Hout, M.C., Papesh, M.H., & Goldinger, S.D. (2013). Multidimensional scaling. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews. Cognitive Science*, 4(1), 93–103. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcs.1203>.
- Khatri, N., & Ng, H.A. (2000). The role of intuition in strategic decision making. *Human Relations*, 53(1), 57–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726700531004>.
- Koufogiannakis, D. (2015). Determinants of evidence use in academic librarian decision making. *College and Research Libraries*, 76(1), 100–114. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.76.1.100>.
- Lakos, A. (2007). Evidence-based library management: The leadership challenge. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 7(4), 431–450. <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2007.0049>.

- Mech, T.F. (1993). The managerial decision styles of academic library directors. *College & Research Libraries*, 54(5), 375–386. https://doi.org/10.5860/crl_54_05_375.
- Meyer, E. (2017). Being the boss in Brussels, Boston and Beijing: If you want to succeed, you'll need to adapt. *Harvard Business Review*, 95(4), 70–77. <https://hbr.org/2017/07/being-the-boss-in-brussels-boston-and-beijing#>.
- Morse, J.M. (2011). Sampling in grounded theory. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 229–244). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848607941.n11>.
- Neuman, W.L. (2014). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Harlow, Essex: Pearson.
- Nooraie, Mahmood. (2012). Factors influencing strategic decision-making processes. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 2(7), 405–429. <http://www.hrmar.com/admin/pics/985.pdf>.
- Pelton, W.J., Sackmann, S., & Boguslaw, R. (1990). *Tough choices: The decision-making styles of America's top 50 CEOs*. Homewood, IL: Dow Jones-Irwin.
- Podrug, N. (2011). Influence of national culture on decision-making style. *South East European Journal of Economics and Business*, 6(1), 37–44. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10033-011-0004-0>.
- Posthumus, J. (2015). *Use of market data in the recruitment of high potentials segmentation and targeting in human resources in the pharmaceutical industry*. Wiesbaden: Springer Gabler.
- Roknuzzaman, M., & Umemoto K. (2009). How library practitioners view knowledge management in libraries: A qualitative study. *Library Management*, 30(8/9), 643–656. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01435120911006593>.
- Ryan, R. (2012). *The Oxford handbook of human motivation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, A., & Graetz, F. (2012). *Philosophies of organizational change*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Stenström, C. (2012). *Factors influencing funding decisions by elected politicians at the state/provincial level: A case study of public libraries in Canada* (Doctoral thesis). Queensland University of Technology ePrints, Australia. <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/59510/>.
- Stumpf, S.A., & London, M. (1981). Management promotions: Individual and organizational factors influencing the decision process. *The Academy of Management Review*, 6(4), 539–549. <https://doi.org/10.2307/257631>.
- Thompson, J.D. (2003). *Organizations in action: Social science bases of administrative theory*. New Brunswick: Transaction.

Weber, E.U., Ames, D.R., & Blais, A. (2004). 'How do I choose thee? Let me count the ways': A textual analysis of similarities and differences in modes of decision-making in China and the United States. *Management and Organization Review*, 1(1), 87–118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-8784.2004.00005.x>.

Weiner, S.G. (2003). Leadership of academic libraries: A literature review. *Education Libraries*, 26(2), 5–18. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ983923.pdf>.

Yildiz, A.K. (2015). Evidence-based decision making in library management. *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries*, 4, 693–698. <http://qqml-journal.net/index.php/qqml/article/view/278/268>.

Annex 1

Interview questions

How long have you been in your current position? How many years of top level leadership experience do you have?

1. Identify a strategic change that you have brought into your library in past three years
2. Describe your process for making this type of decisions and forming a plan of action.
3. What kind of idea generating methods do you use?
4. What is the most important thing when it comes to strategic decision making?
5. Who or what out of these three is the most important influential factor in strategic decision making: stakeholder, client or environment?
6. Do you use outside sources in order to make strategic decisions? If yes, what or who?
7. Do you use evidence, facts or figures in strategic decision-making process? Explain.
8. What sources have proved to be most effective when making strategic decisions?
9. How much do you follow forerunner's strategic decision-making process/style?
10. Do you find you make better decisions alone or with a group, explain?

