Stakeholder Engagement in Strategic Planning for Academic Library (Case Study at Perpustakaan Tengku Anis, Machang, UiTM Kelantan Branch)

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Abstract. Strategic planning is a management approach used by various institutions and libraries are no exception. Academic libraries optimise their activities through strategic planning while helping to realise the strategic plan of the main institution, the university. Staff involvement is one of the important elements in a series of strategic planning processes. This article was prepared to find out the staff involvement process carried out by Perpustakaan Tengku Anis (PTA) in strategic planning. The research approach is a case study with data collection methods of literature review and interviews. The results showed that PTA has involved staff in the strategic planning process with *grassroots strategic planning* approach through a *dialogic approach* with the implementation of deliberations or focus group studies. The involvement of staff to be involved and contribute in realising the strategic plan with full awareness and shared responsibility.

Keywords: Strategic planning, staff engagement, academic library, library management.

1. Introduction

Strategic planning is a management approach to the planning process in an organisation in order to achieve the goals that have been formulated. The strategic plan will be a guide for the organisation to carry out activities and face challenges. Allison & Kaye (2015) define strategic planning as a systematic process undertaken by the organisation by a committee to determine priorities in dealing with the organisation's environment, strategic planning becomes a guide to allocate resources to achieve priorities (goals). Strategic plans can make organisations more effective in completing

the planned programmes and efficient in the resources needed. This is due to careful planning that starts from setting the mission to formulating priorities (objectives) of activities by considering environmental influences, especially since strategic planning is carried out systematically.

Academic libraries as information centres for the academic community play an important role in supporting research and scientific development. In order to achieve this goal, academic libraries go through a strategic planning process. Strategic planning is needed by academic libraries in an era of uncertainty and rapid change. Conditions and challenges that will be faced by libraries start from increasing public accountability, changes in the knowledge environment, changes in the technological environment, economic changes, to changes in human resources (Rubin, 2016). In this era full of uncertainty and change, the changes and uncertainties are the certainty itself that will be faced. The covid-19 phenomenon also accelerates the pace of technological change. Therefore, to continue to be able to contribute to the academic community, the library needs to consider the strategic plan.

Libraries have been using management approaches, especially strategic planning or strategic management. Based on the current literature review, academic libraries have developed strategic plans for libraries since the 1990s (Brown & Blake Gonzalez, 2007). The current development of strategic plans in academic libraries towards critical management studies, prototyping, organizational psychology (Scott & Vogus, 2021), shared leadership (Krier, 2022), agile methods (Cervone, 2014) and dialogic approaches (Dole et al., 2017) which offset SWOT and PEST tools which are also often used to complement the formulation of strategic plans in analysing the environment. The development of strategic plans applied in academic libraries also shows that strategic plans are still and will continue to be needed with various developments that will adapt.

Saunders (2015) asserts that library strategic planning is not limited to documents (without realisation or development), but the strategic plan can be a communication tool on how the library can support the campus as the main organisation so that in the end the strategic plan can bring the library to a better direction and show its existence in the middle of the campus. Academic libraries need to realise the urgency of the strategic plan so that it is not only limited to planning that lives in a document without measurable progress. The strategic plan is basically how the planning process occurs so that it is implemented and can be evaluated for future improvements (Allison & Kaye, 2015).

Furthermore, one of the interesting discussions presented by (Allison & Kaye, 2015) is that stakeholders play a role in the strategic planning process, both internal and external stakeholders. To carry out strategic planning, internal stakeholders (in particular) must fully understand and be committed to strategic planning. Thus, the involvement of stakeholders in the strategic planning process and the execution/implementation of strategic planning is one of the keys to implementing the programme in accordance with the plan. This article wants to discuss how staff engagement as internal stakeholders in the strategic planning process at Perpustakaan Tengku Anis (PTA) with the research question "How does PTA engage staff as internal stakeholders in the strategic planning process?"

