

# An academic library position in a university: understanding the position and its positioning process.

MD YUSOF, M.

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**AN ACADEMIC LIBRARY POSITION IN A UNIVERSITY:  
UNDERSTANDING THE POSITION AND ITS POSITIONING PROCESS**

**MAZNI MD YUSOF**

A Thesis Submitted to The Robert Gordon University in Partial Fulfilment of the  
Requirements of the Degree of Professional Doctorate Information Science

**THE ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY**

**AUGUST 2018**

# **Abstract**

**Mazni Md Yusof**

**Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Professional Doctorate Information Science**  
**The Academic Library's Position in a University: Understanding the Position and**  
**Its Positioning Process**

This study explored the issues related to academic libraries' position and the positioning process. The study adopted an inductive and grounded theory approach to illuminate the academic library's position and positioning process through the perceptions of the study's participants. Seventeen semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted as the main source of data and 46 related documents were analysed as secondary data support. The findings show that an academic library's positioning is a dynamic process, which is described as movement through the positions of surviving, striving and thriving. These positions are influenced by the library's operational effectiveness, the library's legitimization strategies and the library as a knowledge symbol, which are the themes that emerged from the findings. To further enhance the understanding of academic libraries' position, a model of academic libraries' dynamic position was developed based on the findings. It was found that academic libraries' dynamic position is influenced by the striving position, which is based on the level of success of the legitimization strategies, and failure to progress to the next position will lead academic libraries to a situation of a false sense of legitimacy.

**Keyword:** Academic library position, academic library legitimacy, surviving position, striving position, thriving position, false sense of legitimacy, dynamic academic library position, academic library identity, legitimacy strategy, conformance, manipulating

## **Declaration of Original Work**

This is to certify that I am responsible for the work submitted in this thesis, that it is my own original work except as specified in references or in footnotes, and that neither the thesis nor the original work contained therein has been submitted to this or any other institution for a higher degree.

Mazni Md Yusof

30th August 2018

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ACRL	Association of College & Research Libraries
HE	Higher education
IR	Institutional repository
IT	Information technology
LIS	Library and information science
NLS	National Library of Scotland
NSS	National Student Survey
RDM	Research data management
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RGU	Robert Gordon University
SCF	Strategic Collaboration Fund
SFC	Scottish Funding Council
UK	United Kingdom

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This chapter contains an outline of the study and is presented in five subsections, which include the study background, the significance of the study, the research question and objectives, a methodological overview and the thesis structure.

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

This study was triggered by a report by the American Library Association on academic libraries' value published in 2010. The report consists of a literature review on the value of academic libraries and aimed to provide a clear understanding of academic libraries' value measurement through literature. The report made several suggestions on how to demonstrate and articulate academic libraries' value (Association of College & Research Libraries [ACRL], 2010). The study has advanced the measuring of academic library value by listing several quests for librarians to venture to measure and demonstrate academic libraries' value.

The report defined value in five different ways, namely, use, return on investment, commodity production, impact and alternative comparison, yet the study focused only on two types of value, which were perceived to be desired by constituents: the impact value and the financial value (ACRL, 2010). In general, these values are used by library and information science (LIS) researchers to evaluate academic libraries and to demonstrate their value to university managers (ACRL, 2010).

However, it is a well-known fact that in addition to the value mentioned above, academic library value includes symbolic value. As suggested by Lynch, Murry-Rust, Parker, Turner, Walker, Wilkinson and Zimmerman (2007), academic libraries' symbolic value has a sentimental connotation that is used as shorthand in budget allocation meetings. The sentimental connotation has saved many academic libraries during budget-cutting periods (Lynch et al., 2007; Nicholas et al., 2010). This sentimental connotation value is represented by, among others, the metaphor 'the academic library as the heart of the university' (Grimes, 1998; Lynch et al., 2007). This has emphasised the importance of symbolic value to academic libraries.

Hence, studies of academic libraries' value should not exclude or ignore the significance of symbolic value and other terms of value in understanding academic libraries' value. According to scholars in organisational studies such as Deephouse and others (2016), abandoning symbolic value contributes towards the distortion of our knowledge of organisation legitimacy and creates a substantial gap in our understanding. Measuring academic libraries' position is beyond the concept of effectiveness (Cullen & Calvert, 1997), which includes the concept of organisation centrality and legitimacy (e.g., Bitektine, 2011; Hackman, 1985; Suchman, 1995), based on the evaluation of operational and symbolic base value. Hence, this study aimed to explore the position of academic libraries that is not limited to a designated value, by understanding their value beyond the measurement of specific services, roles or physical space.

This study is an explorative qualitative inquiry of the academic library position in universities, aimed at enhancing understanding of the position and the positioning process based on an inductive approach as well as a grounded theory approach. The grounded theory approach allowed the study to explore findings without a preset conceptual framework, thus providing an opportunity for the findings to be revealed from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). The study explored an academic library's position in a university through the perceptions of its constituents. In line with this, 17 semi-structured interviews were conducted from May until September 2014, and 46 related documents were collected and analysed. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to share their library experiences and provide comprehensive reflections on the library position, and the documents collected provided support to the information as secondary data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill et al., 2009).

## **1.2 Significance of the Study**

This study focused on creating an understanding of the academic library's position and positioning process. This involved exploring all issues related to academic libraries' position overall value of being central, such as in studies by Grimes (1998), Lynch et al. (2007) and Robertson (2015). This study did not focus on selected services or values and their impact on libraries' position, as, for instance, in studies that have focused on information literacy (O'Connor, 2009; Onswu Ansah, 2008), projects related to information technology (IT) (Chandon & Jarvanpaa, 2001; Crawford, 1997) and open access (Reinsfelder, 2012; Reinsfelder & Anderson, 2013). In the quest to create

understanding of academic libraries' position, many LIS researchers have studied their position, for instance, Spreitzer and Sutcliffe (2007), Stoffle and Cuillier (2011) and Franklin (2012).

However, not many researchers have focused on the progressing stage of the positioning. As stated by Saunders (2015), not much LIS literature has focused on understanding the strategic priorities and the strategy implementation of academic libraries together with the issues and challenges libraries face (Saunders, 2015). The lack of literature focusing on this area of study has created a gap in understanding the strategic process of academic libraries in universities (Saunders, 2015).

To address this gap, this study asked the questions, What is the position of academic libraries? How does the positioning process take place? and What are the factors that influence the position? This is in line with a suggestion made by Lynch et al. (2007) that there is a need to 'question the applicability of the centrality concept to libraries in universities and indicate the need for research that offers a relevant model for use in those settings' (p. 227). Thus, to contribute to a deeper understanding of academic libraries' position, a model of academic libraries' position was developed using the findings from the study. The study's contribution towards the understanding of academic libraries' position and positioning process through a model is significant for the LIS studies' area.

### **1.3 Research Questions and Objectives**

Essentially, the research aim of this study was to provide a deeper understanding of academic libraries' position. The study also aimed to develop a model to understand the position, by asking the questions, What is the academic library's position? How does the positioning process take place? and What are the factors that influence the position?

Therefore, this study's objectives were to:

1. understand what influences academic libraries' position and positioning process
2. explore alternative ways to describe academic libraries' position in a university.

### **1.4 Overview of Methodology**

This study used an inductive as well as a grounded theory approach. Using these approaches allowed the researcher to approach the study without a preset conceptual



framework since grounded theory allows themes to emerge from data (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). Data could be collected from the participants' interpretation of subjective realities and this was helpful in understanding the academic library position as a social status.

The study is a case study that was conducted in a modern, post-1992 university library in Scotland. Use of the case study method provided the study with the opportunity to gather thorough information regarding the library studied within a non-controlled environment. This supported the aim of the study, which was to study academic libraries' position without focusing on a designated value, services, role and impact on the position by collecting as much information as possible on the position.

In line with grounded theory and the inductive approach applied in the study, 17 semi-structured interviews were carried out in person and 46 documents were collected as secondary data. These interviews were recorded using a digital audio recorder and fully transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. The transcriptions were then analysed to enable themes to emerge from the data. The data collection process also contributed to the understanding of the underlying meaning of the data, which included verbal and non-verbal messages communicated during the interview process and other related activities. Understanding of such underlying data has contributed greatly to the process of analysing the emerging themes from the study. Thus, the data analysis process in the study was executed beyond analysing the plain text.

Using an interview data collection method has allowed the study to collect the richness of the data from the interviews, by collecting data based on the explicit participants' unique perceptions as well as implicit data embedded in the interaction between the participants and the interviewer. In grounded theory, both the researcher and the participants can mutually construct interpretation of multiple realities (Charmaz, 2008). In other words, the researcher is involved in a reciprocal relationship with participants that produces a theory that is grounded in their experiences (Charmaz, 2008).

## **1.5 Structure of the Thesis**

The structure of the thesis is divided into seven chapters, which include:

## **Chapter One: The Introduction**

This first chapter has the purpose of introducing the background of the study, explaining the significance of the study, the research question, the aims and objectives, and describing the methodology used and the structure of the thesis.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The second chapter has the purpose of reviewing literature from information and LIS studies as well as other study areas that are related to organisational studies. The chapter begins by discussing several concepts related to academic libraries' position. Next, the chapter discusses the development of and issues in measuring academic libraries' position. The chapter proceeds with a discussion of the concepts and theories used in previous studies on academic libraries' position and the use of legitimacy to represent the position. Finally, the chapter discusses an alternative way to describe academic libraries position.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

This chapter has the purpose of presenting the philosophical approach used in the study, which influenced the researcher's choice of research methods. This chapter begins with a discussion of the research perspectives and research philosophy adopted—an inductive research approach and a grounded theory approach—and the research design. Next is a discussion on the data collection strategies use in the data collection process. This chapter also presents the data analysis process, which includes some examples of the process using data from the study. Lastly, the chapter discusses some reflections from the data collection and analysis process, which comprise, among others, those that are related to a practitioner point of view and researching one's own organisation.

## **Chapter Four: The Case**

This chapter introduces the case study by first describing the university in the Scotland higher education (HE) environment and then introducing the library by discussing its involvement in the university, its structure and its focus.

## **Chapter Five: The Findings**

This chapter describes and introduces the themes that are embedded within the findings discussed. Among the main themes to emerge in this study are operational effectiveness, symbolic knowledge, metaphor and legitimation strategies. These main themes were widely discussed in the interviews as well as supported in the documents analysed. The findings are described and supported with excerpts from the interviews and documents as examples.

## **Chapter Six: Discussion**

This chapter discusses the main themes reported from the previous chapter. From the themes, a model of academic libraries' dynamic position was developed based on an alternative way to describe the purpose of academic libraries' position: to survive, to strive and to thrive. Next, the model is discussed using the elements from a related theory to formulate the findings into the contributions of the study.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusions**

Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of the study. This chapter presents the contributions made by the study to theory as well as to the LIS literature in the study of academic libraries' position. This chapter also explains the study's limitations and offers recommendations and suggestions for future research.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature from LIS related to academic libraries' position as well as literature from other areas, especially that related to organisational studies. The chapter is divided into five sections comprising discussion on several concepts of academic libraries' position. Next, the chapter discusses the development of and issues in measuring academic libraries' position. The chapter proceeds with discussion of the concepts and theories used in previous studies on academic libraries' position and the use of legitimacy to represent the position. Finally, the chapter discusses an alternative way to describe academic libraries' position using the surviving, striving and thriving positions.

### **2.2 Academic Libraries' Position**

In marketing literature, position is discussed in relation to segmentation, targeting and communication, whereas in branding literature, position traditionally revolves around selecting, implementing and controlling a brand's image over time (Urde & Koch, 2014). The discussion is related to two approaches to understanding the position and the positioning process. They are the outside-in (market and brand orientation) approach and the inside-out (strategic management). The inside-out approach is focused on skills, knowledge, processes, relationships or outputs and has increasingly come to influence strategic management, and it revolves around sustaining position, competitive position and managing advantages in resources and capabilities (Urde & Koch, 2014).

In the LIS literature, the academic library position has been discussed through similar perspectives. Hansson (2015), for instance, discussed academic libraries' legitimacy using external legitimacy and internal legitimacy. External legitimacy is related to expectations outside the library, for instance, if the library is given a well-defined position in the university, whereas internal legitimacy is related to the identity-shaping processes whereby the library is positioning itself. External legitimacy is created by needs and expectations from outside the libraries, whereas internal legitimacy is seen primarily in identity-shaping processes within the library itself (Hansson, 2015).

The different approaches and perspectives used to understand organisation positioning such as market orientation (outside-in) and brand orientation (inside-out) represent different points of departure in understanding and defining position. Academic libraries' position is generally studied using these three perspectives.

### **2.2.1 Structural Position**

Academic libraries' central position in the university has long been a concern for many researchers in LIS. Among the concerns are those related to academic libraries' centrality in the decision-making process in universities (Schwartz, 2007) and resources allocation (Crawford, 1997; Grimes, 1998; Lynch et al., 2007; Robertson, 2015). Hickson et al. (1971) defined the centrality of a subunit as the degree to which its activities are interlinked into the system. Hackman (1985) defined the centrality of a department in a university as how closely the department matches the central mission of its parent institution and found that a unit's centrality crucially affects the internal resources allocated to it by the institution.

Many LIS researchers have combined this concept of centrality with the theory of organisational power, which includes several structural variables and power variables associated with strategic contingencies' theory of organisational power. These variables include uncertainty, centrality and substitutability (Crawford, 1997).

There are other studies in LIS that had focused on structure position usually involve academic librarians' position in a university. An academic librarian's professional status is firmly embedded in the structures of universities and university libraries, yet the main physical separations or structural arrangements are defined by the distribution of financial resources. According to Flaming-May and Douglas (2013), financial distribution gives a signal of the university's priorities in that differences in compensation demonstrate the value placed by the institution. For instance, in the case of salary, equity is an issue for academic librarians with faculty status (Flaming-May & Douglas, 2013).

### **2.2.2 Symbolic Position**

Academic library centrality studies also use the perspective of position as a symbol, for instance, studies in relation to the famous academic library metaphor 'the heart of the university' such as those of Grimes (1998), Lynch et al. (2007) and Robertson (2015).

In such studies, academic libraries' position has been indicated by academic libraries' indicators of success, including both operational and symbolic indicators, such as circulation and interlibrary loan numbers, the size of collections, and librarians' involvement in the faculty senate or its committees (Grimes, 1998, p. 116; Lynch et al., 2007). Lynch et al. (2007) described academic libraries' symbolic position as a sentimental and connotation value that is useful to guarantee access to resources.

There are also studies of academic libraries' symbolic position that are related to the academic centrality of an academic library, for instance, those of Estabrook (2007), Fister (2010) and Robertson (2015). Estabrook's (2007) study showed that the centrality of a programme, department or unit in a university is often measured by its quality according to an external body, its centrality to the mission of the university and the demand for its offerings, and in recent years, the factors of cost have been added. A study by Fister (2010) listed some elements of interest in academic libraries' centrality in universities, including the usage, the centrality in supporting the university's mission and its contributions to the university's reputation.

In general, the academic library's symbolic position based on academic centrality is a combination of several centrality indicators such as budget allocation, usage, cost, benefits and contributions to reputation, which are both operational as well as symbolic in nature.

### **2.2.3 Physical Position**

The academic library's position has also been studied from the perspective of the centrality of the academic library's physical position, for example, the building's location, function and aesthetic value. For instance, Closet-Crane (2009) studied academic libraries' successful business discourse in securing budget allocation to build a new building in the competitive environment of universities. This perspective has also been used in the study of academic libraries' space as a centre for resources and ideas to provide information to its users (Latimer, 2011), where the use of space and the library's physical location has been acknowledged as central to students' activity on campus: 'The library as a gateway to knowledge remains as true for the building that welcomes in readers to peruse books and journals as for the one that guides its users to electronic resources throughout the world' (p. 112).

Closet-Crane (2009) conducted a study on the discourse of academic libraries' space as a learning space. The study was a discourse analysis study that used academic library literature related to buildings and space as primary data. The study suggested that academic libraries' spaces such as the information common are a manifestation of the libraries' business domain in their larger institution. Hence, the branding of academic libraries' space or building serves as the metaphorisation of the library as a business, which is parallel with the marketisation of universities (Closet-Crane, 2009).

