

Developing an Information Provision Strategy for University Libraries in Ghana

EDWIN ELLIS BADU

Department of Library Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana

This study explores the notion of organisational missions and goals held by the major stakeholders in university libraries in Ghana and assesses these visions for the libraries in relation to the development of a strategic planning process for the libraries. Multiple case studies were used to collect the data and the data were analysed using the multiple case study approach. The primary findings are that the major stakeholders in Ghanaian university libraries have different perceptions of the missions of their libraries. Two main perceptions emerged. The non-library stakeholders prefer-

red a narrower mission for the libraries focused more on the needs of their institutions and emphasising collection development as the method of attaining excellence. The library stakeholders expressed a much broader mission defined in the context of national information provision, emphasising information access while at the same time balancing it with collection development. This multiplicity of strategic visions was found to be the subject of disagreement between decision-makers and the rest of the library staff. The study concludes with some ideas on how to address this situation.

Introduction

The importance of the library mission

Strategy in the early literature, for example, Ansoff (1965), Andrews (1971) and Porter (1980), as well as more recent literature, such as Mintzberg (1990), Hunger and Wheelan (1995), is defined as top management's plans to attain outcomes consistent with an organisation's mission and goals. Strategy is usually looked at from three viewpoints: 1) strategy formulation (developing the strategy); 2) strategy implementation (putting the strategy into action) and 3) strategic control (modifying either the formulation or implementation process).

The mission and goals of the organisation drive strategy formulation at corporate, business and functional levels. The present and potential strengths and weaknesses of the organisation influence the mission and goals of the organisation and vice versa. Organisations are founded for a purpose and it is essential that stakeholders un-

derstand the reason for the organisation's existence, that is, the organisation's mission. Often, the organisation's mission is defined in a formal, written mission statement – a broadly defined but enduring statement of purpose that identifies the scope of an organisation's operations and its offering to the various stakeholders (Pearce 1982).

The mission of an organisation must be shared by the decision-makers (the major stakeholders) and an organisation with a keen sense of its own identity has been found to be far more likely to be successful than one that has no clear understanding of its reason for existence (Brooks 1984). Effective management requires not only an understanding of the environment but also a focus on the organisation's mission. Genus (1995) stresses the fit between an organisational mission and resources.

A firm's mission should evolve in the context of SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis (Barlow 1994). In effect, changes in an organisation's environment must be reflected in its mission statements. The relation-

Edwin Ellis Badu, PhD, Department of Library Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, Ghana.

ship between an organisational mission and strategy has also been expressed in a similar context by Fuchsberg (1994) and Duck (1993) who describe the relation as each component influencing the other. Hence, effective management requires not only an understanding of the environment, but also a focus on the organisation's mission (in the context of its strength and weaknesses). A clear sense of purpose is necessary in establishing goals because it is difficult to know where one is going if one does not first know who one is. Organisations with a clear sense of their missions are able to determine which activities fit into their strategic direction and which ones do not. According to Mullins (1996), all major stakeholders must agree upon the goals of an organisation because goal conflicts interfere with rational planning.

However, for non-profit organisations, such as university libraries, Nutt (1984) argues that divergent goals and objectives are likely and hence different perceptions to the mission of non-profit organisations are bound to occur with devastating consequences for strategy and organisational performance. This is because such organisations typically lack a single clear-cut performance criterion (such as profits).

The importance of vision statements

Thompson and Strickland (1998), Hunger and Wheelan (1995), and Hayes (1993), among other researchers and practitioners, have also emphasised the importance of the definition of the vision of the organisation. In fact, Thompson and Strickland (1998) begin the strategy process with articulating a vision statement for the organisation. In the current discourse on strategy this is a point of strong disagreement but this debate is outside the scope of this study. What is important here is that the vision of an organisation is inevitably a corporate responsibility that determines what kind of an organisation it will be. It is not simply a stage in a process but rather it involves a variety of tasks that largely determine the corporate value added to the organisation.

A strategic vision indicates management's aspirations for the organisation, providing a panoramic view of "what businesses they want to be in, where they are headed and the kind of company they are trying to create" (Thompson and

Strickland 1998). It spells out a direction and describes the destination. A clear and entrepreneurially astute strategic vision is a prerequisite to effective strategic leadership. Managers cannot function effectively as leaders or strategists without a future-oriented concept of the business, e.g., what customer needs to work toward satisfying, what business activities to pursue, and what kind of long-term market position to build vis-à-vis competitors.

Naisbett (1982) has observed that strategic planning is worthless unless there is a strategic vision. According to Corral (1994) a vision can provide an organisation and its staff a shared sense of opportunity, pride and significance and can provide the context and confidence for aspiration and achievement.

Purpose and significance of this study

There are at least three important aspects of the mission of an organisation that affect the success of strategic planning. First, rational planning is affected by conflicting perceptions of what constitute the mission of an organisation. Second, major stakeholders must have a strategic vision of their organisations. Third, effective management is enhanced by the relationship between the organisational mission and an organisation's external construct.

In the context of university librarianship, the literature on the relationship between the mission/vision and the strategy of university libraries is fragmented. Recent discourse on the subject has failed to demonstrate the effect of this relationship on the strategy process because of insufficient empirical work. This article attempts to redress this imbalance by examining the effect on strategy of the different attitudes towards the mission and vision of Ghanaian university libraries held by key stakeholders and some library staff in the libraries.

Methodology

To investigate the impact of the mission and vision statements on the strategy process in university libraries in Ghana, this study used the multiple case study approach used widely in organisational and management research. Two main reasons support this research design:

1. The flexibility of the approach allowed the researcher to use a mix of multiple data collection techniques since a single mode of data collection would have been inadequate to reflect the complexity, richness and subtlety of this topic.
2. To reduce the workload that analysing only qualitative data would have placed on the researcher.