This research uses a case study method approach. Case study involves the study of a particular case, or a number of cases (multiple case study), where the case is complex

and bounded, is studied in its context, and the analysis seeks to be holistic (Tight, 2017). A case study was conducted on Tengku Anis Library to focus on the engagement of library staff in the strategic planning process. The data collection method used literature review and interviews conducted with three (3) senior librarians from Perpustakaan Tengku Anis, Machang Campus, UiTM Kelantan Branch.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a planning processes undertaken to achieve organisational goals over time (long term). Strategic planning is the setting of organisational goals with action as the end result, which requires insight from experience and is flexible to future changes (Corral, 2001). Strategic planning is also understood as a planning process that has consequences for responsibility in the use of resources within a certain period of time with the aim of advancing/developing the organisation (Witcher, 2019). More specifically in the discussion of academic library strategic planning is a plan that covers a five-year period that aims to support the vision, mission, and goals of the main institution. The strategic plan also plays a role in providing quality services to support the teaching and learning process, faculty (staff), students, and stakeholders engaged (Knight, 2015).

The strategic planning process begins with the determination of objectives that include the vision, mission and goals of the organisation. Then it is followed by an analysis of the internal and external environment. Strategic determination to the implementation of predetermined strategies (Witcher, 2019). Allison & Kaye (2015) divide the strategic planning process into three steps that need to be taken which include, first, step up for success, stakeholder engagement, and vision, mission, values. Second, the environmental scan process, theory of change and programme portfolio, business model, organisational capacity, leadership. Finally, complete the strategic plan, and use your plan successfully or the implementation of the strategic plan. Based on these two sources, it can be drawn that there are three processes that will be passed in strategic planning, namely, determining goals (vision, mission, values/goals), analysing environmental influences, and implementing strategic plans. In this case, we consider that the evaluation process should also be considered for the sustainability of the strategic plan.



Figure 1 Strategic Planning Process (Witcher, 2019)



Figure 2 Strategic Planning Process (Allison & Kaye, 2015)

The overview of the stages of the strategic planning process mentioned above is to provide a view that stakeholder involvement is one part of a series of processes. Thus, stakeholder involvement will indirectly intersect with Human Resources (HR) including staff, communication that occurs to the role of leadership in the distribution of ideas. On the other hand, the academic library as an information organisation in higher education also participates in meeting the university's strategic plan, thus all elements of the university will have the same spirit and goals to achieve. Therefore, it is inevitable that staff involvement in the strategic planning process as well as the implementation of strategic planning should be considered and addressed.

Dillon (2008) stated that academic libraries cannot develop without aligning with the strategic plan of their main institution. Unfortunately, a study conducted by (Wadas, 2017) showed that there is a lack of alignment between the university mission statement and the library mission statement. Thus, academic libraries must align their strategic plans in order to help achieve the goals of the main institution or in other words, the library will go alongside to achieve the same goal (Franklin, 2009). The study conducted by Harland et al. (2018) confirms that the role of creative leaders is needed to focus on stakeholder engagement so that academic libraries can help the university as a main organisation while promoting the value and impact it can contribute.

The dynamic development of technology, the changing trends in higher education teaching, and the ever-evolving trends that libraries face. Libraries cannot adopt all

trends as new library services, but they can decide how priorities are structured to fit the vision and mission of the parent organisation (Saunders, 2015). This is also in line with what Allison & Kaye (2015) said that in a series of strategic planning processes it cannot capture all the problems that occur, but can sort out the most likely to be faced with the limits of its resources. To deal with the challenges faced by libraries using various approaches, and often using multiple approaches. Results also show that demographics, human capital, and library variables play an important role in goal setting. The results of the study showed that the multiple approaches approach helped the library to determine the right course of action in setting goals for better change (Yi, 2013).