In general, in the LIS literature, academic libraries' position has been discussed from both outside-in and inside-out perspectives (Urde & Koch, 2014) or internal and external legitimacy (Hansson, 2015). For instance, an academic library's symbolic position has been seen as the outcome of constituents' evaluation of its services and roles in studies such as those of Grimes (1998), Lynch (2007), Robertson (2015), Estabrook (2007) and Fister (2010). In contrast, the structural position as well as the branding of academic libraries' building and space have been related to the inside-out perspective of evaluating libraries' position in studies by Closet-Crane (2009) and Crawford (1997).

### **2.3 Measuring Academic Library Value and Position**

LIS researchers have used a variety of ways and perspectives to measure and understand academic libraries' value (ACRL, 2010), which has contributed to some understanding of the academic library's position. Robertson (2015) commented that studies that discuss the academic library's position from the perspective of its constituents are 'few and far between' (p.5). In addition, Robertson (2015) categorised literature on academic libraries' position from the perspective of their constituents into three groups: the awareness stage, measuring centrality related to resources allocation and measuring the academic centrality of academic libraries. These categories are useful in discussing the literature related to academic library value and position.

The first category is the awareness stage, which includes earlier studies on academic libraries' value and position, for example, those by Munn (1968) and Hardesty (1991). The second category is related to resources allocation, in which the academic library's position is determined by changes in the allocation of resources, for example, the funds, power and number of staff; among relevant studies are those by Crawford (1997), Grimes (1998) and Lynch et al. (2007). Finally, the third theme, which is the study of academic

libraries' position in relation to academic centrality, includes, for instance, studies by Estabrook (2007), Fister (2010), Petraityte (2014) and Robertson (2015).

In addition to the categories mentioned above, other themes have been used when discussing academic libraries' position, such as the themes of IT influence and metaphor. These themes are also discussed in this section.

### **2.3.1 Awareness Stage**

In the awareness stage, Munn (1968) created awareness of the position of academic libraries, which he suggested was misunderstood by academic libraries' university management and resulted in academic libraries receiving less support from their university management. Munn's study was based on his observations as a librarian while at the same time he was serving as an administrator in a university. He noted that academic libraries are not the main focus of university top managers because in the academic world, libraries are considered mid-level organisations that neither cause problems nor bring income to a university, and thus are not worth paying attention to. Munn (1968) also described academic libraries as being the 'bottomless pit' department in universities in terms of budget and spending (p. 635).

In 1991, Hardesty revisited the study of Munn's 'bottomless pit' pejorative statement and found that university managers were very supportive towards their academic libraries. The managers viewed libraries as having integral roles to play in their universities because academic libraries are very useful for students as well as for the rest of the institution. According to the managers, academic libraries are beneficial in terms of operation and symbol. Libraries are needed because of their resources but also as representatives of the highest aspiration of the institution of knowledge (Hardesty, 1991). The phrase 'bottomless pit' for some university top managers instead reflected the whole campus rather than pejoratively pointed at its libraries.

Hardesty (1991) also found that university managers regarded academic libraries as being important operationally as well as symbolically. For instance, according to the university in Hardesty's study, the academic library's symbolic value lay in the nature of the library's new building and the library as a tool for publicity and campaigns. The academic library's building was considered 'a major symbol, and that is one reason we are proud of building a new library. It is something we will use from now on in [our own] publicity'



(Hardesty, 1991, p. 221). Although some of Hardesty's findings contradicted Munn's (1968) observation, both studies agreed upon the statement that university managers had limited information about their library and their judgements about the library were based on second-hand information such as community feedback and complaints.

Overall, Munn's (1968) study, which was based on his own observations, indicated that university managers see their library as a benign organisation and a bottomless pit whereas Hardesty's (1991) study, which was based on interviews with university top managers, argued that the bottomless pit statement does not describe the libraries; instead, academic libraries have a symbolic role to play on campus. Nonetheless, both studies suggested that academic libraries should take a proactive step towards more active communication because being seen as benign by university managers can lead to being neglected: 'at most institutions, the library is not the centre of the institution. It only gets in the centre of the institution if somebody is trying aggressively to put it there' (Hardesty, 1991, p. 228). Therefore, the heads of libraries must continue to work aggressively within the framework of academia to make their libraries central (Hardesty, 1991).

### **2.3.2 Information Technology, Resources Allocation and Power**

The second theme in discussing the academic library position is related to the influence of IT on academic libraries' resources allocation. For example, Crawford's (1997) study examined how IT has influenced academic libraries' interorganisational power based on strategic contingencies theory. The study attempted to find the correlation between IT project implementation success and academic libraries' power in their university.

To measure the changes in the interorganisational power of the libraries, Crawford (1997) proposed an integrated model based on strategic contingencies theory to measure variables considered the basis of interorganisational power. These included both structural variables and variables associated with strategic contingencies, namely, uncertainty, centrality and substitutability. A model of intraorganisational power was proposed and tested in this study aimed at integrating the strategic contingencies model of intraorganisational power with concepts measuring the effects of technology on organisations. The major independent variables included a technology index and environmental variables, and the intervening variables were the bases of power, that is, percentage of the budget, the number of subunit positions and perceived power.

Crawford's (1997) study used a questionnaire, which was sent to the directors of 487 identified libraries in the United States and it was found that academic libraries' automation and IT projects had had a significant influence on the changes in the libraries' intraorganisational power in universities. Yet the study also showed that IT influence was a weak agent. Successful IT projects influenced other power variables, such as the increasing number of professional staff and constituents' perceptions of the libraries' centrality, and this was without the effect of the most anticipated variable—resources allocation. According to Crawford, this was one of the study's limitations and it was due to the model being based on an IT study, which used some criteria that were not applicable to an academic library setting.

In another study, Candon and Jarvenpaa (2001) conducted interviews in three medical libraries to understand the changes in libraries' interorganisational power using Hackman's (1985) concept of centrality. In Hackman's concept of centrality, the centrality of a department in a university is measured by the closeness of the department's purposes with the university's purpose. This is indicated by the changes in four theoretical concept indicators, which are the internal resource allocations, environmental power, institutional power and resource negotiation strategies. Using the precategorisation of departments in universities by Hackman (1985), Candon and Jarvenpaa's (2001) study categorised academic libraries as peripheral or support units in universities.

Candon and Jarvenpaa (2001) discovered that, as the head of a support department, the head of a library is faced with challenges in increasing their interorganisational power after the successful implementation of IT projects. They further concluded that support departments in universities such as academic libraries can elevate their position through the use of behavioural and structural strategies. Three behavioural strategies were found to be used by the heads of libraries. These strategies were a discursive strategy to ensure acceptance, an interaction strategy to compile information regarding the IT project and a non-threatening negotiation strategy to negotiate the project.

Through their study, Candon and Jarvenpaa (2001) found that behavioural strategy helps to facilitate acceptance of successful IT projects and in return can be used to enhance sources of structural power. Although the structural position of the head of a library may hinder as well as facilitate the positioning process, this study regarded the head of the library's structural position in a university as representative of the use of a structural

strategy. However, Candon and Jarvenpaa suggested that the heads of academic libraries need to combine the use of behavioural and structural strategies to better achieve their objectives, upon succeeding in implementing their IT projects.

More recent studies on the academic library's position have found that IT has grown into a pervasive factor in the evaluation of academic libraries' roles. This is because academic libraries have become highly dependent on IT units for software maintenance and training. Such dependency has made it impossible for academic libraries to operate without the support of IT services nowadays (Crawford, 1997; Estabrook, 2007; Fister, 2010; Petraityte, 2014).

The heavy dependency on the IT units has created role confusion between IT units and academic libraries, particularly in providing access to information (Delany & Beats, 2015). According to Fister (2010), there is uncertainty among university managers as well as other constituents regarding the authority, roles and relationships between the library and the IT unit. The uncertainty and interchangeability of their roles (Fister, 2010) has resulted in university managers perceiving the strategic vision of library and IT services as inseparable (Petraityte, 2014), and as a consequence, the changes undergone by the library are influenced more by the development of IT than the needs of the library services. This trend has rendered IT a dominant influential agent in defining the operation and concept of the academic library (Petraityte, 2014).

### **2.3.3 Measuring the Academic Centrality of Academic Libraries**

The final category is the study of academic libraries as a central department in universities by examining the roles and functions of the libraries. Measuring academic centrality is related to analysing administrators' view of how core their library is to their institutions (Robertson, 2015). The measuring process involves using decisive constituents' perceptions of the libraries position, for example, as done in the studies of Robertson (2015), Fister (2010) and Estabrook (2007). These studies interviewed university top managers such as chief academic officers, chief operation officers and vice-chancellors.

However, Grimes (1998) disputed the centrality and criticality dimensions put forward by the Hackman (1985) and Ansar and Shapiro (1988) studies. Grimes argued that the centrality concept lacked connection to reality and the criticality concept was easily manipulated. For instance, the relationship between a library's contribution and the

university workflow could be easily manipulated, for example, by highlighting the services that are closely related to the university's mission at the expense of the quality of the library's other services. In addition, the precategorisation and subjectivity in defining core and peripheral units were done prematurely and had no connection to reality (Grimes, 1998, p. 44).

It was perceived that Hackman's (1985) designation of core and peripheral units was controversial and the concept, according to Hackman herself, needed further investigation, including refining and clarifying of the categories (Lynch et al., 2007). Instead, Grimes (1998) offered a definition of academic libraries' centrality as being linked to several indicators of the library's day-to-day operational success, such as library services, access and tradition (p. 115). However, Grimes's concept of centrality was criticised for its failure to address the gap between administrators' and librarians' perceptions of academic library centrality, either through the concept of interconnectedness or through mission congruence (Housewright, 2000).

In this category, LIS researchers have studied academic libraries' position by framing academic libraries' legitimate roles and functions in the university (Petraityte, 2014). In addition, other professional studies have been commissioned by specific committees that do not involve any theory, for instance, studies commissioned by the ACRL committee, such as those by Fister (2010) and Estabrook (2007).

Robertson (2015) conducted a study on the perceptions of the top managers of Canadian research universities regarding their academic libraries. His study used interviews to explore how the universities' top managers were predicting their academic libraries' future. This study was conducted as exploratory research based upon a grounded theory methodology, which allowed for some degree of flexibility and openness in interviews in order to draw out the participants' perceptions.

Robertson (2015) found that the universities' top managers recognised academic libraries' significant contributions to research and teaching, particularly through information provision and the library as a place. This influenced the top managers' selection of academic libraries' future success indicators. Apparently, the indicators chosen were focused more on the dominant academic library roles, that is, the access to books, journals and online information, and the library as a space. Nonetheless, other

library roles, such as those of scholarly communication, open access and research publication, were regarded as less familiar to the provosts (Robertson, 2015). Similarly to Grimes (1998) and Lynch et al. (2006) studies, the university top managers in this study were struggling to identify their library's indicators of success. Although operational usage data were valued, the managers also appreciated the direct input from constituents related to their library's reputation (Robertson, 2015).

Basically, in relation to academic centrality, Robertson (2015) found that university top managers will perceive their library as core if the library contributes to the university's accreditation and generates satisfaction from academics and students (Estabrook, 2007). The top managers urged the library to play a central role on campus, mainly related to the library's role as a space and a collection. Overall, the managers were positive about their library and agreed that their library played an important role in recruiting good academic staff, supporting research and providing a conducive study space (Fister, 2010).

In other studies, Bracke (2012) and Flaming-May and Douglas (2015) tried to frame academic librarians' position in universities through their role and function. Even though their studies were focused on academic librarians, they provided some insight regarding the position of academic libraries. In their studies, it was perceived that academic librarians are re-establishing their claims to centrality by strengthening the library's jurisdiction in the university through contributions to academic-related activities such as scholarly communication by managing institutional repositories (IRs) and open access publishing and fundraising activities using related library themes such as donations for books and library facilities (Bracke, 2012).

Both Bracke (2012) and Flaming-May and Douglas (2014) concluded that librarian faculty status has constructed the political and symbolic factor that influences their library status in the university. However, they also concluded that the political and symbolic situation faced by librarians is rooted in structural and human resource factors and controlled by upper-level managers in both libraries and universities. Nonetheless, they suggested that librarians are able to influence changes in the structural and human resource spheres by showing the value they add to the academic enterprise and demonstrating the important support they provide to the overall institutional structure (Flaming-May & Douglas, 2014).

In general, investigations into the academic library position have found that information provision is a major contributor to academic libraries' centrality (Estabrook, 2007; Fister, 2010; Robertson, 2015) and top university managers' perceptions have dominated the study of academic libraries' centrality.

#### **2.3.4 Using Metaphors to Describe Academic Libraries' Position**

Grimes (1998) and Lynch et al. (2007) studied the impact of the academic library metaphor on university managers in making decisions about the allocation of university resources. Their studies had grown from mutual concern over the famous academic library metaphor 'the library is the heart of the university'. Grimes did her study in 1992–1993 and later was emulated by Lynch and others in 2006. Using the same method, both studies concluded that the library as the heart of the university metaphor was no longer cogent and applicable in the current HE environment, particularly for budget argument purposes (Lynch et al., 2007).

Metaphors have long been used to describe libraries and their relationship with their environment. Librarians have used metaphors to promote libraries in the community as well as to describe the profession; for instance, they have described the public library as 'the people university'. In the academic world, the library has been described as 'the laboratory for humanities' and in religion-related environments libraries have been described as 'the parish churches of literature and education' (Griske, 2011, p. 56).

Metaphors can provoke powerful images about a library and when the image is fully understood by the library constituents, it can persuade the constituents to adopt a particular perspective derived from the metaphors. For example, 'if the information highway metaphor for networked information conveys the idea that all information is available for free on the internet, the funding to support libraries as a source for the information highway becomes questionable' (Griske, 2011, p.56).

Other popular metaphors used to describe libraries that can be found in the LIS literature include academic libraries as body parts, for instance, the library as the heart of the university; the library as a place, for instance, as a café; and finally, the library as an ecosystem that promotes biodiversity, for instance, as a coral reef encompassing multiple species inhabitants (Griske, 2011). The use of different perspectives in creating metaphors to describe academic libraries helps to remind us that a particular metaphor is

influenced by the background and positions of the libraries' constituents; they become the senders and receivers of the messages.

Nevertheless, both Grimes (1998) and Lynch et al. (2007) concluded that academic libraries should abandon the use of the metaphor 'the library as the heart of the university'. They suggested that academic libraries should instead focus more on libraries' operational success when arguing for the allocation of resources (Lynch et al., 2007). They concluded that the metaphor is no longer cogent, especially in proposals for the university budget. However, this does not mean abandoning the use of a metaphor altogether but suggests using a new metaphor that indicates that academic libraries' success and centrality is connected to the success of the campus community (Grimes, 1998). As an alternative, Grimes (1998) suggested 'academic libraries as a crossroad community' as the new academic library metaphor, which suggests that academic libraries are central in supporting university activities, especially learning activities. The metaphor can also be interpreted that academic libraries need to determine what their own values are and to show how those values have contributed towards university success (Lynch et al., 2007).

## **2.4 Theories and Concept Use in Measuring Academic Libraries' Position**

An ACRL (2010) report on the value of academic libraries indicated that assessing academic libraries' effectiveness presents opportunities for libraries to gain internal and external credibility. Internal credibility allows libraries to compile the hard data that they need to make decisions and to demonstrate their accountability to university top management. With regard to external effectiveness, the library can gain external credibility through messages sent to its constituency about library skills, competencies and efforts (ACRL, 2010).

Hernon, Nitecki and Altman (1999) further defined the measurement of academic libraries' effectiveness as a process of assessing how a specific academic library's goals were met; however, the scope of the assessing and analysing process was based on local indicators and very library-centric (Hernon et al., 1999). For example, in a study on academic libraries' contribution to their university's reputation, selected data from academic libraries' performance, such as the numbers of library instruction sessions,

participants who attended and referral transactions combined with the amount of library expenditure and professional staff, were used to study the correlation between the academic libraries' effectiveness and the universities' reputation (Weiner, 2008).