Therefore a method of combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis was used. Triangulation (Denzin 1978) helped one method to complement the other and was also used developmentally because the first method has sometimes been used sequentially to help inform the second method. The concept of mixing methods has been criticised in the literature by Guba (1992) and Patton (1988). Burrell and Morgan (1979) also argue against mixing paradigms stating that there can be no communication across paradigms because linguistic symbols take on different meaning across paradigms and are founded upon mutually exclusive views of the social world. On the other hand, Rossman and Wilson (1985) and Lancy (1993) take a pragmatic stance arguing that a false dichotomy exists between qualitative and quantitative approaches and that researchers should make the most efficient use of both paradigms in understanding social phenomena.

This study has used the interpretative and positivist paradigms to study the vision statements from the perspectives of major policy makers of the university libraries. The results of the interpretative study were then used as a basis for a large-scale positivist study of the same research questions involving a population of library staff of Ghana's five university libraries.

When this investigation was conducted in September 1996, Ghana had five universities. Hence all five main university libraries were selected for this study. Sampling which usually helps with statistical generalisation was not necessary because case study research does not depend on statistical generalisation of the sampled cases (Yin 1989). All five cases were sociologically representative of the object of this study. For the sake of anonymity the five cases are represented in this report as UnivA, UnivB, UnivC, UnivD, and UnivE.

The selection of subjects for the study was done in two ways. The first subjects selected were for the qualitative and the second for the quantita-

Table 1. Selection of subjects for qualitative study.

Subjects	Number Selected	Number Actually Interviewed Per Case					Total
	Selected	Univ A	Univ B	Univ C	Univ D	Univ E	
Dean	2	3	1	1	4	2	11
Head of Department	2	2	3	3	1	1	10
Registrar	2	1	2	1	2	3	9
Planning officer	2	2	0	2	1	0	5
University Librarian	1	1	1	1	1	1	5
Deputy Librarian	1	1	1	1	1	1	5
Member Lib.Board	2	3	3	0	1	0	7
Chairman Lib. Board	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Mem.Lib. Strategic Comm.	2	2	2	2	0	0	6
Finance Officer	1	0	1	1	1	0	3
Dep.Fin. Officer	1	1	0	0	0	1	2
	17*5						
Total	85	16	14	13	12	9	64

Senior civil servants selected = 4; Actually interviewed = 2
 The grand total of subjects interviewed = 64.
 The total number of subjects selected for the interviews was 89 and 64 actually took part with a response rate of 70.8%

tive phase. The first subjects were drawn from a list of major stakeholders of the university libraries in Ghana. At the time of the interviews, they were influential in matters regarding university and/or library policies; decisions; funding/disbursement of funds; employment/promotion; and all general matters that affect the libraries either directly or indirectly.

Table 1 lists the subjects selected before the field study per the case study protocol and the actual subjects who took part in the interviews.

Table 1 shows that a fair distribution of subjects in almost every category of university administration took part in the investigation. In certain situations the number of subjects interviewed was more than the number selected, particularly in cases where those actually interviewed fell short of expectations. The lack of responses was due mainly to the unavailability of subjects. Table 2 shows the distribution of the sample sizes for the subjects selected for the quantitative phase of the investigation.

A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed; 89 were received, yielding a response rate of 74.2%

The concept of the university library mission held by the major stakeholders was explored by asking them to state what they believed constituted the mission of their universities and their libraries. They were then requested to put in priority order the most frequent elements cited in the interviews. They were to categorise the issues as *Very high priority*, *High priority*, *Important*, *Marginal* and *Least important*. The same elements were also presented to the library staff in a questionnaire to find out if they agreed with the elements identified by the university decision-makers. The elements of the mission statements are as follows:

1. Information provision (books, periodicals and manuscripts)
2. Providing the right environment for learning
3. Promoting campus wide access to information resources
4. To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge
5. Taking a leading role in national and international library and information services
6. Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management
7. Document supply (ILL)
8. Provision of entertainment and other social facilities

The major stakeholders were then asked what their vision for the universities and their libraries were. The major elements of the vision statements were then presented to the library staff to find out if they shared their management’s vision.

The analyses were done qualitatively using some aspects of the grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss 1967) and quantitatively using the Social Science Statistical Package (SPSS) (Nie et al. 1970).

Results

Mission statements for university libraries

Appendix A shows the entire result of how the major stakeholders prioritised the mission issues. The civil servants’ responses were excluded for statistical reasons. The views of the only two civil

Table 2. Questionnaire samples and responses

Library	Number Distributed	Number received	Percentage response
UnivA	34	34	100
UnivB	30	22	73.3
UnivC	30	15	50.0
UnivD	18	11	61.1
UnivE	8	7	87.5
Total	120	89	74.2

Table 3.1. Ranking of the issue of "information provision" by major stakeholders

Priority Index	Stakeholders					
	University Staff not librarians N=44		Library staff N=17		Total N=61	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very high priority	17	27.9	14	22.9	31	50.8
High priority	15	24.6	3	4.9	18	29.5
Important	6	9.8	0	0	6	9.8
Marginal	3	4.9	0	0	3	4.9
Least important	3	4.9	0	0	3	4.9

servants taking part in the investigation are represented in other forms in this report. Table 3.1 shows how the stakeholders ranked the first issue, information provision.

Table 3.1 clearly shows that over 50% (50.8%) of the respondents ranked information provision i.e. the collection of books, journal, manuscripts and making these available to users, as a very high priority and 29.5% also ranked it as a high priority. A significantly high proportion of the stakeholders who took part in the survey therefore ranked information provision as a high priority mission for the university libraries in Ghana. This finding suggests a general trend towards a belief in traditional library media. Hayes (1993) observed that the traditional mission of academic libraries has been twofold – to preserve the record of knowledge and to provide access to that record and its contents. Some librarians, in his view, are facing a crisis in determining their mission and are being forced to make a choice in the commitment of resources between collection development on the one hand and information access on the other.