However, Staley et al. (2012) suggest that it is important to raise shared-awareness and refer to it as an important component of strategic planning. In order for the strategic plan to keep up with current trends and staff to be aware of trending issues, it is important to foster shared awareness through interactive group discussions. Frequently, strategic planning processes do not directly involve library staff, leaving staff feeling disconnected and unrepresented. Involving staff in a series of strategic planning processes is done through focus groups to get input and feedback from staff. Processes that involve staff can provide opportunities to share their views on the values they believe are important in certain aspects (Buller & Gypin, 2021).

The study related to strategic planning in the field of academic libraries continues to develop with various models, approaches or processes aimed at achieving goals. The literature study conducted by Scott & Vogus (2021) raised several important points including: the importance of staff in the whole process to interact and share ideas; critical management studies (CMS) approach that focuses on participation, diversity of change, and ethical approaches; prototyping approach as an alternative to trial-error.

2.2 Staff Engagement as Internal Stakeholder

Stakeholder engagement in the library strategic planning process is considered important. Stakeholder engagement is essential as the implementation of the strategic plan requires the participation of all relevant parties. The process is the product is an appropriate expression to describe that the final result of the strategic plan is not limited to the document but the understanding and commitment of all parties. Furthermore, internal stakeholders that need to be involved in the strategic planning process include the board of direction, executive direction and senior staff, staff members, and the advisory board. In fact, staff members should be represented on the planning committee (Allison & Kaye, 2015). In the context of academic libraries, Knight (2015) mentions the stakeholders as faculty, students and staff.

The engagement of library staff in the development and strategic planning process for academic libraries is a vital part of the process. *Grassroots strategic planning* is strategic planning that involves all library staff from the bottom of the library's organisational structure. Staff as frontline who directly deal with library users every day have experiences and views that can be input into strategic planning. The study conducted by Casey (2015) showed three approaches used in applying grassroots strategic planning, namely; retreat (a series of discussion activities from initiating ideas, discussing ideas in groups, to general open discussions); SOAR, strengths, opportunities, associations, and results (a discussion method carried out by mapping

strengths and opportunities in the form of strategic planning); and scenario planning (discussions with planned scenarios that can represent goals/visions).

Leebaw (2019) proposed the CMS approach as an alternative to traditional strategic planning that prioritises efficiency, effectiveness measured by numbers. Based on the CMS concept, Leebaw tried to renew the strategic planning approach through; open participation (involving all staff without distinguishing structural positions, this is also similar to the bottom-up and grassroots strategic planning approach); reframing the problem (in the context of diversity that views the equality of all people with various backgrounds or skin colours); and embracing ethical agency (encouraging ethical judgments such as openness, accessibility, usefulness, in the strategic planning process). This involves providing open opportunities for all library staff, responding to diversity issues in various perspectives wisely and fairly, and encouraging ethical judgements such as considering dissensus or the outcome of both good and bad decisions for the public.

The two studies mentioned above prioritised staff participation through either open discussion or group discussion with various specific approaches. Libraries have used the focus group study approach as a means of gaining staff perceptions, gathering input from library activities in strategic planning (Mellinger & Chau, 2010). Furthermore, the results of their study showed that staff had positive perceptions of their participation in the focus groups. On the other hand, the relationship between facilitators and discussion participation, visuals, and meeting space can contribute to encouraging open communication. The follow-up of the discussion results so as to provide recommendations is a further step after the discussion. Mellinger & Chau argued that staff group discussions are a productive way to gather the opinions and perceptions of library staff in response to prevailing issues or trends.