In general, measuring academic libraries' effectiveness was aimed at a specific library's services or roles against a single university's aim or specific mission, such as student retention (Weiner, 2008), return on investment in research (Tenopir, 2011) and open access initiatives (Reinsfelder, 2012). These measuring activities are related to measuring subjectively, and are associated with academic library managers' need to demonstrate their library's effectiveness to their university. Moreover, measuring academic libraries' effectiveness is based on problem-solving and being driven by problems rather than theory (Cullen & Calvert, 1995). Measuring academic libraries' effectiveness alone does not confirm academic libraries' success (ACRL, 2010) and position; thus, more analysis is needed to measure academic libraries' success and the overall position of academic libraries. Measuring an academic library's position is an activity that goes beyond measuring the academic library's effectiveness, and this can be clearly differentiated by its purpose and aim.

Position studies on academic libraries have the purpose of evaluating libraries' existence in universities, revisiting libraries' relationship with their university, and keeping track of academic libraries' overall performance (Robertson, 2015). Position studies are also perceived as a 'reality check' (Lynch et al., 2007, p. 214) for academic libraries, to understand why they are positioned as they are (Estabrook, 2007), for instance, understanding why one library role is legitimised while another role is not. Hence, measuring academic libraries' position is a beneficial exercise for academic libraries to understand the reality of their position. It is noted that, while measuring academic libraries' performance and effectiveness is a straightforward process and problem driven, measuring academic libraries' position is more complex and theory driven (Cullen & Calvert, 1995). Several theories have been used by LIS researchers to evaluate and analyse academic libraries' position, including, among others, strategic contingencies theory and institutional theory.



### **2.4.1 Strategic Contingencies Theory**

Strategic contingencies theory has been used to study academic libraries' position in relation to centrality and power. Developed by D. J. Hickson et al. (1971), strategic contingencies theory states that the control of contingencies needed by a subunit within an organisation is controlled by another subunit's power. Within this theory, power is considered a dependent variable that changes in response to a subunit's bases of power, which include the subunit's ability to cope with uncertainty, its substitutability and its centrality to the organisation.

Using this theory, information is regarded as one of the strategic contingencies (Crawford, 1997). For instance, academic libraries' strategic contingencies are related to information and access to information provided by the libraries to other subunits in the universities. The more other subunits rely on the library for information, the more powerful the library will become (Crawford, 1997).

### **2.4.2 Institutional Theory**

In contrast, institutional theory has been used to study academic libraries' legitimacy by identifying and explaining certain pressures imposed on the libraries by their parent institution that affect the way the libraries operate. This pressure reflecting a certain form of rules and instructions that are constantly repeated in actions that eventually turn into objective reality. This objective reality is then taken for granted and identified as a concrete role. For instance, the academic libraries' roles are regarded as related to providing information, and this has been framed by other agents and certain discourses as the library's legitimate role in universities (Petraityte, 2014).

Petraityte (2014) conducted a study on framing academic libraries' position in Lithuanian universities using the universities' strategic documents. The study found that academic libraries' information role has become their dominant role and a source of normative legitimacy. Petraityte (2014) argued that information provision is an academic library's central role in the network of factors and agents that have a significant influence on its position. Therefore, it was suggested that the information role is the most central and legitimate role of academic libraries.

Petraityte (2014) argued that the legitimacy conferred on academic libraries in Lithuania could be associated more with normative legitimacy than regulative legitimacy. Normative legitimacy is based on external evaluation, for instance, professional networks that can be distinguished as an important normative-isomorphism-related influence. The professional network influence is through sharing 'best practices', adopting various standards and adhering to common professional rules and regulations that lead to assimilation. Another example is quality discourse, in which normative external evaluation is expressed through the improvement of information provision and through various standards and aspirations to meet the end users' needs (Petraityte, 2014).

### **2.4.3 Grounded Theory**

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss's (1967) seminal work *Discovery of Grounded Theory* promoted the creation of new theory through inductive logic by rejecting the era's positivist social science leanings towards verification of existing theory through deductive logic (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). Nevertheless, traditional grounded theory was identified as having a post-positivist ontology, while Charmaz (2014) detected 'strong positivist leanings' and labelled traditional grounded theory as 'objectivist grounded theory' (p. 235).

Nonetheless, grounded theory has become a popular method for social science researchers for several reasons. One of these is that grounded theory legitimises qualitative research by providing reliability and validity through its emphasis on data analysis. The grounded theory approach places emphasis on empirical fieldwork and this has led to an understanding of what happens in the real world (Denscombe, 2010), and it involves a systematic approach in the process of developing theory from data generated through research inquiry (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). Today, grounded theory has evolved into a variety of versions; however, most scholars have agreed upon three main versions of grounded theory: Glaser's school of classic or formal grounded theory, the Strauss and Corbin school (Straussian) and constructivist grounded theory (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007b, p. 10).

Glaser's classic or formal grounded theory is known by its constantly reflexive monitoring biases through memo producing and writing the literature review after the data-collecting and coding process are completed (Glaser, 2012). This version of

grounded theory has been criticised as positivistic in the assumption that a researcher can remain objective in analysing data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007a, p. 33). A number of researchers have contested the view that a researcher can remain unaware of theoretical literature. Considering the knowledge of theoretical literature, or at least a similar level of professional experience, is advantageous in obtaining and analysing the data, yet it does not constitute forcing of the data (Charmaz, 2014, p. 306).

In contrast, Straussian grounded theory recognises the interpretivist approach as reality; the proponents acknowledge that the researcher and participants co-construct the research, especially in the data collection stage. The researcher's role is acknowledged as present in the analysis stage through interpreting the meanings of the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 49). The Straussian approach also acknowledged the evolution of grounded theory while expressing admiration for the postmodern and constructionist (constructivist) version of grounded theory. However, this version of grounded theory has been criticised for its laborious coding approach, which adds an unnecessary level of complexity and threatens researcher creativity (Charmaz, 2006, p. 115).

Constructivist grounded theory falls firmly within the interpretivist paradigm. Charmaz (2008) stated that constructivist grounded theory explores action and answers the *what* and *how* questions. The approach uses construct data and concepts to form the foundation of theory. While it agrees with the original methods of Glaser and Strauss in its inductive approach, systematic and comparative data analysis, and open-ended approach to questioning, it is the greater emphasis on the phenomenon being studied that has distinguished constructivist grounded theory from other grounded theory approaches, and in this study, the academic library position is the phenomenon being studied (Charmaz, 2008).

#### *2.4.3.1 Previous Studies Using Grounded Theory*

In a PhD study, Harland (2017) used grounded theory to understand how university librarians can ensure their relevance to stakeholders in an open access environment. This was a qualitative study using a constructivist grounded theory approach to understand how the university librarian can ensure the relevance of the library to its stakeholders. The research data were derived from 11 initial semi-structured interviews with 10 university librarians or library directors of publicly funded universities.

This study suggested that the university librarian responds to these problems in a cyclical pattern of several strategies that interact with each other. The strategies include aligning the strategic vision with that of the university, reinventing the library, engaging with stakeholders, building an agile and engaged culture, and demonstrating value to the university. The study also identified the importance of continuous conformation with the university's strategy as well as a constant reinvention of academic library services for these strategies to interact with each other. These strategy and reinvention creates a library culture that is continually striving for improvement (Harland, 2017). The study also emphasised the importance of the university librarian's role as an agent and model to develop the library strategy and culture. The role includes the attitudes and behaviours of senior library leaders and staff towards building a customer-focused and creative academic library culture (Harland, 2017).

Grimes (1998) conducted a qualitative study of seven academic institutions using grounded theory. The study aimed to investigate the truth of the metaphor 'the library is the heart of the university' with the 'goal to identify empirical indicators to link the concept of academic library centrality with actual library experience' (Grimes, 1998, p. 68). The research involved interviews with the chief academic officer and chief executive officer at each of the universities involved. The study concluded that support for the traditional metaphor has been decreasing and the chief academic officers and chief executive officers interviewed in this study were reluctant to assign priority to the indicators of academic libraries' success (Grimes, 1998).

In 2004, Lynch et al. (2007) conducted a similar study to Grimes's (1998) study. The study used the same research questions to interview participants in the same positions at six universities. As with Grimes's study, the findings indicated that the metaphor 'heart of the university' was no longer cogent. The study suggested that a new metaphor be used that 'describes the library's measurable value to the institution, such as immediacy and substitutability' (Lynch et al., 2007, p. 225) and that its value be used as a strategy to negotiate for libraries' budget allocation. This study also concluded that, to secure support, the library must demonstrate how it serves the university mission (Lynch et al., 2007).

Robertson (2015) used grounded theory to study the perceptions of Canadian provosts on the institutional role of academic libraries. This exploratory study was based on grounded

research methodology. Using grounded theory allowed some degree of flexibility and openness in the study in drawing data out from the interviews (Robertson, 2015). Semi-structured interviews were designed, and altogether, 16 interviews were conducted by telephone. Recordings of the interviews were then transcribed, coded and analysed.

From the study, it was found that the 16 provosts interviewed perceived their library as having a vital role in areas that are central to their universities: the research and the student learning missions. It was also noted that similarly to Grimes's (1998) study, the provosts in this study were reluctant to assign priority to research over teaching and learning, or vice versa. Instead, it was suggested that the libraries create a new balance between these two key university missions (Robertson, 2015).

According to the study, libraries are a significant value provider to both research and teaching. The study concluded that the libraries' main contribution is being grounded primarily in providing access to scholarly literature. However, some provosts were aware of other roles libraries play in a university, such as being the point of creation, curation and dissemination of knowledge, and other provosts had no articulated ideas regarding those roles (Robertson, 2015).

## **2.5 Academic Library Position and Legitimacy**

Although traditional research in organisational studies has described organisation legitimacy as a dichotomous situation, more recent studies have described legitimacy using ordinal or continuous measures (Deephouse et al., 2016). Researchers, such as Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002), have argued that legitimacy is a continuous variable ranging in value from low to high and organisations can deliberately take action to influence the amount of legitimacy conferred. Another study, by Bitektine and Haack (2015), regarded changes in legitimacy judgements of individual evaluators as being influenced by the social factors and institutional strategies used, such as a legitimacy strategy. By recognising constituents as potential agents of change, legitimacy is often perceived as a negotiable position and status (Bitektine, 2011; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

According to Suchman (1995), 'by managing its legitimacy, organisations can make a huge transformation until the organisational activities are perceived as desirable, proper, and appropriate within any given cultural context' (p. 586). Suchman also indicated that there are three general challenges in managing legitimacy—gaining, maintaining and

repairing legitimacy—and suggested a selection of strategies to respond to each of the challenges. Therefore, organisations such as academic libraries can alter their position by deliberately taking action to multiply their legitimacy using the three legitimisation strategic actions to address the challenges of legitimacy management.

In line with the above suggestion, Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) suggested that organisations can apply a combination of strategies to alter the type and amount of legitimacy they possess or desire (p. 426). This strategic legitimisation process is defined as a series of proactive steps to acquire legitimacy through the strategies, which, when applied in appropriate situations within organisations, will result in the multiplication of legitimacy (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Appropriate situations in which to apply a particular strategic action are described by O’Kane, Mangematin, Geoghegan and Fitzgerald (2015), for instance, using strategic actions of conformance, such as compliance, compromise and avoidance, to meet and anticipate expectations from constituents, and manipulating strategic actions, such as cooperation and influence, to control institutional pressures as interventions between the organisation’s norms and beliefs and the university’s norms and beliefs.

Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002), in contrast, suggested the concept of a threshold, recommending that by crossing the threshold, organisations will become less precarious and in a better position to multiply their legitimacy through proactive steps. Further, they described a threshold as unique to individual organisations and not clearly explained (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002, p. 428). Zimmerman and Zeitz believe that there is a threshold of legitimacy that distinguishes between surviving and non-surviving organisations.

It has been suggested that while elevating uniqueness and value added is not important in gaining legitimacy, uniqueness has been proven essential in earning other types of social status, such as reputation (O’Kane et al., 2015). In general, legitimacy can be treated as a dynamic process, often negotiated, and not as a belonging, or a property owned by an organisation. Legitimacy is the outcome of constituents’ judgement of organisational behaviour (Bitektine, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015). Thus, academic libraries’ position as a social status is also an outcome of the evaluation of its behaviour. Organisations such as academic libraries can alter their position by deliberately taking action to increase their legitimacy (Suchman, 1995).

### **2.5.1 Studies of Academic Libraries' Position Using Legitimacy**

Generally, being legitimate indicates that libraries are accepted and needed members of their universities (Scott, 2014). A legitimate academic library enhances its ability to survive and can further progress to build its reputation, which complements the legitimacy in the form of its image (Rao, 1994), because legitimacy is based on social acceptance and reputation emphasises comparisons (Deephouse & Carter, 2005).

Previous studies on academic libraries' legitimacy have analysed specific academic library roles and functions in relation to their legitimacy in their university, for instance, the use of information literacy to measure the library's legitimacy in HE (O'Connor, 2009; Ownsu Ansah, 2008). This was done by analysing how the establishment of the information literacy role in academic and school libraries contributed to the legitimisation of academic librarians and libraries. A study was also conducted on how a new academic library building as a place represented the library's legitimacy in the university (Closet-Crane, 2009), by discussing how the building represented the library's business success discourse in securing budget allocation to build the new building in the competitive environment of a university. Another specific role examined was academic libraries' emerging role in scholarly communication and open access (Hansson, 2015; Reinsfelder, 2012; Reinsfelder & Anderson, 2013).

Hansson (2015) used legitimacy as a base to discuss the analytical framework of the future of libraries. The framework was based on current trends in contemporary librarianship and was used as a way of structuring predictions about the future of librarianship with special attention to public libraries and academic libraries. In another instance, Reinsfelder and Anderson (2013) used role legitimacy to analyse academic libraries' role in open access and scholarly communication as a new role for academic libraries. They discovered that tasks related to scholarly communication such as performing bibliometric analyses have elevated libraries to a new position, where their position is legitimised by their expertise in scholarly communication that has benefited several groups of constituents, particularly the university management (Reinsfelder & Anderson, 2013).

Nonetheless, using selected academic library services and roles in measuring libraries' legitimacy is not the best practice. From the perspective of organisational studies, an

organisation has no clear and complete evidence that the chosen services and roles are the best ones to be manipulated to achieve the organisation's legitimacy (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Where 'observations on macro-level validity cannot be used to infer that evaluators actually judge that entity as proper: their private propriety judgments may differ' (Bitektine & Haack, 2015 p.60). Instead, a multilevel approach is needed to infer the homogeneity of individual and group judgement outcomes of organisation behaviour (Bitektine & Haack, 2015).

### **2.5.2 Legitimacy and Status**

Several critical questions regarding the legitimacy process were proposed by Bitektine (2011) to discuss the concept of social status. The questions are also important to understand position as a social status. According to Bitektine (2011), the questions are in the realm of several types of legitimacy, namely, cognitive legitimacy, social politic legitimacy and pragmatic legitimacy.

The first question concerns whether an organisation belongs to a class or a category. In relation to this study, this question refers to whether the academic library is being accepted as a member of its university. This question according to Bitektine (2011) is in the realm of cognitive legitimacy. Aldrich and Fiol (1994) defined cognitive legitimacy as conferred according to the constituents' knowledge about an organisation—knowledge that is familiar and taken for granted. It is a matter of compliance with a routine evaluation and taken for granted as 'the way we do things' (Scott, 2014, p. 66). Scott (2014) stated that an organisation must conform to normative rules, regulative processes and cognitive meanings.

Budd (2008) defined cognitive idea as an idea of phenomenology, which is simple and subjective to the introspection of a person; individuals and groups each think about the phenomenon in their own way and filter it through their own experiences. Therefore, libraries' behaviour is evaluated based on their constituents' own experience. For instance, the explicit implication for information literacy is that students can be convinced that the cognitive effort spent on information literacy course can result in enhancing their performance in other courses (Budd, 2008).