Table 3.2 also shows that only about 30% of the subjects ranked promoting campus-wide access

Table 3.2 Ranking of promoting campus-wide access to information resources by major stakeholders

Priority Index	Stakeholders					
	University Staff not librarians N=44		Library staff N=17		Total N=61	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very high priority	3	4.9	4	6.6	7	11.5
High priority	5	8.9	8	13.1	13	21.3
Important	14	22.9	4	6.6	18	29.5
Marginal	17	27.9	1	1.6	18	29.5
Least important	5	8.2	0	0	5	8.2

to information resources as either very high priority or high priority (11.5% and 21.3% respectively). This demonstrates the preference of the overwhelming majority of the respondents for a university mission that concentrates on the provision of traditional media to users.

Table 3.3 also indicates that the provision of entertainment facilities (social) for users was found to be the least important. Most respondents qualified their answers to the question. They believed that presently their universities were underfunded and considered the provision of entertainment facilities (social facilities) a luxury, for example, one Dean made this comment:

... we cannot entertain anybody now. The university library is not here to entertain anybody particularly when we are not properly funded. Cuts here cuts there. We cannot provide entertainment for students; it's for those who have more money to spare (UnivA).

Table 3.3. Ranking of entertainment facilities by major stakeholders

Priority Index	Stakeholders					
	University Staff not librarians N=44		Library staff N=17		Total N=61	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very high priority	0	0	0	0	0	0
High priority	2	3.3	0	0	2	3.2
Important	2	3.3	0	0	2	3.2
Marginal	5	8.2	5	8.2	10	16.4
Least important	5	8.2	0	0	5	8.2

The responses to the mission issues, cross-tabulated by work role yields significant differences between the respondents. The Kruskal-Wallis one-way *anova* test, a non-parametric test that shows the mean rank between independent sample, produced the results presented in Table 3.4 (The Kruskal-Wallis test shows the different ways different groups rated the variables. It provides a chi-square value that indicates the differences between mean ranks using significance <.05).

Table 3.5 indicates that all the library staff among the respondents found document supply (ILL) to be important, while 88.64% of the non-library staff found it either not important or marginal. This finding suggests that the non-librarians among the university staff interviewed believed that their libraries should focus their goals more on providing the information they possess.

Table 3.4 Mean ranks of mission statements by stakeholder category

Priority statement	Stakeholder Category				
	University staff (not librarian) N=44 Mean rank	Library staff N=17 Mean rank	Chi-squared	Degrees of Freedom	Significance
Promoting campus wide access to information resources	36.3	17.3	14.1079	1	.0002
Document supply (e.g. ILL)	38.5	11.6	28.2638	1	.0000
To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge	37.3	14.7	19.8540	1	.0000
Information provision (books and journals)	35.1	20.3	8.5240	1	.0035
Taking a leading role in national and international library and information services	39.3	9.4	34.8514	1	.0000
Providing the right environment for learning	24.6	47.6	20.6502	1	.0000
Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management	37.3	14.7	19.9257	1	.0000
Provision of entertainment facilities	31.5	29.6	.1429	1	.7054

Table 3.5. Ranking of document supply major stakeholders

Priority Index	Stakeholders					
	University Staff not librarians N=44		Library staff N=17		Total N=61	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very high priority	0	0	1	1.6	1	1.6
High priority	2	3.3	5	8.2	7	11.5
Important	3	4.9	11	18.0	14	23.0
Marginal	16	26.2	0	0	16	26.2
Least important	23	37.7	0	0	23	37.7

Over eighty-six percent (86.36%) of the university staff, but not librarians, would like the librarians to concentrate on the provision of books and journals. This implies that they are more inclined toward having their institutional needs satisfied from their own collections and perhaps trying to emphasise collection development as a major library mission.

Table 3.6 shows the ranking of the issue, taking a leading role in national and international library and information services. It shows that only 2 of the non-library staff considered the statement important, with none considering it as very high or high priority, while over 58% (58.82%) of the librarians, however, ranked it as of either very high priority or high priority and 41.18% ranked it as important.

This difference in the perceptions of the non-librarians and the librarians is further evidence that the university staff members who are not librarians expect their libraries to concentrate more on an institution-based mission rather than on a national one. The evidence clearly shows that the librarians in addition to an institutional inclination would also like to see information access and the sharing of the wide range of national and international resources as an important mission issue. The small mean rank value of 14.8 (35.1–20.3) for the responses on information provision in Table 3.4 confirms that both categories of staff are in favour of information provision as an important mission statement. A large mean rank difference of 29.9 further strengthens the argument that one group, the librarians, is more in favour of taking a leading role in national and

Table 3.6. Ranking of the issue “taking a leading role in national and international library services“ by the major stakeholders

Priority Index	Stakeholders					
	University Staff not librarians N=44		Library staff N=17		Total N=61	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very high priority	0	0	1	1.6	1	1.6
High priority	0	0	9	14.8	9	14.8
Important	2	0	7	11.5	9	14.8
Marginal	20	32.8	0	0	20	32.8
Least important	22	36.1	0	0	20	36.1

international library and information resources than the non-librarians.

One concludes that the librarians who took part in this exercise wish to have a mission statement that strikes a balance between collection development and information access. Table 3.4 clearly shows that there are significant differences between the mean ranks of the library staff and that of the non-library staff of the universities in Ghana with the exception of the rankings for ‘provision of entertainment facilities.’ This implies that these two university sets of policymakers have different perceptions of the mission of their university libraries and obviously would have different goals and objectives for their institutional libraries. The survey has demonstrated that the university management taking part in the study do not share a single agreed mission for their university libraries. This is an issue that has implications for library resources since some of the respondents were power brokers and finance officers of the universities. Hebron (1989) has observed that a sponsor who disagrees with a particular, narrow definition of the mission of an organisation might take decisions that affect its funding. This finding also has implications for management’s commitment towards library projects and intra-organisational politics. A cross tabulation of the mission statements by university did not reveal any statistically significant relationships (with a significance >.05) as can be seen in Table 3.7.

The analysis indicates that, across the five cases, there are no significant differences between the stakeholders’ perception of the individual mis-

Table 3.8. Responses on agreement on mission statements by university library staff.