Strategic Planning	D-4 Cycle
Environmental scan, identifying important	Discovery–Appreciating
values	
Creating a vision	Dream–Envisioning
Creating a structure to implement the plan	Design-Constructing
Sustaining the challenge	Destiny or (Delivery)-
	sustaining

Table 1 Strategic Planning dan D-4 Cycle (Dole et al., 2017)

Similarly, Dole et al. (2017) promoted dialogic approaches (Appreciative Inquiry 'AI') as a strategic planning approach rather than "diagnostic" analysis through the mainstream SWOT approach. Similar to the previously mentioned grassroots strategic planning, bottom-up, or focus group study approaches, the AI approach also emphasises the participation of staff involved in the strategic planning process. One form of implementation of the AI approach in strategic planning is the 4D-Cycle (Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny). The AI approach encourages discussion so that every staff involved has contributed ideas to the discussion so that it can cover many points of view or perspectives. Therefore, especially in the Discovery and Dream stages, it is important to involve various elements of stakeholders other than library staff such as faculty, students, or even external stakeholders. Dole et al. exemplified activities that can be

done in AI implementation in the D4-Cycle to support strategic planning such as workshops and focus groups.

3. Finding

3.1 The Strategic Planning of PTA: Staff Engagement

Perpustakaan Tengku Anis (PTA) is the academic library of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Kelantan branch. It is certainly involved in the success of their main institution's strategic plan. Based on the UiTM 2025 strategic plan (Universiti Teknologi MARA, 2020) there are three main points to be achieved, namely, quality education, global excellence, and value-oriented achievement. Quality education as one of the points of the UiTM 2025 strategic plan correlates with the library as an information center for the academic community. To achieve quality education, libraries need to participate in providing resources, facilities, and research assistance for the academic community. Through an interview session with three senior PTA librarians, one of the interviewees said:

"So from the strategic design achievements that have been achieved by the library. Of course there will be work achievements designed by the university. As syahril recognised earlier, we have quality education so the library does support that trust, based on quality education. So advice related to borrowing materials tu, or examples of intele rights, repository, so than that we will improve the quality education of tu university. So we are supporting the university itself. We also support the strategic plan. We make our own, but at the same time we support the strategic planning of the university."

The strategic plan formulation process conducted by PTA as one of the branch libraries of UiTM will follow Perpustakaan Tun Abdul Razak (PTAR) as the main library of the university. PTA is actively involved in the process of formulating the strategic plan of the main library through deliberations that will be held regularly at the beginning of each year (quarter 1) at the main library. The strategic planning process that involves many library branches is indeed a challenge for a library that has 39 branches spread throughout Malaysia. The strategic planning process in UiTM academic libraries can be seen from the two processes that occur in PTA branch libraries and in the main library (PTAR).

First, the strategic planning process carried out by PTA at the branch library level involves staff through open discussions. Discussions involving library staff as internal stakeholders aim to gather ideas and provide opportunities for staff to contribute according to their skills in their particular fields. The discussion is held regularly at the end of each year with a discussion of the achievement of KPIs and PIs as well as updates in response to changes that occur. The librarian who serves as the head of the Strategic Plan and Quality Division will be the representative of the branch library (PTA) to convey in the deliberations at the main library level (PTAR). In connection with this, in the interview session, the interviewee said:

"we have to meet gathering in shah alam, so we discuss PI, KPI the target we, you what to achieve every year. like this in the coming year we (PTA) make, if every november or December, we do early. So that when we go to february there is already dah, what from the design. So that's the normal, that means we make it, I think it's very good strategy, just earlier, communication problem ahahaa. Whether he's active, whether he's not talking, we have to make it good, we have to understand his passion, we have to understand what his strengths are, what is the specialisation, what is the expertise, what is the skill."

The active participation of staff in the discussion process and the role of the discussion facilitator are important to extract information from each staff involved (Mellinger & Chau, 2010). Based on the interviews, it can also be seen that at the branch library level, the urgency to involve staff and explore their ability to contribute to the strategic plan is well recognized.