The next question asked is whether an organisation is perceived as beneficial or hazardous to its constituents. Bitektine (2011) suggested that this question is in the realm of socio-



politic legitimacy. Aldrich and Fiol (1994) defined socio-political legitimacy as the evaluation of whether or not an organisation is appropriate and right according to existing norms and laws, measured by the constituency acceptance of the organisation. Such legitimation is measured by external and internal social beliefs and norms, and the standpoint of others (Scott, 2014). One example of a source of socio-political and normative legitimacy is the form of constituents' endorsement, in which the endorsements are a favourable opinion of the organisation and the means to acquire them is through networks—the relationships between individuals and groups of people outside the organisation (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002).

Individuals and groups have their own interests and expectations of academic libraries when evaluating them according to the expected benefits and avoiding hazards, and will offer their endorsement to the libraries based on their evaluation outcomes.

Next is the pragmatic legitimacy question, which is based on constituents' self-interest (Suchman, 1995). Pragmatic legitimacy is attributed to an organisation on the basis of self-interest. The organisation will be evaluated as legitimate if the constituents benefit from the organisation (Suchman, 1995). For instance, in deeper patterns, in a study by Guthrie and Housewright (2010) academics with an interest in teaching highly rated library's role in supporting teaching as compare to academics with research interests. The patterns suggest that the individuals benefited from their relationship with the library through their own interest and endorsed and legitimised the library according to their individual or group interest (Guthrie & Housewright, 2010).

The differences between pragmatic, cognitive and socio-political legitimacy represent an important divergence point between the legitimacies' assessment. For pragmatic and cognitive legitimacy, the evaluation process stops when the organisation is classified and accepted as a member of the institution (Bitektine, 2011; Zimmerman & Zietz, 2002). For socio-political legitimacy, the evaluation process continues with further scrutiny and questioning to confirm the organisation's benefits and hazards to the agents, groups or the whole institution (Bitektine, 2011).

Viewing legitimacy as a product of constituents' judgement outcome, Bitektine (2011) described organisation status has multiple legitimacy dimensions: 'status implies the act of social acceptance and a certain critical value of performance on that dimension above

which the organization's claim to higher status may be sufficiently acceptable to others' (p. 161). An organisation is regarded as having status when it is accepted as a member of a certain group with similar performance on a set of relevant dimensions yet is different from other status groups (Bitektine, 2011). Status is based on the question of 'where does the organization fit in the ranked order of similar organizations?' (Bitektine, 2011, p. 163).

### **2.5.3 Academic Libraries' Position from Constituents' Perception**

The above section discussed constituents' legitimacy questions. This section now proceeds to discuss perception. Perceptions and evaluations are highly subjective, but essential in conferring organisations' social status (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994), for example, the position in which social status, such as academic libraries' position, can be understood from the constituents' perceptions of the organisation. Constituents' perception is an evaluation made of an organisation; from the observations, judgements are aggregated and communicated through the media, regulations and judicial opinions (Bitektin, 2011). From the observations, constituents make judgements about the organisation's behaviour and the outcomes of the judgements are the actions of acceptance and endorsement (Bitektin, 2011; Bitektin & Haack, 2015).

Expectations are central in the element of social status, such as in determining legitimacy and position. For instance, to be awarded legitimacy, an organisation needs to meet and adhere to expectations of the norms, values, rules and meanings of a social system (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Scott, 2014). Some expectations can be explicitly set by the institutions, professional associations and governments (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), whereas others can be implicit and emerge over time from interactions among the participants in a social system (Scott, 2014).

King and Whetten (2008) divided expectations into two types: the ideal expectation and the standard expectation. They argued that, first, even though organisations seek to elevate themselves and conform to certain targeted ideal expectations, they must first be able to justify their activities according to the standard expectation. Second, they argued that an ideal expectation is a logical extension of minimum expectations and it is the next step ahead of demonstrating 'who we are' to a focus on quality of performance or 'how well we do' (King & Whetten, 2008, p. 201). In other words, the standard expectation is

a minimum expectation, while the ideal expectation is an extended expectation beyond the minimum expectation.

From the LIS literature, it was confirmed that differences exist among the expectations held by various groups of library constituents. According to Cullen and Calvert (1995), this is related to the constituents' own interests. For instance, it has been stated that university managers impose general expectations or minimum standards accountability on academic libraries because of their wider perspectives of the library rather than based on their narrowed personal interest (Hendricks & Hendricks-Lepp, 2014; Nitecki, 1993). The managers' focus is more on the wider community's needs, such as access to information and use of space (Robertson, 2014); they are also interested in how the library aligns itself with the university's mission (Petraityte, 2014).

Conversely, students' expectations of an academic library are related to the subjects and not to the role (Petraityte, 2014; Soria, 2012). In a study by Cullen and Culvert (1995), undergraduate students were fully aware of and focused on their immediate study needs for instance, *Number of Seats per Full-time Student* (Cullen & Calvert, 1995). Students, especially undergraduate students, are perceived as having a more myopic interest in issues that directly relate to them, for instance, individual research support services and collection-related issues (Cullen & Calvert, 1995; Nitecki, 1993), or in communal issues, such as parking spaces (Hendricks & Hendricks-Lepp, 2014). This myopic interest and focus justified their minimum expectation of academic libraries' success.

Hurst (2013) questioned the outcomes of the National Student Survey (NSS) which widely use as a measurement of student satisfaction with academic libraries and further questioned whether or not use of university performance in NSS the an adequate test of academic libraries' contributions to universities' efforts to compete in the HE marketplace (Hurst, 2013).

Generally, academic library constituents have specific needs (Cullen & Calvert, 1995; Hendricks & Hendricks-Lepp, 2014). Individual and group perceptions are based on a more subjective expectation than management's general accountability and standard expectations. However, managerial and individual expectations seem to overlap in operational and structural dimensions (Bitektine, 2011). Constituents' perceptions of academic libraries are not isolated from each other; for instance, conferring legitimacy

and reputation can be based on the same antecedents, such as organisational size, charitable giving, strategic alliances and regulatory compliance (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; King & Whetten, 2008).

Outcomes from constituents' judgement of organisational behaviour, experience and any given perceived property of an organisation can be used to render different forms of judgements, including legitimacy and reputation, where in reality the judgements can interact with and influence each other (Bitektine, 2011).

#### *2.5.3.1 Academic Libraries' Constituents*

Cameron (1978) defined constituents as the 'major subunits or interest groups within the college or university, who influence the direction and function of the organization' (p. 611) and they were further described by Wand (2011) as people or agents that use or help to develop the library or influence the library in some manner. Cullen and Calvert (1997), divided constituents into six groups—resource allocators, senior library staff, other library staff, faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students—whereas Wand (2011) identified three categories of constituents—library (library employees), internal (students, faculty, university offices) and external (IT industry, publishers and vendors, other libraries, archives and consortia, and independent scholars and researchers) (p. 244). Soria (2012) divided academic libraries' constituents into two groups—the study constituent and the teaching and research constituent. Postgraduate students have often been mentioned along with researchers, whereas undergraduate students have seldom been included in studies of the academic library's position because of their limited knowledge of the university as a whole. Undergraduate students have been described as having less awareness of academic libraries' comprehensive issues (Soria, 2012).

Wand (2011) further classified academic library constituents into two groups—the stakeholders and the influencers. Stakeholders are those who use the library resources and services, and influencers are those who have direct influence over the library's operation. Stakeholders are considered clients, encompassing students, academics, scholars and staff who use library resources and services. Influencers are those who directly affect the operation of the library, whether through the decisions they make, the support they generate or the pressure they apply to the library (Wand, 2011). The influencers are directly and indirectly associated with the organisation, and to some extent influence the

organisation through their activities (Wand, 2011). According to Fowler (2016), ‘this conceptualization of constituents is broad and could include all constituencies of the parent institution, such as accreditors, funders, governments, students’ parents, alumni, the local community, other researchers, and peer institutions’ (p. 43). Using the constituents concept, influencers can be identified as resource allocators, senior library staff, other library staff, faculty, graduate students and undergraduate students (Fowler, 2016).

In addition, academic library stakeholders are often divided into two groups: internal and external stakeholders (see ACRL, 2010; Broady-Preston & Lobo, 2011). The stakeholders are categorised primarily according to their measure of the library’s economic and social values (ACRL, 2010). Internal stakeholders include librarians and library leaders. The internal stakeholder has distinct expectations from the external stakeholders; internal stakeholder is more supportive of the libraries’ activities that generate the libraries’ overall values (ACRL, 2010). In contrast, external stakeholders need to be impressed by the libraries’ value. In the ACRL (2010) report, Oakleaf argued that stakeholders may have different views on the definitions and interpretations of academic library ‘impacts’ and value, which has divided stakeholders primarily into those who value economic measures of impact and those who place higher value on social indicators (Broady-Preston & Lobo, 2011). In summary, government entities, students, parents, communities, employers, graduate or professional schools, institutional faculty and administrators all have expectations of HE in general and academic libraries in particular (ACRL, 2010).

In general, the constituents’ role in evaluating a library is influenced by other factors beyond constituents’ designated role in the institution, and such a role is not mutually exclusive, because both stakeholder and influencer groups play important roles in influencing the direction of libraries. Constituents’ roles are critically important in making judgements about academic libraries’ position. It is through their judgement that the libraries’ success is evaluated. Moreover, the two roles are usually interchangeable. According to Cullen and Calvert (1997), this is because they have an overlapping expectation of the libraries and many of these overlapping expectations are not easily understood. Cullen and Calvert in their study of academic libraries stakeholder perception towards the libraries also stated, ‘The research reported here shows some similarities and some differences in what each of the key constituencies in the New Zealand academic

libraries expects from their library (where) many of these differences are not easily reconciled' (Cullen & Calvert, 1997, pp. 445–446). Wand (2011) supported this view by acknowledging that academic library constituents play interchangeable roles, and that 'at times a stakeholder is an influencer and vice versa' (p. 242).

Next, a question arises in regard to which constituent's evaluation has more influence on determining the library's position. Not all academic libraries' constituents have the same level of influence over the libraries. Many studies on academic libraries' position have used university authorities' perspectives, including those of university top management such as university managers, chief operation officers and chief academic officers (Estabrook, 2007; Fister, 2010; Grimes, 1998; Lynch et al., 2007; Robertson, 2015). University top managers' perspectives provide a perfect window to view how academic libraries contribute to their university (Estabrook, 2007), and university top managers are direct official assessors of libraries' performance (Robertson, 2015). In contrast, students, especially undergraduate students, have awareness in areas that directly matter to them, for instance, the library collection, reading space and parking, instead of the areas of management, such as budget and staffing (Cullen & Calvert, 1997). Therefore, undergraduate students are not in a position to directly influence the direction and function of an academic library (Cameron, 1978; Soria, 2012).

#### *2.5.3.2 Some Expectations of Academic Libraries*

Academic libraries have long served universities, and most academic libraries are established as the establishment of the university itself. This direct connection with the universities has resulted in the character of some academic libraries being a reflection of the university (Borphy, 2000). Recent developments in the HE and university environment have seen a growth in constituents' expectations of academic libraries. For instance, academics are more likely to agree that an academic library is their starting point or gateway to locating information for research purposes (Housewright et al., 2013). Therefore, academics demand the use of the latest technologies in discovery tools, IRs and social media. Examples of such discovery tools are the EBSCO Discovery Service, Summon, the Online Computer Library Center and Primo, these discovery tools provide a central portal for searching a library's e-resources collection, and demand is inspired by the need for using a simple searching interface similar to Google (Shapiro, 2016). Academic libraries are advised to invest in new technologies that reignite their

constituents' interest in order to fulfil their expectations and also to capture the attention of the wider community on academic libraries' repositioning efforts (Shapiro, 2016).

Academic libraries are expected to have a bold vision, borrowing the best practices from their counterparts in other libraries, and to set their aims high (Shapiro, 2016) and thrive beyond expectations. Moreover, academic libraries are advised to advance their institutions' mission, attract grant funding from donors and build closer networks with the local community (Franklin, 2012). Academic libraries are expected to act as the 'intellectual hub' of the university, functioning as an incubator for new ideas, inventions, business innovation and cooperative projects (Shapiro, 2016).

Therefore, with the exciting expectations mentioned above, it is the right time for academic libraries to check on their readiness to fulfil such expectations and to reposition themselves in the university in order to re-examine their role within it (Shapiro, 2016). The quest to fulfil the expectations challenges academic libraries to use their imagination to become an important organisation in a university that serves the highly educated community, by working closely with academics, professional staff, students and the community (Shapiro, 2016).

## **2.6 Academic Libraries' Position: From Surviving to Thriving**

Earlier studies on academic libraries' position described the academic library as a benign department, a benevolent position that will neither cause a crisis nor generate grants (Munn, 1968). Other studies described academic library positions such as powerful or not powerful (Crawford, 1997), core or peripheral (Candon & Jarvanpaa, 2001) and central or non-central (Grimes, 1998; Lynch et al., 2007).

The positions were described as an outcome of measuring academic libraries through statistically based performance, such as using the number of library instruction sessions provided, attendance at library classes and referral transactions, and measured against selected mission of the university (Weiner, 2008). For instance, the study of how the abovementioned statistics have influenced universities' student retention (Weiner, 2008). Nonetheless, according to the ACRL (2010) report, the above act has not convinced many university decisive managers unless the numbers collected were analysed against the university's overarching mission (ACRL, 2010). However, Hurst (2013) commented that the process of demonstrating and proving academic libraries' impact to selected

university mission will act as a barrier to meaningful change. For instance, the collection performance statistics do not contribute to the improvement of services. Thus, Hurst (2013) suggested that the impact of such measurement activities themselves needs to be examined.

Nitecki and others have commented that the cultural assessment framework for academic libraries in the service context of providing benefits to customers should go beyond understanding organisational inputs, processes and outcomes. Nitecki et al. (2015) suggested the use of different strategies to frame a cultural assessment based on quality, for example, Lean Six Sigma, the American Society for Quality standards and applications of the SERVQUAL tool (Nitecki, 1993; Nitecki et al., 2015).

In a similar approach, Broady-Preston and Lobo (2011) suggested that the time has come for academic libraries' cultural assessment to be shifted into exploring the use of external standards. A standard external award can help libraries demonstrate the value and impact of the libraries' services to their constituents. Such awards, according to Broady-Preston and Lobo, are an alternative approach to measuring comparative value in academic libraries. They argued that standard external awards are significant in improving service delivery and customer perceptions of the library's quality as well as contributing to the process of identifying suitable and alternative mechanisms for measuring and demonstrating the worth of academic libraries (Broady-Preston & Lobo, 2011).

As mentioned above, there is a need to improve the measuring of academic libraries' value and position, which has led to suggestions of several measuring standards and systems. This study offers an alternative way to measure academic libraries' position by viewing academic libraries' position as dynamic and progressive, using the concepts of thriving, striving and surviving. Thriving and surviving are concepts used in the LIS literature to describe academic libraries' stages of achievement (Franklin, 2012; National Library of Scotland [NLS], 2010; Stoffle & Cuillier, 2011); the striving position describes the effort of progressing, and it is introduced here in this study.

### **2.6.1 A Thriving Academic Library**

Thriving organisations are defined as organisations that are going through learning and energising processes. They are risk takers and learn from their mistakes, are receptive to new ideas, and develop new capabilities and competencies through the learning process.



Thriving organisations are survivors of unpredictable environments and thrive through any challenges (Spreitzer & Sutcliffe, 2007). The NLS (2010) used the thriving library position to describe the success of satisfying several expectations and building unique identities through serving as a national library as well as serving the research community.

Moreover, thriving libraries avoid extrapolating current trends, but work hard to become trendsetters using rigorous business management practices such as aligning strategically with campus learning and research goals, and adopting new technologies to improve service and to reduce costs (NLS, 2010; Stoffle & Cuillier, 2011). For instance, a thriving library emulates and adds value to the best service practices, without abandoning the guiding principles of librarianship, which among others are to stay focused on the constituents and their changing needs (Stoffle & Cuillier, 2011).

An academic library can progress from a surviving position to a thriving position by advancing the institution's mission (Franklin, 2012) in supporting the institution's strategic initiatives from the points that matter the most to the institution. For example, an academic library can transform a role and function from being task based—for instance, reference services, technical services and collection development—to more user based—for instance, services-related constituents such as undergraduate services, graduate and professional services, research and scholarship services, and creative activity and public engagement services (Franklin, 2012).