Mission statement	Agree %	Do not agree %	Total N=89 %
Information Provision	93.3	6.7	100
Providing the right environment for learning	73.0	27.0	100
Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management	71.9	28.1	100
Promoting campus wide access to information resources	69.7	30.3	100
To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge	65.2	34.8	100
Taking a leading role in national and international library and information resources	49.4	50.6	100
Document supply (ILL)	48.3	51.7	100
Provision of entertainment facilities	12.4	87.6	100

sion statements. The data show that the result of the universities' not having a single agreed mission for their libraries is irrespective of organisation and the findings are replicated in all the institutions.

Because the findings so far on the mission priority statements have political implications at

both the managerial and operational levels, it was decided to explore the extent to which the large population of library staff agreed or disagreed with the statements. Mitchell and Withus (1991: 157-65) have observed that any mission statement must be understood and championed by all the staff and must reflect their own feelings of the value of the organisation.

The analysis of the priority mission statements as perceived by the library management and a section of the library staff is presented in Table 3.8. This displays the percentages of responses to the question on whether respondents agree or disagree with a particular mission statement.

Table 3.8 clearly shows that 87.6% of the respondents did not see the provision of entertainment facilities as important. This clearly supports the contention of the university stakeholders that the provision of entertainment facilities by university libraries in Ghana is not an important mission issue for the universities and hence strategically irrelevant to information provision in Ghanaian universities. There were disagreements between the library staff and library management on two mission issues, document supply and taking a leading role in national and international library and information services. The data show

Table 3.7. Mean rank of mission statements by university.

Priority statement	UnivA N=15 Mean rank	UnivB N=13 Mean rank	UnivC N=12 Mean rank	UnivD N=12 Mean rank	UnivE N=8 Mean rank	Chi-squared	Degree of freedom	Significance
Promoting campus wide access to information resources	26.40	35.23	32.38	38.21	31.56	4.9109	5	.4268
Document supply	32.03	34.58	33.58	24.71	37.00	2.9202	5	.7123
To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge	37.17	32.00	30.65	36.75	16.81	7.5897	5	.1803
Provision of entertainment facilities	27.13	37.23	39.50	32.13	22.06	6.9570	5	.2239
Information. provision	24.13	42.35	28.27	39.08	26.06	10.1191	5	.0719
Taking a leading role in national and international library and information resources	38.87	29.54	32.77	35.21	22.81	7.8885	5	.1625
Providing the right environment for learning	32.33	26.85	32.65	39.04	30.13	3.2848	5	.6562
Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management	39.63	29.23	33.69	33.46	18.81	7.4579	5	.1532

Table 3.9. Responses on agreement with management on mission statements by staff category

Mission statement	Category of Staff										
	Professional N = 28				Paraprofessional N = 20				Non-professional N= 41		Total
	Agree no. (%)	Do not agree no. (%)	Agree no. (%)	Do not agree no. (%)	Agree no. (%)	Do not agree no. (%)	Agree no. (%)	Do not agree no. (%)	no. (%)		
Promoting campus wide access to information resources	24 (26.97%)	4 (4.49)	16 (17.98%)	4 (4.49%)	22 (24.72%)	19 (21.35%)	89 (100%)				
Document supply	21 (23.60%)	7 (7.87%)	8 (8.99%)	12 (13.48%)	14 (15.73%)	27 (30.34%)	89 (100%)				
To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge	22 (24.72%)	6 (6.74%)	16 (17.98%)	4 (4.49%)	20 (22.47%)	20 (22.47%)	89 (100%)				
Provision of entertainment facilities	2 (2.25%)	26 (29.21%)	1 (1.12%)	19 (21.35%)	8 (8.99%)	32 (35.96%)	89 (100%)				
Inf. Provision	27 (30.34%)	1 (1.12%)	18 (20.22%)	2 (2.25%)	38 (42.70%)	4 (4.49%)	89 (100)				
Taking a leading role in national and international library and information resources	19 (21.35%)	9 (10.11%)	12 (13.48%)	8 (8.99%)	13 (14.61%)	28 (31.46%)	89 (100%)				
Providing the right environment for learning	26 (29.21%)	2 (2.25%)	17 (19.10%)	3 (3.37%)	22 (24.72%)	19 (21.35%)	89 (100%)				
Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management	24 (26.97%)	4 (4.49%)	14 (15.73%)	6 (6.74%)	26 (29.21%)	15 (16.85%)	89 (100%)				

that many library staff taking part in the study agreed with management on the remaining issues (promoting campus-wide access to information resources; information provision; providing the right environment for learning; and training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management). The staff disagreed, just like their management, with the mission of providing entertainment facilities.

We can infer from the responses on the two main issues of disagreement with management that the library staff members are not in favour of developing a library mission that takes into account a wider national perspective. Document supply, an essential feature of access to resources was surprisingly rejected by 51.7% of the respondents. Both factors are important for access to information as opposed to the more traditional concept of information provision (provision of books, journals and other materials) which was given an overwhelming support by 93.35% of the respondents.

A cross tabulation of the agreement with management on the mission statements by staff positions of professional, paraprofessional and non-professional yielded the results in Table 3.9. The data in Table 3.9 reveals that over 50% of the respondents did not agree with management on the issue of document supply as a mission state-

ment. Over sixty-five percent (65.85%) of the non-professionals were included in this percentage while 60% of paraprofessionals were also not in favour of document supply as a priority mission statement. This implies that a majority of the library staff who did not agree with management on document supply comprised non-professionals and paraprofessionals. The data also reveals a similar trend for the statement – ‘taking a leading role in national and international library and information resources’. Table 3.9 shows that 31.46% of the responses of non-professionals did not agree with management on this issue. This represents 62.22% (31.46/50.56*100) of all the responses that did not agree with this issue; also, *all* those who responded in the negative were non-professionals. This further suggests that the non-professionals would prefer their libraries to focus their mission on the needs of their local institutions rather than to shift the focus to a national level. This finding may also be viewed from another perspective. The majority of the non-professionals might not have understood the potential the issues they disagreed with had for the development of their institutional libraries. This is because most, if not all, of the non-professionals have not received any formal library training and therefore have not had any exposure to new ways of doing library business.