11. How does the importance and intensity of the situation affect your decision-making process?
12. What methods do you use to predict clients' behaviour/feedback and environmental change that will influence strategic planning?
13. Making strategic decisions can be unpopular, when pushing through strategic decisions who else influences the decision and how early in the process you include them?
14. Can you recount an occasion where you had to choose between equally great options to accomplish a single goal? Explain your thought process.
15. Have you ever been in a situation when you were forced to make a strategic decision? Explain.
16. What is the least important thing in strategic decision-making?

Annex 2

Coding

Identify a strategic change that you have brought into your library in past three years.

Q1A	Staff changes
Q1B	Service/operational changes
Q1C	Facilities/building
Q1D	Major cuts

Describe your process for making this type of decisions and forming a plan of action.

Q2A	Phase by phase
Q2B	International input
Q2C	University
Q2D	Library development plan
Q2E	User needs
Q2F	Staff needs
Q2G	Operational/service developments
Q2H	Develop itself
Q2I	Evaluation tools

What kind of idea generating methods do you use?

Q3A	Ideas just come
Q3B	Outside reference/conferences
Q3C	One solution to many problems
Q3D	Experience
Q3E	Customer trends
Q3F	Predictions
Q3G	Brainstorming
Q3H	Open discussions
Q3I	Impact-value

What is the most important thing when it comes to strategic decision making?

Q4A	Clear vision/goal
Q4B	Be great
Q4C	Don't know
Q4D	Impact/benefit for the university
Q4E	Writing things down

Who or what out of these three is the most important influential factor in strategic decision making: stakeholder, client or environment?

Q5A	Stakeholder
Q5B	Client

Do you use outside sources in order to make strategic decisions? If yes, what or who?

Q6A	Yes
Q6B	No

Do you use evidence, facts or figures in strategic decision-making process? Explain.

Q7A	Data/statistics
Q7B	Customer information
Q7C	Economy/budgets
Q7D	Electronic resources
Q7E	Reports/predictions

What sources have proved to be most effective when making strategic decisions?

Q8A	Stakeholder/client feedback
Q8B	Outside statistics/markets
Q8C	Colleagues
Q8D	University/library analytics
Q8E	No specific resource

How much do you follow forerunner's strategic decision-making process/style?

Q9A	Yes
Q9B	No
Q9C	Somewhat

Do you find you make better decisions alone or with a group, explain?

Q10A	Group
Q10B	Alone

How does the importance and intensity of the situation affect your decision-making process?

Q11A	Decide faster
Q11B	I don't like this
Q11C	Makes it easier
Q11D	Try to get extra time

What methods do you use to predict clients' behaviour/feedback and environmental change that will influence strategic planning?

Q12A	International analogs
Q12B	Other sectors
Q12C	Customer feedback
Q12D	Environment analysis
Q12E	University
Q12F	Prepared to change
Q12G	Qualitative/quantitative data

When pushing through strategic decisions who else influences the decision and how early in the process do you include them?

Q13A	Early
Q13B	All people to commit
Q13C	Alone, take responsibility
Q13D	Smaller influential group

Can you recount an occasion where you had to choose between equally great options to accomplish a single goal? Explain your thought process.

Q14A	Yes
Q14B	No
Q14C	Maybe

Have you ever been in a situation when you were forced to make a strategic decision? Explain.

Q15A	Yes
Q15B	No

What is the least important thing in strategic decision making?

Q16A	Emotions
Q16B	Everybody's opinion
Q16C	Tomorrow's profit
Q16D	Don't think about it
Q16E	Be neutral
Q16F	Past tries/legacy