To become a thriving organisation, academic libraries are advised to adopt the language and terminology used in their university's academic plan, which is a plan for the university to achieve academic success, and to try to incorporate specific measurements related to the library's performance in a university assessment. Thriving academic libraries provide quality services that advance the university's missions, while framing their contributions to the overarching institutional mission, such as student success and faculty research, scholarship or creative activity (Franklin, 2012). Hence, a thriving academic library is a distinctive library that not only emulates best service practices but adds value to them, and is a trendsetter in supporting its institution through distinguished services and functions.

### **2.6.2 A Surviving Academic Library**

For most academic libraries, survival is basic and essential. It is something that every library should aspire to achieve (NLS, 2010). Libraries are generally recognised as having the ability to survive because they have survived the changing world and turbulent times in the past. However, libraries should aspire to do more than just survive; instead, libraries should thrive as an organisation at the centre of their most important context (NLS, 2010). To survive is to be accepted and perceived as credible in the organisation. Failure to survive means that an organisation is not accepted and their credibility is questioned and at risk of being replaced by another organisation that provides a similar or better role (Scott, 2014).

Surviving academic libraries are encouraged to make changes that allow them to move forward and reposition themselves, because merely surviving is not sufficient (NLS, 2010). Surviving academic libraries are described as trend followers, not trendsetters (Stoffle & Cuillier, 2011). Hence, they need to progress into a striving position and aim to become a thriving library.

To be elevated from surviving to striving, academic libraries face challenges, problems and opportunities. Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) suggested that an organisation that is progressing from a surviving position could benefit from applying legitimisation strategies, such as conforming, selecting and manipulating. A surviving academic library in a university is an organisation that is accepted as a member of the institution. A surviving position is a basic stage for any academic library. However, academic libraries are forced to progress to the next position to avoid being marginalised and to be replaced.

### **2.6.3 A Striving Academic Library**

A striving academic library is a library that is in the transition stage of becoming a thriving library. Academic libraries that are in a striving position are required to impose legitimisation strategies. For instance, according to Stoffle and Cuillier (2011), academic libraries that strive to progress into the next position can use several strategies to maintain and promote their position, for example, by aligning with their university's mission (Stoffle & Cuillier, 2011) as well as being innovative and creating value-added roles and services (Jantz, 2012).

From an organisational study point of view, Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) and Suchman (1995) listed several legitimization strategies that can be used by organisations to multiply their legitimacy.

The legitimization strategies proposed by Suchman (1995), such as conformance, selection and manipulation strategies, can be used to perceive the future and preserve libraries' previous achievements. For instance, preserving a previous achievement can be achieved by applying strategies for maintaining legitimacy, which include activities such as enhancing the organisation's ability to recognise audience reactions and to foresee emerging challenges (Suchman, 1995). Applying legitimization strategies is more beneficial to an organisation that is in a striving position in multiplying its legitimacy compared with an organisation that struggles to survive (Suchman, 1995). Thus, legitimacy strategies are applied to serve as an indicator of a striving position.

When an academic library is in a surviving position, constituents further question and scrutinise the library's role and function based on their extended expectations. This is an extended logic action from a minimum expectation. Unlike in the surviving position, in which the process of evaluation stops when libraries have proven their acceptance and being needed, in the striving position, the evaluation process continues with the evaluation of whether the library's role and function is appropriate for the norm and culture of the institution from the constituent's point of view (Bitektine, 2011). Any shortage in the evaluation will result in an unfavourable judgement of the academic library, and consequently, its legitimacy may be discounted. Instead, a favourable judgement will lead towards a more robust legitimacy (Bitektine, 2011).

An academic library's position is a social status that can be understood as consequences of the constituents' perceptions and evaluation of the library's behaviour, and the outcomes of such an evaluation are perceived as behavioural consequences, and the outcomes will be manifested in constituents' actions of endorsement and opposition of the library (Bitektine, 2011). Moreover, similarly to social statuses, such as legitimacy and reputation, academic libraries' positions of surviving, striving and thriving are abstract and cannot be directly observed, and therefore are complex to be measured (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002).

In essence, a striving academic library is a library that is moving dynamically towards the betterment of its position and it is suggested that this can be executed by applying legitimisation strategies that support the overarching mission of the university.

## **2.7 Dichotomous Legitimacy**

Traditionally, organisational scholars have tended to define legitimacy as dichotomous. Dichotomous legitimacy was described by Deephouse and Suchman (2008) as a legitimacy that organisations either possess or they do not. For instance, using this type of measurement, an academic library will be measured as either legitimate or illegitimate. However, such measurement of academic libraries' legitimacy is debatable because the legitimacy measurement has challenged the presence of multiple perspectives in evaluating a legitimacy phenomenon (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008).

In the case of academic libraries, such dichotomous measurement has been considered a problematic measurement of their legitimacy. For instance, academic libraries as a whole have long enjoyed a legitimacy base by having a symbolic position on campus: 'the heart of the university' (Grimes, 1998; Lynch et al., 2007). The position has established a powerful link between the libraries and the libraries' constituents.

However, in the present world reality, there are growing pressures for academic libraries to define their role in the demanding frontier of HE. As an impact of the continual change in the HE and information environment, accountability is a crucial expectation that has seen academic libraries' role in universities questioned more than ever (Cuillier, 2012; Fowler, 2016; Franklin, 2012). In monetary terms, academic libraries compete with other campus departments for resources as well as space (Lynch et al., 2007). Hence, evaluating the present academic library scenario using a dichotomous and binary style of legitimacy may develop a positive outcome but without the ability to capture the reality of academic libraries' positioning.

Academic libraries' legitimisation has been reported based on a familiar information provision role (Petraityte, 2014; Robertson, 2015); the scenario has consequently narrowed the possibility of the library to expand its legitimisation to other roles (Petraityte, 2014). For instance, libraries' new roles in scholarly communication, research grant applications and involvement in cultural and community programmes appear to have been unrecognised by university managers (Estabrook, 2007; Fister, 2010; Robertson, 2015).

University top management tends to prioritise the collection roles of the library over the library's role in teaching research and other skills (Robertson, 2015, p. 39).

These scenarios have suggested that measuring academic libraries' legitimacy dichotomously has engaged academic libraries in a false sense of legitimacy. A paradoxical situation has occurred in certain situations when an organisation such as an academic library fully complies with constituents' expectations, but in other situations, their legitimacy is withdrawn (Busse, Kach, & Bode, 2016). For instance, an academic library role in information provision is accepted and perceived as a legitimate role, however, the library's other roles such as in scholarly communication are unrecognised by university managers (Robertson, 2015).

### **2.7.1 Legitimate but Not Central**

Being a legitimate organisation is fundamentally critical for academic libraries in universities because legitimacy conferred has enabled organisations to have better access to resources from the organisation's parent institution (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002) as well as to avoid disengagement and becoming redundant (O'Kean et al., 2015). Definitions of legitimacy are numerous; among them is Suchman's (1995) definition of legitimacy as 'a generalised perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions' (p. 574).

This definition has highlighted two basic perspectives of legitimacy: the first concerns how constitutive societal beliefs become embedded in organisations, and the second, as a strategic view, emphasises how legitimacy can be managed to help achieve organisational goals (Deephouse et al., 2016). Bitektine (2011) offered an extension to the definition offered by Suchman (1995): that organisational legitimacy is related to constituents' perceptions of organisations as the constituents evaluate the organisational behaviour. The outcomes from the organisation's evaluation are classified into either a positively evaluated cognitive category or through a socio-political evaluation, which is based on an assessment of the overall value of the organisation to the individual, group or whole community as evaluators (Bitektine, 2011).

Legitimacy could be indicated through the pattern of constituents' interactions with the organisation, among others, by expressing their support, remaining neutral or imposing

sanctions on the organisation. This depends on whether the organisation is perceived as providing a benefit to the constituents (Bitektine, 2011). Bitektine's definition of legitimacy also highlights that organisational legitimacy is embedded within the constituents' societal beliefs and perceptions and there is opportunity to manage and multiply the legitimization.

In summary, legitimacy can be studied by analysing the pattern of interactions between organisations and their constituents, through understanding the support or the sanctioning imposed on the organisations.

In special reference to organisations in universities, to be legitimised based on their role and identity, organisations are required to capture their central, distinctive and enduring elements as well as manipulate the elements into being desirable, proper and appropriate to enhance their identity in universities (O'Kean et al., 2015).

In general, using the relationship of legitimacy as an indicator of academic libraries' position needs to be based on an evaluation of constituents' evaluations based on their own needs and interests (Bitektine, 2011), the institutional rules, norms, and values (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). This will provide a deeper understanding of the libraries' position within the context of the university.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

From the literature reviewed, it was shown that the academic library's position is a complex situation. It has been argued that establishing legitimacy is fundamentally important for an academic library because legitimization is a licence to greater access to resources and encountering less contesting when promoting its other roles (O'Kane et. al., 2015; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Suchman, 2015; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). However, it was also found in the LIS literature that academic libraries' legitimacy based on information provision does not facilitate the articulation and acceptance of the libraries' other roles. For instance, roles in scholarly communication, open access and fund generating are not considered significant by university management (Estabrook, 2007; Fister, 2010; Robertson, 2015). Instead, academic libraries have been advised to change and transform, for instance, from the surviving to the thriving position.

## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The research methodology has the purpose of explaining why the study was executed in the way it was, by presenting the research perspective. According to Saunders, et al (2009), a study's perspective influences the way the study's findings are gathered and analysed. Hence, this chapter starts with a discussion of the research perspectives and the philosophy adopted. This chapter also describes the data analysis processes to provide an understanding of how and why such data were collected and analysed. The data collection and analysis process is described with illustrations from the actual findings and processes from the data collection process.

The chapter proceeds with some descriptions of the data collection process, which comprised several activities, including access strategies, interviews and document analysis. The chapter continues with a discussion of the data analysis process, which included the process of coding, categorising and developing themes. Lastly, the chapter provides some reflections on the data collection and analysis process, particularly in relation to the researcher's point of view.

This study started with a literature review that aligned the topic of interest with what is known about the topic (Bryman, 2012). The literature reviewed in this study was searched for using several publisher and repository databases. For instance, commercial databases related to LIS such as Emerald Insight, ScienceDirect and EBSCO were used to identify related literature. Universities' repositories were also used to search for related documents. Main keywords used in the searches were academic libraries' 'position', 'legitimacy' and 'centrality'. From the searches, several key studies were identified. The key studies were then used to discover other related studies through their citations and references, which were then identified through Google Scholar and other publishers' bibliometric tools. The cited works from the main literature were then read to determine their connection with the main document and to discern their contribution to the research topic.

However, not all studies discovered were referred to and cited in this work; the cited studies in this study were reviewed for the purpose of better describing the research topic

as well as contributing to the current understanding of the topic. The studies were also selected based on type of publication (e.g., book, proceeding, article, thesis, news, article or blog post): a reviewed work was preferred to an un-reviewed work. The literature was also sorted according to year of publication: the most recent publications were preferred unless earlier publications were salient to the subject.

## **3.2 Research Perspective**

The literature on research methods has emphasised the importance of understanding the philosophical stage of research and the need to clearly illustrate the connection between the stages of research. Saunders et al. (2009) stated that all research should start at a philosophical stage regardless of the philosophical force adopted by the researcher that is driving the research. The philosophy adopted will influence the researcher's particular view of the relationship between knowledge and the process by which it is developed. For instance, research concerned with facts, such as a manufacturing process, will likely have a very different research philosophy from that of research in the management field.

The research perspectives and philosophy adopted will support the research strategy and the methods chosen as part of that strategy. The chosen perspective influences the methodology selected. For instance, an interpretivist paradigm will always be followed through with a qualitative research methodology, whereas a positivist paradigm will always be followed through with a quantitative research methodology (Pickard, 2007). This is because the research perspective chosen refers to a set of beliefs associated with a particular research style. In general, research is conducted according to a specific philosophy and world view about social reality (ontology) and the best tools for social research (epistemology).

Perspectives validate a study's epistemology, which is the acceptable knowledge in the field of study (Saunders et al., 2009). Epistemological positions taken in research are the researcher's own views of reality based on how the researcher assumes the world operates; this is also known as ontology (Saunders et al., 2009).

### **3.2.1 Interpretive Perspective**

The epistemological position of this study is based on an 'interpretive perspective'. The interpretivist perspective suggests that the interaction between subject and researcher will



produce an investigation outcome; thus, it is impossible to separate the cause from the effect, which at the same time shape each other (Pickard, 2007). In the study of academic libraries' position, constituents' perceptions of academic libraries are based on the constituents' interaction with the libraries, including the constituents' past experience, their role in the institution and the benefits they expect to receive from the libraries (Cullen & Calvert, 1995).

The interpretive perspective can be further elaborated using the ontology, epistemology and methodologies, which create clear boundaries between the different perspectives used in a study (Pickard, 2007). For instance, ontology concerns the assumptions researchers have about the way the world operates and the commitment they hold to particular views. According to Saunders and others (2009), there are two aspects of ontology. The first is objectivism. Objectivist ontology works with reality as a social entity that exists externally to social actors who are concerned with their existence. Objectivism is the epistemological position working with the view that reality is observable. It emphasises a highly structured methodology in order to produce replication, and the end product is generalised through a law-like generalisations, similar to products from physical and natural science studies (Saunders et al., 2009). According to the ontological perspective, reality depends on what is external and real, for instance; in discussing organisations, the organisations are viewed as tangible objects with rules and regulations that adopt certain procedures in their operation. In adopting an objectivist ontology, organisations such as the academic library are constraining the force that acts on and inhibits their constituents (Bryman, 2012).

The second view is subjectivism, whereby social phenomena are viewed as created from the perceptions and consequent actions of constituents. This view helps to explain social phenomena that are contributed to by constituents (Saunders et al., 2009). The subjectivist ontological perspective emphasises researchers' understanding of social phenomena as that of participants rather than observers (Saunders et al., 2009). This is in contrast to the 'objective' view, which understands a social phenomenon as an external entity of social actors (Saunders et al., 2009).

The interpretivist perspective is considered suitable for the study of academic libraries' position, which is complex and entails multiple realities. The academic library's position is seen as a 'social construct'. As in legitimacy, position is also an outcome of

constituents' judgements of the library's behaviour (Bitektine, 2011), and it has opened up the possibility of different groups of constituents using their own experience to evaluate the library. According to Berger and Luckmann (1967), this is a social construction of reality that is concerned with the relationship between human beings and their social context. Moreover, Berger and Luckmann (1967) argued that social constructivism is how individuals understand the generality in their society according to their perceptions.

Interpretivism is considered appropriate for the study of academic libraries' position because it understands that the position is not a property or asset owned by organisations; instead, it is rendered by individuals as well as different groups of constituents (Bitektine, 2011). Therefore, using the interpretivist paradigm allowed this study to understand the position from several perspectives offered by the library constituents with the imperative of observing more than one position at a time, which is in contrast to the positivistic approaches to social research that are based on the assumption of one reality that fits one universal reality (Denscombe, 2010).

### **3.2.2 Inductive Research Approach**

The choice of the inductive or deductive approach is in accordance with the 'interpretive' ontology perspective used in this study. An inductive approach is considered suitable for the interpretive ontological stance based on the belief that a social world is a multiple and complex world without a single and tangible reality (Pickard, 2007). In the deductive approach, a social world reality is based on a hypothesis that is deduced from theory (Saunders et al., 2009). The deductive approach has been criticised for placing emphasis on cause and effect between variables without offering much understanding of the social world. In contrast, the inductive approach emphasises the context of the event, thus providing a better understanding of the events (Saunders et al., 2009).

The inductive approach was considered more appropriate than the deductive approach, especially in a study with a qualitative methodology approach. The qualitative methodology approach enables the researcher to obtain more meaningful information and contributes to understanding the meanings behind the data, offering different perspectives from the rich data collected (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). In contrast, the quantitative methodology study approach, restricts its findings to predetermined concepts or theories

(Saunders et al., 2009). This study aimed to explore issues related to an academic library's position, making an inductive study approach the more suitable choice.