Second, the strategic planning process at the main library level. Representatives from branch libraries, including the Chief Librarian and the Chief Librarian of the Strategic Planning and Quality Division, will attend the "Strategic Planning Workshop" programme to discuss setting KPIs and PIs as well as responding to current issues. Through the programme, focus group studies are conducted in small groups of librarians from various library branches to discuss certain issues/topics. The final outputs of the discussion are KPIs and PIs as well as project initiatives that can be agreed upon in accordance with user needs. It is interesting that although the 39 branch libraries have the same goal, the implementation to achieve KPIs and PIs can vary depending on the creativity and cultural values of each branch library. In the interview session, the speaker said:

"During the strategic decision making process. Each branch representative is given a title, given a title for us to discuss with other branch representatives. From there we can finalise how many targets we need to set. Whether the PIs or KPIs that we designed are fulfilled or not. So from there we make a discussion ..."

The process of involving library staff in strategic planning reflects dialogic approaches or AI as proposed by Dole et al. (2017). However, the implementation of AI is not entirely similar to the D4-Cycle but rather a grassroots strategic planning or bottom-up approach through open discussions or focus group studies (Casey, 2015; Mellinger & Chau, 2010). The three senior librarians agreed that strategic planning is important for academic libraries so that the programmes can be well directed, can have an impact on quality (services and facilities), and finally, strategic planning is the first concrete step for libraries to implement programmes as a form of responsibility to the public.

3.2 Challenges faced by the PTA

Implementing the strategic plan will inevitably be faced with various uncertain conditions. PTA faces various challenges in the process of implementing the strategic plan to achieve the KPIs and PIs that have been set. One factor that is a challenge in the implementation of the strategic plan is technology. Digital library services as a form of

technological development adapted by the library face technical issues. So, when facing various challenges, the strategic plan becomes a reference point. With the presence of the strategic plan, various challenges and obstacles will be faced with a reference that has been determined and will become a fixed standard. Changes in a dynamic era cannot be denied, so the strategic plan becomes a solution based on environmental sensitivity (analysis). It is also a challenge for PTA that there is an age gap between senior librarians and young librarians or staff to establish good communication, strategic communication is needed (O'Sullivan & Partridge, 2016).

Leadership and communication are key for PTA to face challenges. Problems faced will be solved with the involvement of all library parties with leadership roles. The process of implementing the strategic plan is closely related to the management structure in place which will involve cross-units to achieve the same goal. The main purpose of discussions or forums conducted for the formulation of strategic planning is not to reach a common agreement. Discussions are held so that ideas are distributed and can be understood by all people involved. At the discussion stage of the formulation of strategic planning, it is the process itself how rolling and the form of leadership that occurs. So that when there is an opportunity for all staff to be involved they will feel more about the results of the final decision (Allison & Kaye, 2015).

4. Conclusion

Strategic planning is a commonly used management approach today and libraries as information organisations are no exception. The strategic planning process often takes a long time and causes headaches, but the end result of the strategic plan is not limited to a document without full and measurable implementation (Allison & Kaye, 2015; Scott & Vogus, 2021). PTA as a branch library of UiTM participates in the strategic planning process of UiTM library. Obviously, the library also sets strategic plans to support the university as the main organisation. Library staff were involved through discussions at the PTA to PTAR stages represented by each branch library librarian representative with a *grassroots strategic planning* approach through *dialogic approaches* implemented in the form of deliberations or focus group discussions. The important role of leadership in the grassroots strategic planning approach is needed so that the dialogue takes place with active participation with clear communication. Through the grassroots strategic planning the success of the strategic plan.

PTA as a branch library has participated in the strategic planning of UiTM library. It cannot be denied that there are resource limitations between the branch library and the main library. Thus PTA as a branch library needs to maximise limited resources to continue to achieve the KPIs or PIs that have been set (efficiently). This is also driven by the active participation of all elements of the library from librarians, staff, and users. In some areas, users can be involved as a form of costumer-oriented library. The results of the PTA staff involvement case study in the strategic planning process are hopefully implemented by other academic libraries or information centre institutions by considering approaches that are appropriate to the environment and organisational culture.

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