University libraries in Ghana do not practise document supply on any appreciable scale. However, the professionals and, to a lesser extent, the paraprofessionals with formal training are probably more aware of the potential this issues has, not only for the preservation of records in libraries but also for the provision of access to those records and their contents.

A general conclusion that can be drawn from Tables 3.8 and 3.9 is that the large population of library staff who taking part in the investigation into the priority mission statements agreed with their management on most of the issues investigated, six out of eight of the issues. The exceptions were two issues, which were mostly disagreed with by the non-professionals.

Visions for the universities and the libraries

This section presents the analysis of the data collected when the stakeholders and the library staff were requested to state their visions for the universities and their libraries.

Vision of interviewees for the universities

Among the interviewees who were university workers, two broad vision statements were identified. At UnivA, UnivB and UnivC, the vision of the stakeholders was to see their universities grow and develop. The following are some examples given by two stakeholders at UnivA and UnivB:

Well, I would like to see us expanding to the extent that we will be able to admit more students.

The university should not remain static. It should grow. Not only in size but in expansion of existing structures and objectives such as teaching, studying and research.

A significant proportion of the stakeholders across all the cases would also like to see their universities as centres of excellence where information technology is at the core of their activities. Examples from two stakeholders at UnivC and UnivD are as follows:

I wish to see this university as a centre of excellence for teaching and research especially with regard to education, that it would be a 'Mecca' for people in Ghana and in West Africa or even those from abroad. This involves introducing computers in our libraries and expanding computer facilities.

If the university should be seen as a centre for people who are competent intellectually and professionally for the nurturing and teaching of administrative competence in education, then we should be able to inspire in the conduct of research, develop materials, organisations of workshops, seminars to the needs of Ghana. We shall have to make our staff computer literate.

At UnivD and UnivE, the establishment of links with other international universities as a way of learning from them was cited by quite a number of the interviewees. For example, one stakeholder remarked that:

My vision is to see more external linkages with other universities for us to know about what goes on there.

In UnivD, in particular, a number of the interviewees would like to see their university have an external service for the dissemination of their research findings:

The university should undertake dissemination of its research. I mean dissemination of information.

In two of the three old universities (UnivA, UnivB and UnivC), a substantial number of the interviewees saw income generation as a strategic issue in order for the university to become self-sufficient and to avoid government control. The following comment by a stakeholder at UnivB illustrates this point:

At the moment this university is struggling. It would like to do more research but it can't. In the next five years I would like to see this university raise funds to get on its feet and achieve more autonomy from government.

The interviewees who were not university workers expressed their vision statements in line with Ghana government educational policy. They would like to see a full implementation of government educational reforms, particularly the government's wish to spend more on vocational and professional education at lower levels than on university education. One government executive had this to say:

Well, in the Ghanaian context, I would like to frame my vision on the basis of the educational reforms. Before the educational reforms, institutions from the basic level to tertiary levels were more or less patterned on typical Oxbridge type. Now the reforms seek to put more emphasis – focus – on technical, vocational and professional education. Now for this reason at the lower levels, now there

have been some programmes on technical, professional and vocational education. The emphasis we would like to see shifts from university to the lower levels.

They would like the universities to concentrate on courses that are critical and essential to the immediate manpower needs of the country as prescribed by government authorities. The following example illustrates this point:

My vision for the university is that it should primarily be geared toward national development and manpower production. The government must identify, when it comes to the Ministry of, say, Manpower, should identify areas which are crucial for national development and I think there should always be a worker – management relationship between the Ministry of Education, Ministry Of Employment and Ministry of Science and Technology so that we are able to identify the manpower that the university should be prevailed upon to adjust their programmes to suit the national development requirements but then they should not compromise on scholarship.

The responses from government officials, on the one hand, and the university management, on the other, clearly show a conflict in their strategic visions. The evidence shows that the stakeholders who are university workers have a vision of growth and development for their universities over the next five years. Government executives, on the other hand, in pursuit of implementing Ghana government tertiary education reforms, would like to see a cut in current university programmes in order to be able to adequately fund non-tertiary programmes. This finding prompted further investigation into the vision statements from the perspective of the large population of library staff. Using the main categories that emerged from the interviews with the major university stakeholders, the library staff members were asked to agree or disagree with each statement. The results are shown in Table 3.10.

Table 3.10 shows that a majority of the library staff disagreed with the university management on five issues, namely: progress in education, improvement in curriculum, achieving self sufficiency, cutting down on some university programmes to save money and providing employment opportunities for students. The greatest disagreement was with cutting down on some university programmes to save money: an overwhelming 96.6% of the respondents disagreed. This issue was the dominant one of the government officials who were interviewed. It therefore

Table 3.10. Vision statements for universities – responses from library staff.

Vision statement	Agree %	Do not agree %	Total N=89 %
Expanded facilities	95.5	4.5	100
Promotion of external linkages	69.7	30.3	100
Dissemination of information	50.6	49.4	100
Progress in education	43.8	56.2	100
Achieve self sufficiency	41.6	58.4	100
Improvement in curriculum	40.4	59.6	100
Providing employment opportunities	40.4	59.6	100
Cut down some university courses to save money	3.4	96.6	100

implies that the majority of the library staff in the survey was in disagreement with the strategic vision of the government, a further indication of a conflict between the visions that the two groups of stakeholders have for the universities.

Vision of stakeholders for university libraries

Three different perspectives of the strategic vision of the interviewees were revealed. Across the five universities, differences between views were minor. The majority of those interviewed would like the libraries to emphasise the excellence and breadth of the their collection and to improve existing services. For example one stakeholder at UnivC had this to say:

You see, I've said this university should be a place of excellence, so must the library. The library should have more variety in scope of subjects and improve its present services.