### **3.2.3 The Grounded Theory Approach**

The grounded theory approach was seen as suitable for the study for several reasons. First, it is a tool for understanding the empirical world. According to Denscombe (2010), emphasis on empirical fieldwork is the distinctive characteristic of a grounded theory approach as compared with other research strategies. This is related to the need to understand what is happening in the real world. The grounded theory approach also gives voice to the participants in the study and represents them in real time as much as possible, hence providing an opportunity to discover their views of reality in the scenario studied (Glaser & Strauss, 2006). This characteristic is in line with the ontological perspective of subjectivism.

Second, grounded theory also guides in the data-collecting process by addressing the need for qualitative and open-ended questions as well as supporting research focused on human interaction in specific settings. Further, the grounded theory approach is considered suitable for an exploratory study when only a handful of studies have been done in the area (Robertson, 2015; Saunders, 2015). This enables the study to explore and answer the research questions, using construct data and concepts to form the foundation of theory, and in this study, a model that illustrates and explains the positioning process of academic libraries.

Third, using grounded theory illustrates the procedure of the theory development. For instance, grounded theory methods consist of systematic procedures related to data collection and analysis, enabling the researcher to construct a theory that is *grounded* in the data (Charmaz, 2014). Therefore, Charmaz (2014) added an interpretive approach to theory building by giving extra interpretive components. Interpretive theory aims to:

- conceptualise the studied phenomenon to understand it in abstract terms
- articulate theoretical claims pertaining to scope, depth, power and relevance of a given analysis
- acknowledge subjectivity in theorising and hence recognise the role of experience, standpoints and interactions, including one's own

- offer an imaginative theoretical interpretation that makes sense of the studied phenomenon. (p. 231)

The interpretive relativist ontology recognises that all individuals have their own reality that has been influenced by life, society or culture (Charmaz, 2008). Charmaz (2014) stated that ‘we construct our grounded theories through our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research practices’ (p. 17). This means that the researcher and participants mutually construct interpretations of multiple realities (Charmaz, 2008, p. 402). In other words, the researcher is involved with the participants in producing a theory that is grounded in their experiences. In this study, the experience of participants as well as that of the researcher are the reality of the academic library’s position.

### *3.2.3.1 Why Not Discourse Analysis?*

Discourse analysis is another theoretical approach that was considered to work well with the study, primarily because of the theory’s ‘commitment to a strong social constructionist viewpoint in the way it tries to explore the relationship between text, discourse, and context’ (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 6). Discourse analysis theory is suitable for examining individuals’ perceptions of the library in the context of their communication because the approach is grounded strongly in language and focuses on analysing how language constructs the idea of an object, situation or person.

Talja (1991) described discourse analysis as:

part of the linguistic turn in the social sciences and the humanities which emphasises the role of language in the construction of social reality. It is one of the dominant or mainstream research approaches in communication, sociology, social psychology and psychology. (p. 460)

In LIS studies, discourse analysis has been used within study of communication in a more general interpretative practices (Talja, 1999). For instance, Hick (2014) used the discourse analysis approach to examine the full range of interpretive repertoires employed by librarians when they construct their professional identities. In this study, language was examined for its interpretive repertoires and its functions, both intended and unintended.

These functions can be explained or justified, or they can work on an ideological level to legitimise a social position of a group.

Unfortunately, this study was constrained in choosing this approach because of the language barrier of the researcher. Since English is not the researcher's first language, a failure to grasp and understand meaning from firsthand interactions with participants became a major concern; hence, use of the discourse analysis approach in this study was dismissed.

### **3.3 Research Design**

The research design is the process of setting out the major research processes and procedures that are intended to be followed (Pickard, 2007). According to Saunders et al. (2009), the research design is the researcher's overall plan to use as a guide to answer the research questions. The choice of research design and methods to be used in a study depends on the research questions, aims and objectives. Saunders et al. (2009) suggested that the choice of research strategy depends on the research question and objective, the extent of existing knowledge, the amount of time, the available resources and the philosophical underpinnings of the study. In line with this statement, two research strategies were adopted in this study: a grounded theory approach and a case study. The choice of these strategies was in line with the research philosophy and perspective of this study, which drew on interpretive epistemology and subjective ontology.

As discussed earlier, this philosophy and perspective require an in-depth understanding of the context. In this study, it was best achieved through a case study and a grounded theory approach. A case study allows an in-depth understanding of the case, and the grounded theory approach enables the researcher to enter into the fieldwork without any predetermined conceptions. The study used grounded theory as a research approach because grounded theory—particularly constructivist grounded theory—is suitable for addressing the what and how research questions (Charmaz, 2008, p. 398).

This research followed the application of grounded theory by closely and constantly cross-examining data in the data analysis stage. It also ensured richness of the data was obtained through snowball sampling, which provides samples with the characteristics desired (Saunders et al., 2009), and through continuous reflexive activity in asking questions about the nature of the data and the depth and range of the sample. Semi-

structured interviews were determined to be the best means of co-constructing theory for this research. Through interviews, the research question can be explored through the experiences and actions of the participants and the richest data can be gauged from a mutual interpretation of the data by the researcher and participants (Charmaz, 2014). Lastly, basic grounded theory itself is fairly adaptable for use with a variety of qualitative study methodologies, such as interview and document analysis and a variety of forms of data such as text and recordings (Denscombe, 2010).

### **3.3.1 Purpose**

The research purpose is the researcher's goal of conducting a research inquiry. There are three main purposes for conducting social research, and these purposes are described as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Saunders et al., 2009). An exploratory study seeks to investigate what is happening by exploring new insights in assessing an existence. An exploratory study is best used to clarify the nature of a phenomenon, especially when there is not enough information regarding the phenomenon; exploratory research is helpful to enhance the understanding of that particular phenomenon. This is based on the exploratory study's main advantage, which is flexibility that allows the researcher's focus to be narrowed as the research progresses (Saunders et al., 2009).

Exploratory study uses the causal relationship between variables to understand a situation or a problem and is able to provide a clear picture of the phenomena or situation (Saunders et al., 2009). This study is an exploratory study that had the purpose of exploring the academic library's position and positioning process, and was designed to offer a clear understanding of the academic library's position in a university because few studies have covered the area (Robertson, 2015; Saunders, 2016). Therefore, an exploratory study was appropriate for providing new insights into the academic library position and enhancing the understanding of the particular situation.

The study adopted a qualitative methodology because it is considered more appropriate when using an inductive approach. A qualitative methodology approach was considered the most appropriate choice since the qualitative methodology approach would enable the study to obtain more meaningful information and contribute to the understanding of meanings behind the data collection and analysis process. A qualitative methodology

offered the study unique perspectives on the richness of the data collected (Gorman & Clayton, 2005).

### **3.3.2 A Single-Case Study**

Saunders and others (2009) defined a case study as a strategy for doing research involving inquiries into a contemporary phenomenon within its real context. A case study is referred to as an object of study and as a methodology of inquiry in which the inquirer bounds the case by time and place (Creswell, 2012). A study using a case study method is based on the need to gather an in-depth understanding of a particular issue, because it provides the opportunity to explore the object of study from the single-case study context and uncover prevalent factors that influence the case. A case study approach is a 'real-life empirical research method conducted in an in-depth study within its real-life context; it is also focused on direct observations of the events' (Yin, 2009, p. 18). The choice of research method in an empirical study depends on the research questions and the need to control or not control the actual behavioural situation. A qualitative case study is particularly useful in studying a situation in which there is no control over the behaviour, which is very unlikely to be permissible when using an experimental method related to manipulating behaviour and laboratory setting studies (Yin, 2009).

As a qualitative study, this study did not involve measuring variables, as is often found in quantitative studies, but aspired to explore the position using a single-case study as a method of inquiry. This study benefited from a case study research method because this method provided the opportunity to study the academic library position in great detail compared with other approaches. Moreover, using a single-case study provided the study with the opportunity to be 'holistic' rather than dealing with several separate factors; it also emphasised on the relationship of social processes of the case. By understanding the relationship has provides the study with the opportunity to explain outcomes from the study rather than just discovering what those outcomes were (Denscombe, 2010).

In addition, the choice of a single-case study is related to the focus of the inquiry. According to Patton (2015), a case study involves:

the necessity of placing a boundary around some phenomenon of interest and where the boundary is placed is both inevitably arbitrary and fundamentally critical because

that boundary setting process determines what the case is and therefore the focus of the inquiry. (p. 259)

Therefore, a case study is predefined by its focus and scope as there is no correct answer to the question of ‘what makes a case?’ (Buchanan, 2012). Hence, the need for a single-case study or a comparison between cases is predetermined by the unit of analysis in the study. For instance, if a study is focused on an organisation, what is happening in the organisation and how the organisation is affected by a particular setting, then the unit of analysis could be a single organisation. However, if there is an interest in comparing between two or more organisations because of its different characteristics—for instance, a successful organisation with a less successful organisation—more units of analysis are needed and hence the multiple case study method. According to Patton (2015), ‘the analytical focus in such multisite case study is on the variation among project sites more than on the variations among individuals within projects’ (p. 260).

The choice of a single case for this study was also due to the limitations of its time and budget. As a PhD-based study, it had limited budget and time constraints. The prospect of having a huge amount of data from a qualitative inquiry of several cases was considered a constraint because of the time and budget required to conduct such a study. For studies on social status such as legitimacy and position, it has been recommended that extensive interpretative qualitative methods be used—for example, interviews, observation and document analysis—to uncover and measure different types of reality, and this would allow the researcher to document the legitimisation process and the impact. This is best done in a small sample study such as a case study (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002).

The library in this study was chosen for its ability to provide some understanding of its position because of its status as a post-1992s academic library, which is considered a new university library. As a new university library, it was suggested that it is still struggling to balance the prioritising of its roles in supporting teaching and research (Hurst, 2013), which indicates that the strategising process is still in progress and thus would provide the opportunity to understand the position and the positioning process. Apart from the above reason, the library was chosen because it is the researcher’s own institution. Researching one’s own institution delivers the opportunity to understand local issues, which are implicit and crucial to understanding the reality and complexity of an organisation. This was regarded as one of the advantages of studying the researcher’s own



institution and would help to save time in studying the context of the institution (Saunders et al., 2009). By studying the researcher's own institution, the possibility of applying several data collection strategies was high because of the advantage of location as well as the good network developed as a result of the high volume of interactions with the study's participants. Details on the library chosen as the case are discussed in Chapter 4.

### *3.3.2.1 Outcome from the Study*

Because this study was based on a single-case study context, the findings made from the study are not intended for statistical generalisation; instead, they are intended to be generalised to a theory or conceptualisation that is proposed at the end of the study. It has been suggested that a case study's findings can be generalisable through theoretical propositions instead of statistical generalisation, which is intended to generalise to a similar population (Yin, 2009). This is known as analytic generalisation, which is generalising to a theory or conceptualisation rather than to populations (Polit & Beck, 2010) and it is a matter of identifying evidence that supports that conceptualisation.

Analytic generalisation in qualitative studies occurs most keenly at the point of analysis and interpretation, using rigorous inductive analysis and confirmatory strategies that address the credibility of the study. Analytic generalisation can lead qualitative researchers to insightful and inductive generalisations of the findings of their study (Polit & Beck, 2010). In this study, a rich and thick description of a single-case study is provided so that audiences can determine how closely their situations resemble the situation in the study, and this helps the audiences to decide whether the theory and concept from the case study can be applied to their situation.

Rich descriptions of the case study are provided throughout this thesis, especially in Chapter 4, which describes the case; Chapter 5, which presents the findings; and Chapter 6, which presents the model. Case studies have been viewed as being less rigorous, taking too long and producing massive unreadable documents from the data; but this has been proven otherwise because of the systematic data collection and analysis involved in case study research (Yin, 2009).

### *3.3.2.2 Relationship with the Case Study Context*

Prior to conducting this PhD study, the researcher was a professional academic librarian for 16 years. Being away for a few years from the post enabled the researcher to approach the case study context with a fresh viewpoint and ‘empathic stand’. An empathic stand is described as a researcher’s position at the midpoint between being too involved and remaining too distant. Any incline towards either end could interfere with judgement or might cloud the understanding generated from the study (Saunders et al., 2009).

The condition of researching one’s own institution creates neither extreme familiarity nor complete strangeness; instead, it creates an environment that consists of both elements. As an experienced academic librarian, the closeness to the areas of study clearly created empathy but not with a loss of perspective that would prevent the researcher from making a sensible judgement, and being away from the profession did not create a distance that would result in complete unfamiliarity with the areas studied.

Familiarity is described as having pre-engagement with the institution studied, whereas strangeness is associated with entering the institution as an outside researcher. Research students are considered strangers to the institution but with some familiarity with the system; moreover, in researching their own institution researchers are required to be in both positions simultaneously (Tietze, 2012). For instance, as an academic librarian, the researcher in this study had more empathy for the library’s standpoint and had preconceived ideas on the issues discussed. Therefore, the researcher did not attain the distance and objectivity necessary for valid research. In the situation of researching their own institution, researchers are required to make what is familiar and known about the institution strange and unknown (Tietze, 2012).

## **3.4 Data Collection Strategy**

This study was designed to use qualitative data collection methods because they are related to the study’s aim to understand an academic library position using the perceptions and perspectives of its constituents (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). The use of qualitative methods is in line with the nature of the study, which uses an inductive and grounded theory approach in which themes emerged from the findings and not from preset hypotheses. The themes were then used to develop a model to enhance the understanding of academic libraries’ position.

Using a qualitative research approach gives an advantage to study in the data collection and analysis stages, where the two processes are related. According to Pickard (2007), when a study engages with a qualitative case study, it is crucial for the study to focus on the post-fieldwork plan to allow for a more flexible discovery and exploration process so that the data collection and data analysis process can be connected and control each other. For instance, in a qualitative study, the interview process and the transcript process are run simultaneously, which enables findings from the transcripts to shape the next interview questions, and this is especially beneficial when using data collection methods such as interviews and observation (Saunders et al., 2009). Flexibility in the interview and transcript process allows modification of the emerging analyses as conditions change, or when further data are gathered (Glaser & Strauss, 2006).

Interviews are used to collect descriptive and in-depth data that are specific to an individual. They are best used when the nature of the data is too complicated to be enquired and requires more than a straightforward answer (Pickard, 2007). This data collection method was stated by Gorman and Clayton (2005) as the opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore the alternative of what you do see hence, add the 'serendipitous learning that emerges from the unexpected turns' in discovering the discourse that your question evokes' (p. 50). With these understanding in mind, the interview method was chosen to capture a holistic understanding of the thoughts and feelings of the constituents, through the use of unstructured or semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions (Pickard, 2007).

Yin (2009) and Saunders et al. (2009) suggested that when conducting a case study, the data collection techniques employed may be numerous and various, and the techniques are likely to be used in combination and can include interviews, observation and documentary analysis. Document analysis is regarded as an extended data collection process following interviews because participants will sometime refer to documents when they are trying to elaborate their perceptions (Bryman, 2012).

### **3.4.1 Snowball Sampling Method**

Snowball sampling is an interactive and non-probability sampling method in which small numbers of participants propose other participants who they believe match the characteristics set (Bryman, 2012). The snowball sampling method has a low chance of

likelihood in sample but with high chances that the samples have the characteristics desired. The snowball sampling method is useful in practice for studies with difficulties in identifying a potential sample and with a relatively low budget. In using the snowball sampling method, it has been suggested that the absolute number of participants in the sample that will determine saturation has no a priori restriction and the estimated size of a sufficient sample is particularly small, especially when used in tandem with the in-depth interview method (Baker & Edwards, 2012; Pickard, 2007; Saunders et al., 2009).

As mentioned above, the number of participants considered sufficient in the snowball sampling method is expected to be small because it accelerates the process of information exhaustion and redundancy through the use of specific criteria in referring other participants (Pickard, 2007). In general, the number of participants considered sufficient in qualitative data collection depends on the saturation point reached, and when conducting the snowball sampling method, sampling should stop when either no new participants are introduced or the sample is as large as is manageable (Saunders et al., 2009). The small number considered sufficient is also due to the information collected being highly concomitant with the study because participants are carefully selected, which causes the data collection process to reach its saturation point faster (Pickard, 2007).

The snowball sampling method was considered suitable for this study because the study had limited access to the desirable population and hence difficulties in reaching samples. This restriction was due to the researcher's limited knowledge about the organisation along with some language and cultural barriers between the researcher and the intended population. Therefore, this encouraged the researcher to select a sampling method that involves a gatekeeper who act as an access key to the population desired.

Purposive sampling may also be used in studies that have adopted a grounded theory approach. In the purposive sampling method, the researcher's judgement is used to select cases that are perceived to be the best sample to answer the research question(s) and objectives. This is done by choosing a sample that has been identified as particularly informative (Saunders et al., 2009). However, such a sampling method was not suitable for this study because, as mentioned above, the researcher had limited access to information related to the organisation studied and this made it impossible for the

researcher to identify particularly informative samples in the given time of this study and would raise the concern of bias in the sampling process.

### **3.4.2 Negotiating Access**

Saunders et al. (2009) indicated that there are three access levels to an organisation being studied, namely, physical access, continuing access and cognitive access. The physical access level is when the researcher is awarded access to execute a study in the organisation, which is usually formal and granted by management. Next is the continuing access level, in which negotiation is an iterative process. At this level, the researcher needs to seek further access to the organisation through a gatekeeper or broker who controls the research access. Finally, the cognitive access level is where the researcher has access to the intended participants and precise data, and is able to address the designated research questions and objectives.

Negotiating access is crucial in organisational studies because it may affect the researcher's ability to collect a representative sample and answer the research questions in an unbiased way, as well as produce reliable and valid data (Saunders et al., 2009). Gaining access to an organisation requires a combination of strategic planning and hard work, but with no guarantee of success (Bryman, 2012). Saunders and others (2009) have suggested several strategies: among others, familiarisation and understanding of the organisation studied, utilising existing and newly developed contacts, developing incremental access, establishing credibility and, lastly, being open to serendipitous events. Bryman (2012) suggested four ranges of tactics to ensure smooth fieldwork activities: engaging with key informants, obtaining support from top management, presenting clear ideas regarding the study to the organisation, and being flexible and willing to bargain (Bryman, 2012).

In an organisational study, gaining access to an organisation does not mean that access activities have been completed; access gained needs to be followed by activities to gain trust and to avoid suspicion from the subject. Researchers can gain trust and avoid suspicion from the subject by increasing their knowledge about the organisation, proving they are trustworthy and participating in the organisation's activities (Bryman, 2012). Again, these activities have been recommended to ensure a smooth data collection process.

An access interview is a strategy applied to become familiarised with the characteristics of the studied organisation. An access interview introduces a researcher to the environment with information that helps the researcher to navigate the organisation in both physical and virtual environments. In this study, it helped to create understanding of the current situation of the studied library as well as the university environment based on information provided by a gatekeeper or broker. Although the access interview was part of the negotiated access in the interview process, some valuable data were revealed in the interview session. The data guided the development of the study, such as in composing interview questions, and served as the researcher's background knowledge of the organisation.

In an access interview, the researcher has the liberty to ask various questions in order to explore different dimensions of the organisation. At this stage, the research theme has not fully emerged and is subject to modification. Using such strategies can elicit new viewpoints and deeper insight into the study, and may bring a new lead and contribute to understanding of the case study's context (Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012).

An access interview can also serve as a strategy to access the organisation studied through existing and new contacts while creating a good relationship with the organisation. It is very useful for a researcher with limited access to the organisation studied because it helps provide access to potential participants to interview and documents to analyse, and helps to increase the researcher's credibility (Saunders et al., 2009). The access interview approach is more suitable for a study of a small selected sample using a snowball sampling method (Saunders et al., 2009).

In addition, participating and 'hanging around' are common access strategies that involve participating and loitering in an event or area, which gradually increases the researcher's visibility and ability to be incorporated into certain groups (Bryman, 2012). Being open to serendipitous events helps increase access to the organisation incrementally.

### **3.4.3 The Interview Strategy**

Alvesson and Ashcraft (2012) claimed that an interview is a social process that combines both the contents of the interview and resources beyond the interview that will lead towards phenomena investigation. This is perfect for any study that focuses on both

finding the answer from participants' perceptions and trying to make sense of why such perceptions are the way they are (Alvesson & Ashcraft, 2012).

Basically, there are three types of interviews: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. Structured interviews use 'standardised' or identical sets of questions and the questions need to be exactly as written and in the same tone to avoid bias. Structured interviews are referred to as 'quantitative research interviews' (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 321). Semi-structured interviews use a list of themes and questions to be covered in the interview, although these may vary from interview to interview.

For instance, questions may be omitted for a specific organisational context, and in some cases, additional questions are needed to explore the research question and objectives (Saunders et al., 2009). Unstructured interviews work with no predetermined list of questions. In the unstructured interview process, the interviewer has the opportunity to talk freely about the organisation related to the topic area using a non-directive approach so that the interviewees' perceptions guide the direction of the interview provided the interviewer has clear idea about the aspect they need to explore. (Saunders et al., 2009).

To provide focus in the interview sessions, there should be a minimal degree of structure in the interview questions. This enables the researcher to have some control over the session and grants some degree of freedom to the participants to raise issues related to the context of the study (Robson, 2002). This contrasts with the use of unstructured interviews, which provide total freedom for participants to talk freely about the topic and no degree of control by the researcher over the interview's direction (Saunders et al., 2009), which can lead to a lack of focus on the feedback given by the participants.

The choice to use a semi-structured interview was also consistent with the inductive approach adopted in this study because the study sought as much information as possible from the participants. Semi-structured interviews are conducted in real time, through direct interaction with participants, thus providing the opportunity to investigate the underlying message in the participants' body language as well as their non-verbal communication to help in understanding their verbal response, which can sometimes bear different meanings (Robson, 2002).

### **3.4.4 Research Site**

The fieldwork was conducted on both campuses of the University: the main campus and the city campus. The latter was relocated to the former in the summer of 2013, resulting in only one interview being done on the city campus. In this study, the case is referred to as ‘the Library’ and the parent institution as ‘the University’. The interviews were conducted mainly at the main campus, where the majority of participants were based. The following section explains the process of gaining access to the research site.

Strategies were executed to ensure successful access to the Library and the University, as well as to develop a close network with the participants. In this study, activities such as access interviews, ‘hanging around’ and participating in Library events helped ease access to the organisation. This access strategy is discussed in the next subsection.

Permission to conduct the case study was requested via email to the director of library services, while ethical clearance was granted by the University Research Committee prior to starting this study. As the first step to initiating the study, an access interview with Administrator 5 was executed. Administrator 5, who was a faculty quality officer, was contacted based on a suggestion by the researcher’s PhD supervisor. Administrator 5 was contacted to gain her consent for her role as a gatekeeper in the study. Administrator 5 was chosen because of her central role in the University and involvement in several important committees in the University. Moreover, as a senior member of staff, she had a wide professional as well as social network with the rest of the University community.

The access interview with the gatekeeper was executed with two aims in mind: (1) to gain access to the University and (2) to enhance the researcher’s knowledge regarding the University. As expected, Administrator 5 provided valuable information about the University and the Library management, operation and governance. Administrator 5 also provided a list of names of people she believed would have information related to the study. The names were subsequently used as a list of potential participants. In addition to the initial interview with the gatekeeper, other access strategies were planned and performed to secure access to the Library and University, including observing meetings and participating in the Library’s activities. These are discussed in the next subsection.



### **3.4.5 Access Activities**

In this study, access activities were planned with two aims: (1) to pave access to the organisation and (2) to enhance knowledge about the organisation because activities also contribute information that is valuable to the data collection and data analysis process. Initial access to the organisation is normally granted by the management, and continued access is maintained by gaining acceptance and consent from the intended participants (Saunders et al., 2009). Apart from the initial and physical access, it is also necessary for this study to gain cognitive access, which is the ability to distinguish a representative sample—for instance, participants or documents that meet the research objective in the context of the organisation studied—from non-related information. Obtaining only physical access is inadequate to ensure smooth access to an organisation; instead, the researcher needs to collect useful and meaningful data that are able to answer the research questions and objectives (Saunders et al., 2009).

#### *3.4.5.1 Access Interview*

Three access interviews were performed prior to the remainder of the interviews. As mentioned above, the first access interview was performed with Administrator 5 and was conducted at an early stage of the study to provide more information regarding the University's governance, structure and operation. In the interview, names of people and documents were suggested and these were later contacted or sought. The interview with Administrator 5 provided insightful information regarding the University, the governance system, the committees in which the Library was involved, and some issues regarding the Library and faculty. The interview also provided access to some of the documents to be used in the document analysis.

Consecutive access interviews were performed with Librarians 4 and 5. With Librarian 4, the interview was more casual and was done at the University café. Because of shared interests, Librarian 4 was more open in discussions regarding the Library and the University. The interviews were not recorded because the interview session was part of the initial physical access activity, whose aim was to develop a network. The last interview was performed with Librarian 5. Again, the interview provided valuable information regarding the Library and the University environment, enabling easier access to the Library and the Library documents.

Although the interview was not recorded, it provided two valuable benefits. The first benefit is concerned with the information of the current situation of the Library and the University, such as the departments that work closely with the Library, the University's main issues and challenges, issues the Library has with some of the faculties and schools, and some feedback from a student survey related to the library services. The second involved building a close network between the researcher and the Library as well as with other departments engaging with the Library, which resulted in the 'attending' and 'hanging about' activities. An interview was also performed with the supervisory team as an exercise in interviewing and transcribing.

A list of the access interviews is presented in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1: Access Interviews**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Note</b>
Administrator 5	4/12/13	Access interview
Librarian 4	11/2/14	Access interview
Librarian 5	15/4/14	Access interview

Apart from the abovementioned benefits received from the access interviews, the access interviews showed that different types of participants required different approaches in the interview process. This lessened the opportunity for the study to use a structured interview and led to the use of the semi-structured in-depth interview method, as discussed in Section 3.4.3.

Using an interview data collection method requires a researcher to have certain competencies to ensure more effective interview sessions. In this study, it was especially true; for instance, interviews with the administrators required attention to the use of jargon, especially related to the university and HE environment. Attention had to be focused on the use of acronyms and abbreviations for committees, organisations and government bodies mentioned. The interviews with the librarians required longer time allocation because the topics discussed in the interviews often generated empathy and personal interest, which extended the formal interview session into an unrecorded and less formal session.

Some interview sessions involved communication of underlying meanings that needed to be understood within the context of the study, for example, the issues regarding teachers' teaching workload, budget and facilities. Although this information was not related to the Library, the information needed to be noted, as it provided non-observable information about the University. Examples of interview questions are provided in Appendices 3-1, 3-2 and 3-3. Nevertheless, all interviews needed to be treated with thoughtfulness because of the various meanings embedded in the interview sessions, and this required understanding the study context beforehand.

#### *3.4.5.2 Participating and 'Hanging Around'*

Participating and 'hanging around' are common access strategies and involve participating in and loitering at an event or area until the researcher is gradually noticed and incorporated into a group (Bryman, 2012). These access strategy activities were performed, to ensure a smooth, ongoing access process, at the same time as the data collection activities. Actions suggested by Bryman (2012) include using the researcher's previous knowledge to engage in conversation or discussion and to adapt to the environment by occasionally helping or offering advice. In this study, the activities performed included participating in Library talks, and attending Library classes and cultural activities.

The activities were made possible through a close network with the librarians and administrators. Among the activities was a publisher's talk for University researchers organised by the Library. The researcher had volunteered to help in the talk by distributing pamphlets and tokens. The talk was followed by an informal discussion with Librarian 4 regarding issues related to the Library's online resources subscription. Another example was attending a cultural event hosted by the Library, followed by informal talks regarding the Library's role in the cultural event with Librarians 1 and 2.

Two meetings were observed in an effort to induce access to the University and the Library. Participation in the meetings focused more on introducing the study to the constituents than as a data collection process. Nonetheless, some of the information gathered from the meetings was valuable and used as talking points later in interviews. The first meeting was arranged through Administrator 5. The meeting was attended with consent from every member of the committee and the convenor.

At the beginning of the meeting, the researcher was introduced to the committee members by the meeting convenor, who provided some information regarding the study. As a result, the study was properly introduced to the meeting committee. This meeting also increased the researcher's knowledge about the University and its operation. The meeting observation was followed by collection of the meeting minutes, which had issues related to the Library.

The next meeting was arranged through Librarian 5. The meeting was an informal discussion between the Library and the IT service manager regarding student feedback on a survey related to IT Services in the Library, in particular, access to online databases and the IT help desk in the Library.

The meeting observation contributed to understanding of the Library's context in the University; for instance, the meeting introduced some issues regarding student feedback on access to online resources that were valuable to the study. Again, the participation was made possible with the consent of all members of the meetings. Because of the informal environment of the meeting, the study was introduced in a more casual manner to the members. This helped with ease of communication with the Library staff later in the interviews.

A list of meetings attended, activities participated in and 'hanging around' sessions is presented in Table 3.2

**Table 3.2: Meetings Attended, Activities Participated In and 'Hanging Around' Sessions**

No	Activity	Type	Date
1	Faculty quality meetings	Attending meeting	30/4/14
2	Library's meetings with IT Services	Attending meeting	26/5/14
3	Cultural event hosted by the Library	Hanging around	25/6/14
4	Library talks	Participating	2/10/14
5	Publisher talks	Participating	7/10/14
6	Library class	Hanging around	3/11/14

### **3.5 The Interview Process**

In this study, potential participants were individually contacted via email, given brief information about the study and invited to join the study. A high number of potential participants approached were interested in joining this study; however, some invitations were declined for several reasons, including that they were on annual leave, maternity leave and or out of the office for research-related matters. Those who agreed to take part in the study were then contacted via email and appointments were made for interviews. Before each interview, the participants were again briefed about the study, the interview process and the use of data in the study.

#### **3.5.1 Strategy for Interviews**

To maximise the outcomes of the interview process, several strategic actions were planned and executed during the interview process, such as preparation prior to the interviews, including room and venue reservations for interview purposes, and an interview reminder. In this study, the strategies were developed according to the researcher's experience from earlier and access interviews. For instance, after performing several interviews, some issues arose with the quality of the interview recordings, including problems with noise and distraction during the interviews. This happened with interviews that were held in open and public areas such as cafés. For instance, the noisy surrounding affected the quality of the recorded interview with Academic 7, and thus there was no transcription for that interview session. Therefore, for the subsequent interviews, room reservations were made prior to the interviews, unless the participant requested that the interview be held in the participant's office. This was done to ensure the maximum quality of interview recordings and to decrease distractions during the interview sessions.

The interviews were registered on an electronic calendar to remind participants about the interviews, and their time and venue. Each participant was emailed a day prior to the interview as both a reminder and to confirm the interview date and the participant's availability; it was not unusual for participants to postpone the interviews. Apart from the abovementioned strategies, thorough preparations were made before each interview. For instance, prior to interviewing academics, information on their interests and experiences in teaching, research and publication was retrieved and reviewed.

During the interviews with the librarians, information regarding their experience and Library-related activities was sought, such as their membership and involvement in committees and projects. Combined with the information acquired during the access interviews and access activities, this information served as talking points to avoid awkwardness or ‘vacuum situations’ in the interviews. Such interview strategies were prepared to demonstrate the researcher’s credibility, to obtain trust and confidence from the participants and to increase the participants’ willingness to participate and share information with the researcher (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 328).

### **3.5.2 The Sampling Process**

From the three access interviews performed, participants proposed several names of people who would be able to provide comprehensive information regarding the Library and its role in the University. The list grew longer as other interview participants recommended more names. Participants then were asked to suggest names of other Library constituents who met the criteria for this study’s sample. The criteria for potential participants of this study were Library constituents who interacted with the Library beyond using the Library as services. As a result, the participants of this study had particularly rich experiences of interacting with the Library, including in projects, committees and meetings, rather than as constituents who only used the Library as a service.

For example, the academic participants in this study interacted with the Library in several ways, including in important meetings, open access journal projects, preparing reports, presenting papers at seminars, reading list projects and Library classes. The university administrators interacted with the Library through management meetings, generating Research Excellence Framework (REF) reports and through the University’s open access repository, and the librarians had the daily task of interacting with all levels of constituents. Initially, 17 interviews were held between December 2013 and September 2014.