The vision of most of the university staff members who were not librarians was that the libraries should continue in their supportive role to the academic institutions of which they are part. For example, the following statement by one of the stakeholders illustrates this point:

I think that basically, the university should take its cue from what the library stands for. The library being the main source of information for people it should be able to provide support that will enable people to get the relevant material.

This group of stakeholders held the view that the university library's traditional role should be ex-

Table 3.11. Vision statements for libraries – responses from library staff

Vision statements	Agree %	Do not agree %	Total N=89 %
Improving services	87.6	12.4	100
Staff development	78.7	21.3	100
Expansion of entire library facilities	76.4	23.6	100
Full technology application	70.8	29.2	100
Ease of use of library	39.3	60.7	100
Strategic management of library	32.6	67.4	100

panded to cope with increases in student numbers.

The third perspective was that of the university library staff interviewed. They indicated that their vision for the libraries in the next five years was to see a shift from their traditional role of providing books and other materials to providing access to information. To illustrate this point, one librarian at UnivB stated that:

At present it seems what the library is doing is keeping the books and providing it to the university community. We need somebody who understands. We have to retrieve information in the form of diskettes and photocopy document. We have to have facilities to satisfy request not in our libraries.

Staff development in information technology was also expressed by some of the library staff as a factor important to achieving access to information by the librarians. For example, at UnivB, one stakeholder stated that:

I think my vision is we need the right level of personnel and equipment to handle the use of information technology.

There was also a minority, ‘no vision’ group, who were all the government officials and a handful of university staff who were not library staff. To illustrate this, the following is a comment from one government executive when he was asked for his vision for the university libraries:

Vision for the library? I think we will leave that for the librarians.

The following related a stakeholder at UnivA made comment:

Well, I don’t think I have actually thought of a vision of the university library as such but I do feel that the university library should have facilities that will serve everybody.

In a similar quantitative investigation to the one on university strategic vision, the large population of library staff was asked to agree or to disagree to the major categories that emerged from the interviews with the library stakeholders. Table 3.11 is the analysis of the responses of the library staff.

The data in Table 3.11 show that with the exception of ‘ease of use of library’ and ‘strategic management of library’, an overwhelming majority do share the vision statements expressed by their superiors. There are no serious disagreements between the visions the stakeholders have for the libraries and the large library population view. This result is very good for the university planners as a shared vision with the rest of the library staff will more likely help to promote cooperation in the implementation process. What is a worrying development is the ‘no vision’ group among whom were all the government officials who were interviewed.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study has explored the concept of library mission and vision held by some major stakeholders closely involved in the strategic direction of the university libraries in Ghana. Two main conclusions can be drawn from the results of the investigation:

1. The major stakeholders and the library staff of the university libraries in Ghana did not have a single, agreed articulated mission for their libraries.
2. A multiplicity of strategic visions was found to be the subject of disagreement between decision-makers and some library staff.

According to the proponents of the normative (linear) model of the strategy process, ‘a single, agreed clearly articulated mission is an essential prerequisite for successful strategic planning’ (Vincent 1988: 43). The results as presented above do not support this optimistic tone that dominated much of the early literature on strategy formulation. The results are however consistent with the finding of Cohen et al. (1972) that librar-

ies, like many service organisations, often have multiple not single missions.

The findings indicate that the major stakeholders in the Ghanaian university libraries have different perceptions of the mission of their libraries. The findings suggest two views. The major stakeholders who were non-librarians preferred a narrower mission for the libraries. This mission would focus more on the needs of the particular institutions and would emphasise collection development as a method of attaining excellence. The librarians had a much broader vision of their libraries' mission expressed in the context of national information provision, emphasising information access while at the same time balancing it with collection development.

One of the constant issues in designing a mission statement involves just how broad one should make it. A broad mission statement has support in the literature, particularly in the corporate world. Pearce and David (1987) have asserted that broader mission statements are more helpful to an organisation than more narrow statements. Hayes (1993) advocates a broader mission for university libraries. He states that a university library's mission imperatives must apply not only to the library but also with at least equal vigour to the university as a whole. He further states that the university's imperative, like that of the library, must be based on the view that information is important to both society and the individual.

However, critics of broad mission statements for non-profit organisations, such as Milofsky (1979) believe that the narrower the mission statement, the less dissension there is likely to be among stakeholders and the easier it is to use in the evaluation of programmes. He states further that non-profit organisations with stable, narrow goals will find it easier to recruit individuals to articulate and support these goals to the broader community. These observations, of course, point back to the key point articulated earlier, namely that there are dissenting views of the mission of a university library among the different categories of major stakeholders.

A critical examination of the role of a mission statement, as defined by, for example, Oster (1995), points to three distinct functions: 'Mission statements serve boundary functions, act to motivate both staff and donors, and help in the proc-

ess of evaluation of the organisation'. The boundary function is important as a way to provide focus for the organisation. The second function as far as libraries are concerned is to motivate staff, library boards, users and sponsors. It thus helps to carry across to people the ideology of the organisation, to serve as a flag around which the organisation can rally. The final function is to help in the evaluation of the organisation. Just as there are three functions served by the mission statement, there are also three constituencies the statement will affect: the staff, the users, and the library and non-library sponsors. As a boundary mechanism, the mission statement serves all three groups. It helps to attract sponsorship, focuses the staff and defines clientele. The motivational function operates principally on staff while the evaluation function is a staff-sponsor (government) domain.

These functions can be seriously undermined without doubt if a university library mission is full of diverse and conflicting elements, as this study has demonstrated. As a reflection of the basic goals, characteristics and philosophies that will shape the strategic posture of university libraries, a mission statement that makes contradictory and competing demands on the libraries affects the basic foundation upon which all strategies are developed. Cyert and March (1992) state that goals must always result from bargaining among members of sub-coalitions. Mullins (1996) also stated that goals that have been defined through the consensus of major stakeholders help to develop the commitment of individuals. They also focus attention on purposeful behaviour and provide a basis for motivation and reward systems.

Unfortunately, the results of the study of the Ghanaian libraries have shown that the three principal groups of stakeholders do not have a single overriding mission for their libraries. Though Vincent (1981) argues that the absence of a single mission among stakeholders in a university library is more a universal characteristic than an institutional one, past studies (Mullins 1985; Genus 1995) show that a conflict between decision-makers over objectives, goals or values often results in a degree of resistance to planned changes that are often perceived as not being 'owned' by those affected by them. A process of melding the diverse and conflicting views of the

elements that constitute the mission statement of the university libraries in Ghana is therefore a necessity to provide the basis for a culture that will guide future executive action.

The study also revealed a similar disagreement between the library staff and the library management as to the components of a library mission statement. Though a significant proportion of the library staff who participated in the study agreed with the libraries' management on quite a number of elements in a library mission statement, there were considerable differences regarding a broader mission statement for university libraries. The library staff members were not in favour of developing a library mission that took into account a wider national perspective while library management believed strongly in a university library that served the entire nation. These differences must be addressed because objectives and strategies require mission statements that display such a single-minded, though multi-dimensional approach to doing library business (Pearce 1982).

According to Zalemik (1989), the primary responsibility of the top management of a university is that they must have a vision of the university and of the library's role. The analysis of data on the vision that the major stakeholders have for the universities indicates that all three categories of major stakeholders across all five case studies in Ghana did have visions for the universities. Evidence was, however, also found that all the government officials and a considerable number of the non-librarians did not have a strategic vision for the university libraries.

Secondly, the data suggest that, despite having strategic visions for the universities, the vision statements of government officials were entirely opposite to the vision for the universities held by the major stakeholders who were university workers. While the former expressed a vision of implementing government educational reforms, particularly government's wish to spend more on vocational and professional education at lower levels than on university education, the latter would prefer growth and development at all levels of university education. According to Corral (1994), however, a strategic vision must be shared among all staff of an organisation.

The overall results from a Ghanaian perspective did not fully support this concept of a strate-

gic vision of a university library. It was the stakeholders who are librarians who to some extent supported the view that the strategic management of libraries must involve a perspective wider than its individual institutions. For the library profession, there is the perception that the entire set of academic libraries is a resource for a nation, and even the world. But in this research study, the majority view of the Ghanaian stakeholders who were not library workers was an emphasis on the excellence and breadth of the libraries' collections with a focus on traditional media.

The results further show the differences between the strategic visions of various major stakeholders. Hayes (1993) argues that in strategic management of university libraries, libraries have to develop grand strategies for preservation and resource sharing and that the results of this will be a hierarchy of objectives, from individual library to the institution, to the nation and to the world. Underlying them all is the vision of the academic library as the institution for information resource management to meet the needs of society at every level (Hayes 1993).

The results from the perspective of the library staff (not the major stakeholders) support Hayes' argument (1993). This is a positive sign for strategy implementation in the university libraries in Ghana. What are of great concern are the differences in aspirations of the government officials for universities and those of the major stakeholders of the university libraries. Also troubling is the lack of strategic vision for the libraries articulated by the government officials as well as the general lack of consensus among the various major stakeholders of the libraries. These political differences do not augur well for the universities' or for the university libraries' development. Strategic visions are translated into key elements necessary to accomplish that vision (Hunger and Wheelan 1996) and a sponsor who does not share an organisation's vision will be reluctant to commit his funds (Helfron 1989).

Recommendations

Organisations are founded for a particular purpose, known as the organisation mission. The organisation's mission must be systematically and comprehensively developed, shared and agreed

upon by decision-makers. However, it was found that the major stakeholders and the library staff who took part in the investigation did not have an agreed mission. The challenge for the university library managers responsible for the development of information provision strategy is to develop a meaningful library mission based on a process of melding the diverse and conflicting demands placed on the libraries by the various stakeholders. Since the purpose of a library may change over time, it is essential that mission statements be reviewed in the context of SWOT analysis. The point of this analysis is to enable the libraries to position themselves to take advantage of particular opportunities in the environment to maximise their strengths and to moderate the impact of their weaknesses.

Similarly, a multiplicity of strategic visions was found to be the subject of disagreement between decision-makers and the library staff. Major stakeholders' conflicting visions for the universities and the libraries must be resolved. David (1986) suggests three basic approaches for conflict resolution: avoidance, diffusion and confrontation. The opposing vision statements expressed by the major stakeholders can be resolved by diffusion. The government of Ghana will have to take the initiative to open talks with university staff, not just the vice-chancellors but representatives of all interest groups of the universities. An agreement as to the future role of universities in Ghana must be reached in order to minimise the potentially dysfunctional effects that pursuing one or the other's vision will have on the universities and their libraries' development. Without this agreement, no one group will give the other's vision the support it needs in terms of finance and implementation. The role of libraries in university development must be part of any agreed-upon vision statement. Restraint must be exercised in all negotiations, as past resolutions of disagreements between government and university staff members have been noted for their unsatisfactory endings.

References

- Andrews, KR. 1971. *The concept of corporate strategy*. Homewood, Ill.: Dow-Jones-Irwin.
- Ansoff, HI. 1965. *Corporate strategy*. Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin
- Brooks, G. 1984. Some concerns find that the push to diversify was a costly mistake. *The Wall Street Journal*, 2 October, pp. B1.
- Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. 1979. *Sociological paradigms and organisational analysis*. London: Heinemann.
- Cohen, MD. et al. 1972. A garbage can model of organisational choice. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 17(1), March: 1-25.
- Corrall, Sheila. 1994. *Strategic planning for library and information services*. London: ASLIB.
- Cyert, Richard Michael and March, James G. 1963. *A behavioral theory of the firm*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Davidson, Andrew. 1994. Frank Barlow. *Management Today*, February: 50-54.
- Denzin, N.K. 1978. *The research act: a theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. 2nd ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Duck, Jeanie Daniel. 1993. Managing change: the art of balancing. *Harvard Business Review* 71(6) Nov-Dec.: 109-18.
- Fuchsberg, G. 1994. 'Visioning' missions becomes its own mission. *Wall Street Journal*, 7 January: Sec. B, p.1, col.3+.
- Genus, A. 1995. *Flexible strategic management*. London: Chapman and Hall.
- Guba, E. 1992. *The paradigm dialog*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Hayes Robert. 1993. *Strategic management for academic libraries*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Helfron, F. 1989. *Organisation theory and public administration*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Hunger, J. David and Wheelan, Thomas L. 1990. *Strategic management*. 5th ed. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Lancy, DF. 1993. *Qualitative research in education: an introduction to the major traditions*. New York, NY: Longman.
- Milofsky, Carl 1979. Not for profit organisations and community: a review of the sociological literature. *PONPO Working Paper*, 6. New Haven, CT: Yale University.
- Mullins, Laurie 1996. *Management and organisational behaviour*. 4th ed. London: Pitman Publishing.
- Naisbett, John 1982. *Megatrends: ten new directories transforming our lives*. New York, NY: Warner Books.
- Oster, Sharon M. 1995. *Strategic management for non-profit organisations; theory and cases*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Patton, MQ. 1988. Paradigms and pragmatism. In: Fettermam, DM. (ed.). *Qualitative approaches to evaluation in education*, pp. 116-137. New York, NY: Praeger.

- Pearce, John A. 1982. The company mission as a strategic tool. *Sloan Management Review*.
- Pearce, John A. and David, Fred. 1987. Corporate mission statements: the bottom line. *Academy of Management Executive*, 1 (2), May: 109–115.
- Porter, ME. 1980. *Competitive strategy: techniques for analysing industries and competitors*. New York: The Free Press
- Rossman, GB. and Wilson, BL. 1985. Numbers and words; combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a single large-scale evaluation study. *Evaluation Review* 9(5): 627–43.
- Schrage, Michael. 1991. Consultants' maxim for management: ignore markets, build on competence. *The Washington Post*, 17 May, Sec. F. p.3, col.1+
- Thompson, A. Arthur and Strickland, A.J. 1998. *Strategic management: concepts and cases*. 10th ed. Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.
- Vincent, Ida. 1988. Strategic planning and libraries: does the model fit? *Journal of library Administration* 9(3): 35–47.
- Yin, R.K. 1989. *Case study research: design and methods*. 2d.ed. Newbury Park: Sage.

Appendix: Mission/Goal Statements Prioritised by Major Stakeholders Category

Priority Index	Abbreviated Statement	University staff not librarian N=44		Stakeholders Library staff N=17		Total N=61	
		no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Very high priority	Information provision	17	27.9	14	22.9	31	(50.8%)
Very high priority	Providing the right environment for learning	24	39.3	0	0.0	24	(39.3%)
Very high priority	Promoting campus wide access to information resources	3	4.9	4	6.6	7	(11.5%)
Very high priority	To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge	3	4.9	4	6.6	7	(11.5%)
Very high priority	Taking a leading role in national and international library and information services	0	0.0	1	1.6	1	(1.6%)
Very high priority	Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management	2	3.3	0	0.0	2	(3.3%)
Very high priority	Document supply	0	0.0	1	1.6	1	(1.6%)
High Priority	To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge	8	13.1	13	21.3	21	(34.4%)
High Priority	Inf. provision	15	24.6	3	4.9	18	(29.5%)
High Priority	Providing the right environment for learning	14	22.9	4	6.6	18	(29.5%)
High Priority	Promoting campus wide access to information resources	5	8.2	8	13.1	13	(21.3%)
High Priority	Taking a leading role in national and international library and information services	0	0.0	9	14.8	9	(14.8%)
High Priority	Document supply	2	3.3	5	8.2	7	(11.5%)
High Priority	Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management	2	3.3	5	8.2	7	(11.5%)
High Priority	Provision of entertainment facilities	2	3.3	0	0.0	2	(3.3%)
Important	Promoting campus wide access to information resources	14	22.9	4	6.6	18	(29.5%)
Important	Providing the right environment for learning	5	8.2	11	18.0	16	(26.2%)
Important	Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management	4	6.6	11	18.0	15	(24.6%)
Important	Document supply	3	4.9	11	18.0	14	(23.0%)
Important	Taking a leading role in national and international library and information services	2	3.3	7	11.5	9	(14.8%)
Important	To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge	8	13.1	0	0.0	8	(13.1%)
Important	Information provision	6	9.8	0	0.0	6	(9.8%)
Important	Provision of entertainment facilities	2	3.3	0	0.0	2	(3.3%)
Marginal	To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge	24	39.3	0	0.0	24	(39.3%)
Marginal	Taking a leading role in national and international library and information services	20	32.8	0	0.0	20	(32.8%)
Marginal	Promoting campus wide access to information resources	17	27.9	1	1.6	18	(29.5%)
Marginal	Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management	15	24.6	1	1.6	16	(26.2%)
Marginal	Document supply	16	26.2	0	0.0	16	(26.2%)
Marginal	Provision of entertainment facilities	5	8.2	5	8.2	10	(16.4%)
Marginal	Information. provision	3	4.9	0	0.0	3	(4.9%)
Marginal	Providing the right environment for learning	1	1.6	2	3.3	3	(4.9%)
Least important	Provision of entertainment facilities	35	57.3	12	19.7	47	(77.0%)
Least important	Document supply	23	37.7	0	0.0	23	(37.7%)
Least important	Taking a leading role in national and international library and information services	22	36.1	0	0.0	22	(36.1%)
Least important	Training of the academic community in the skills of information retrieval and management	21	34.4	0	0.0	21	(34.4%)
Least important	Promoting campus wide access to information resources	5	8.2	0	0.0	5	(8.2%)
Least important	Information provision	3	4.9	0	0.0	3	(4.9%)
Least important	To assist in education and acquisition of knowledge	1	1.6	0	0.0	1	(1.6%)