When using snowball sampling, researchers are reminded of the possibility of a small sample size, since the specific criteria set and sampling method will accelerate the process of information exhaustion and redundancy (Pickard, 2007). Baker and Edwards (2012) stated that, generally, when using the in-depth interview method, there is no absolute

sample size suggested, nor is there an exact number of samples that will determine saturation.

The size of sufficient sampling in the qualitative data collection sampling method depends on the saturation point reached; in snowball sampling methods, the sampling should stop when either no new participant names are given or the sample is as large as is manageable (Saunders et al., 2009). It has been suggested that between 12 and 30 (Saunders et al., 2009) or 12 and 20 (Pickard, 2007) interviews are sufficient for a heterogeneous group of participants.

Among the 32 potential participants approached, 17 agreed to join the study and 15 declined the invitation for assorted reasons, including being away on holiday or maternity leave and being out of the office for research-related matters.

### 3.5.3 Interview Participants

Interviews were done with three main constituents of the academic library: Academic cum researchers, managers and librarians. It is a common practice in the university studied for an academic to also be a postgraduate student. In the study, three participants were teaching staff as well as postgraduate students. As suggested by Soria (2013), in doing a study of the overall quality of academic libraries, academics and postgraduate students can be grouped together as members of the academic community (Soria, 2013).

Other categories of students, especially undergraduate students, are considered non-dominant agents of an academic library's position because they have been identified as not having a comprehensive awareness of the issues pertinent to an academic library's value beyond being a place to study and to access resources (Cullen & Calvert, 1995; Soria, 2013). Undergraduate students are also not key role agents in studies of the academic library's role. Details of the interviewed participants are presented in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Study Participants**

No	Participant	Designation	Place	Date	Note
1	Administrator 5	Faculty administrator	Participant's office	4/12/13	Access interview
2	Librarian 4	Librarian	Café	11/2/14	Access interview

<b>No</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Note</b>
3	Librarian 5	Librarian	Meeting room	14/3/14	Access interview
4	Librarian 1	Librarian	Meeting room	15/4/14	Transcribed
5	Librarian 2	Librarian	Meeting room	19/4/14	Transcribed
6	Academic 7	Academic	Café	15/5/14	Not transcribed
7	Administrator 3	Record manager	Participant's office	19/5/14	Transcribed
8	Administrator 4	Faculty administrator	Participant's office	29/5/14	Transcribed
9	Librarian 3	Librarian	Office lounge	25/6/14	Transcribed
10	Administrator 2	Research data manager	Café	30/6/14	Transcribed
11	Academic 4	Academic, doctoral student	Café	7/7/14	Transcribed
12	Academic 1	Academic	Discussion room	10/8/14	Transcribed
13	Academic 5	Academic	Discussion room	13/8/14	Transcribed
14	Academic 6	Academic, doctoral student	Discussion room	26/08/14	Transcribed
15	Academic 2	Academic, doctoral student	Discussion room	27/8/14	Transcribed
16	Administrator 1	Faculty administrator	Participant's office	1/9/14	Transcribed
17	Academic 3	Academic	Discussion room	9/9/14	Transcribed



### 3.5.4 Transcription

The primary source of data in the study was the 17 semi-structured interviews. Out of these 17 interviews, 13 were audiotaped and fully transcribed and the remaining four were not recorded. Three of the interviews were not recorded because they were the initial physical access interviews, and one interview recording was not of good quality. A total of 12 hours of interview sessions were recorded. This amounted to 101 pages of transcriptions (Table 3.4). The transcriptions were word-by-word transcriptions that represented the raw data as it was spoken by the participants. The interviews were transcribed by the researcher, allowing full familiarity and immersion in the data gathered.

**Table 3.4: Interview Transcribed**

<b>No of interviews transcribed</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>Pages</b>
13	12	101

The interviews were transcribed to Microsoft Word documents and transferred to NVivo X software, which is particularly beneficial for data storage. The software eased the process of data analysis by permitting the researcher to code and categorise the transcribed interviews in great detail, which involved going back and forth through the transcribed data while listening to the recorded interviews (see Appendix 5-1). However, the NVivo X analysis function was not used in this study because of the researcher's limited knowledge of the software. Since the researcher performed all interviews and transcriptions, the interview events were also incorporated into the sense making of the data.

### 3.5.5 Interview Questions

The interview was designed as a semi-structured interview. According to Saunders et al. (2009), using an in-depth unstructured interview will most likely result in the participants finding it difficult to focus on the research topic; therefore, interview question sections are necessary to ensure the interviews are effective (Saunders et al., 2009). In this study, the interview questions were used to guide the researcher in the interview process and to

control the participants' focus. The interview questions were divided into four sections with some modifications made throughout the data collection process to suit the participants' roles in the university.

In this study, questions prepared for the interviews were used only as a guide during the interview sessions. Glaser and Strauss (2006) warned that having fixed questions can distort the development of theory from the data by forcing questions into preconceived categories. Hence, unstructured interview questions should be flexible. However, it is important to note that the semi-structured questions used in the interviews were focused to address the research objectives of the study. Although participants had the freedom to lead the discussion, the discussion was guided by the research objective of the study.

Based on the access interviews and the research objectives, the data collection process was focused on three areas of interest: (1) what the participants' perceptions of the Library were, (2) how these perceptions related to the Library's role in the University and (3) how the relationship between them influenced the Library's position. The flow of the interview questions is discussed in the next section.

The first part of the interview was intended as an introduction and to generate general information about the participants. Therefore, the questions were focused on the participants, their experiences and their role in the university. The questions used in this part were quite straightforward, for example, 'How long have you been working as a librarian at this university?'

The second part of the interview related to the first focus of the interview, that is, the participants' perceptions of the Library. The questions in this part followed the participants' interests from part one and involved more 'point of view' questions, for instance, using phrases such as 'do you think' and 'how do you see'. This section followed participants' interest in discussing the Library from their experiences of interacting with the Library. For instance, for a participant with an interest in teaching and learning, the following question related to how the Library was involved in their classes. An example of questions used in this part is, 'How do you see that the library is supporting your classes?' However, for participants from the Library, the questions incorporated questions related to their interaction with the constituents, for instance, 'How do you feel interacting with the other department is supporting your task in the library?'

The third part of the interview focused on how the University environment influenced the Library's position; thus, the questions used in this part were related to the University's mission and how participants perceived the Library's role in supporting this mission. An example of these questions is, 'From your perspective, how do you see the library is adopting the university mission?'

The last section addresses how participants perceived the image of the Library. The last part is the closing section; hence, participants were asked closing questions on how they perceived the Library. An example of a question in this section is, 'What are the services that represent the library to you?' The interview was designed as a semi-structured interview, and the questions for each participant were not repetitive nor verbatim and were subject to the role participants played in the university as well as their personal interests, as shown in the earlier answers.

### **3.6 Triangulation**

Triangulation entails using more than one method or source of data in a study to create greater confidence in the findings (Bryman, 2012). There are four types of triangulation that contribute to the verification and validation process in a qualitative study: methods of triangulation, triangulation of sources, analyst triangulation and theory triangulation. It has been suggested that using the triangulation types can overcome the sceptical perception of qualitative research that it tends to create bias as a result of using a single method, analysis and perspective (Patton, 2002).

This study opted to use the second type of triangulation, which involves triangulation of data sources. This means comparing and cross-checking the consistency of information derived from the interviews and document analysis, which arrive at different times and by different qualitative data collection methods. In practice, this is a process of validating information obtained from interviews by checking the related documents, such as meeting minutes, related articles, mission statements and other university-related documents. In this study, the documents were collected as part of the corpus of the text, which included the transcribed interviews, and was analysed through the process of coding, categorising and identifying the emerging themes.

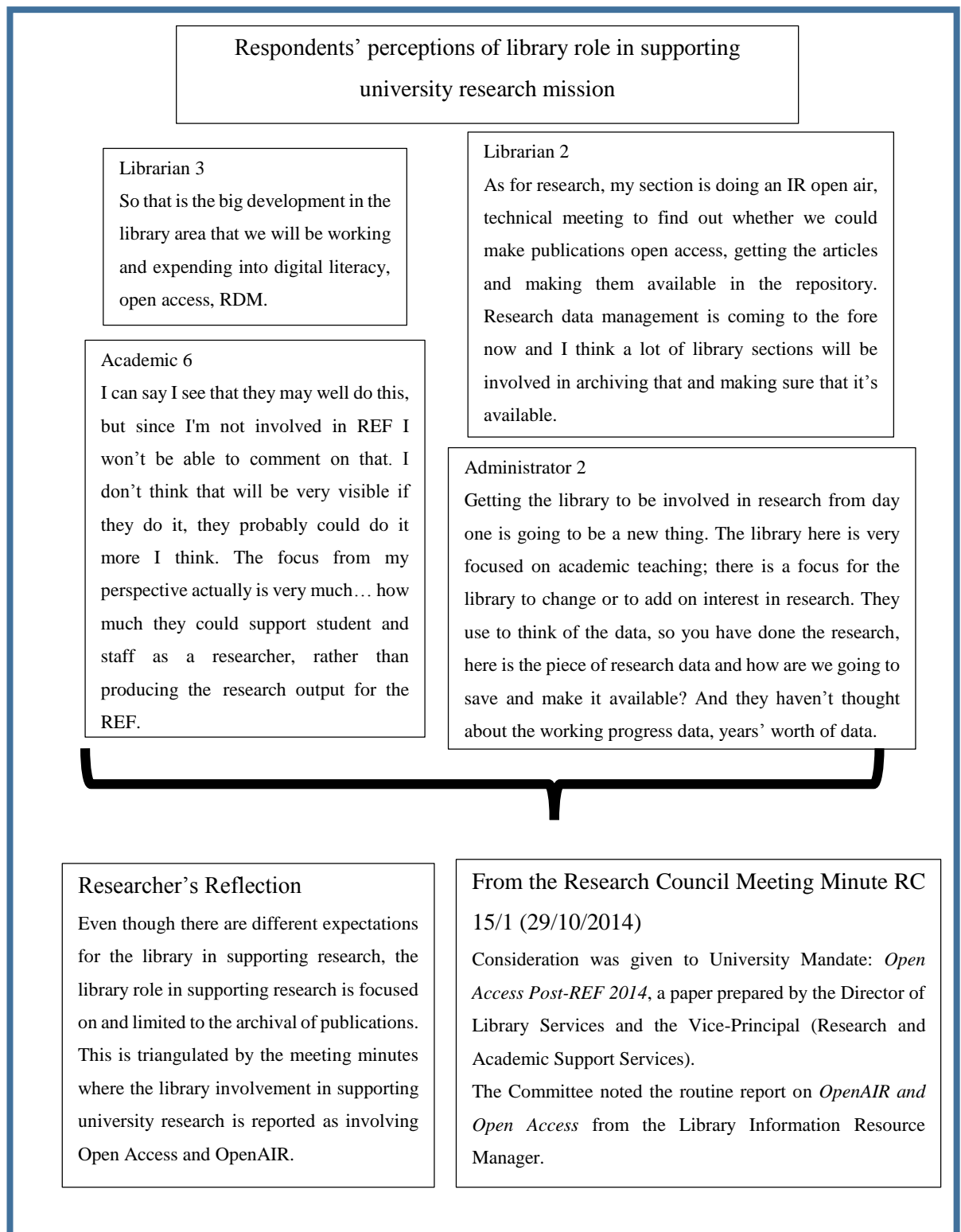
However, access to such documents depended on the access granted by the document's gatekeeper as well as the researcher successfully tracing such documents, possibly in a

public domain platform (Saunders, 2009). As a result, 20 individual minutes from related committees from 2012 to 2014 were collected, along with reports and related documents, such as the Library's framework, the University's aim and mission, and a paper presented at a seminar through the joint efforts of academics and librarians, and used as a source of data. The list of documents used is discussed in Section 3.6.1.1.

### **3.6.1 Document Analysis as Triangulation Method**

Written documents are a well-used source of data in case studies. This includes printed documentary data and non-printed materials such as formal administrative reports, public reports, personal diaries and blogs. In this study, document analysis was done to support, verify and triangulate the data collected from the interviews. It is common practice in a qualitative study for a small number of written documents to be analysed through the process of coding and categorising (Silverman, 1993).

The document analysis data collection method was chosen as a triangulation method in this study for two reasons. First, a document would be chosen because the particular document was mentioned in an interview, for instance, the Library strategic framework documents, or minutes from a particular meeting. Thus, the specific meeting minutes would be obtained to check and validate the related issues. Second, document analysis was chosen as a triangulation method because it is an extension of the interview data collection method. For instance, in several interviews, librarians discussed the Library's role in supporting the University's research mission to maintain an IR. Thus, minutes from the Research Committee meeting were searched and analysed to validate the Library's role in supporting research. An example of the process is presented in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1: Respondents' Perceptions of Library Role in Supporting University Research Mission**

Patton (2002) reported that, in some cases, the triangulation of data sources in a qualitative study will lead to a different result. This is possible because the analysis of

different types of data may produce different results since inquiries are sensitive to different real-world conditions (Patton, 2002). However, inconsistencies of outcomes should not be viewed as incredible results; instead, they should be seen as opportunities to understand when and why inconsistencies occur. This provides a valuable opportunity for a deeper analysis of the relationship between the subjects under study (Patton, 2002). In document analysis, the reliability of the documents is less frequently questioned; instead, ‘the ability of the researcher to make sense of local practices through such documents as end products is more valued’ (Silverman, 1993, p. 10).

### *3.6.1.1 How the Documents Were Chosen*

As mentioned above, documents in this study were chosen in two ways: first, by accessing documents participants mentioned in interviews, and second, by searching documents related to issues discussed in interviews, for clarification and validation. As a result, several documents were analysed, including survey reports, the Library Strategic Framework, the University mission statement *A Clear Future*, Student-Facing Units evaluation documents, news on the University’s cultural activities and several meetings’ minutes. Public documents were obtained from the public domain website, and non-public documents were obtained from participants’ personal collections.

A total of 46 documents were collected for analysis. A list of document types collected is presented in Table 3.5.

**Table 3.5: Documents Analysed**

No	Document type	Number	Source
1	Faculties’ quality meeting minutes	14	Web
2	Research Committee and Academic Committee meeting minutes	6	Web
3	University mission statement and related documents	3	Web
4	University survey outcome reports and related document	4	Participant’s copy
5	Library survey documents	1	Web
6	Library framework, evaluation and assessment	4	Participant’s copy
7	Library building-related article	1	Web

No	Document type	Number	Source
8	Open access related documents and institutional repository related documents	2	Web
10	Open House at RGU and cultural animateur role	3	Web
11	Library organisational chart and strategic framework	3	Participant's copy
12	Information regarding faculty open access journal	1	Web
13	Validation meetings' minutes	2	Web
14	University provost's blog page	2	Web
	Total	46	

### *3.6.1.2 Limitations*

Unfortunately, obtaining relevant documents is neither easy nor straightforward. Access to some documents depends on the document's gatekeeper granting access to the document as well as on success in tracing documents on a public domain platform. In this study, limited access to documents was due to two factors: the documents' availability and the researcher's status.

The first limitation is related to documents and information regarding the Library. From the data collection process, it appeared that very little information about the Library was available in printed or online forms of documents, for instance, university reports, meeting minutes or assessment documents. At the same time, not much information about the Library could be found on the University's or the Library's own web pages.

This is because, in the university's official documents, such as university reports and strategic documents, the Library was grouped together with other student-facing services such as Student Accommodation and IT Services, and the Library's web page and blog were mostly dedicated to the Library's services. This problem extended to meeting minutes, where information about the Library was available but scarce. Nevertheless, this did not eliminate document analysis as a useful method in this study because very useful data were successfully collected from the documents gathered.

The second issue faced in collecting relevant documents in this study was that some of the documents were classified as confidential, and therefore had restricted access. For instance, access to some meeting minutes was denied because of confidential issues such as the closure of the University's business strategies. Another example is that access to the minutes of Research Council meetings was denied because of the researcher's status as a research student.

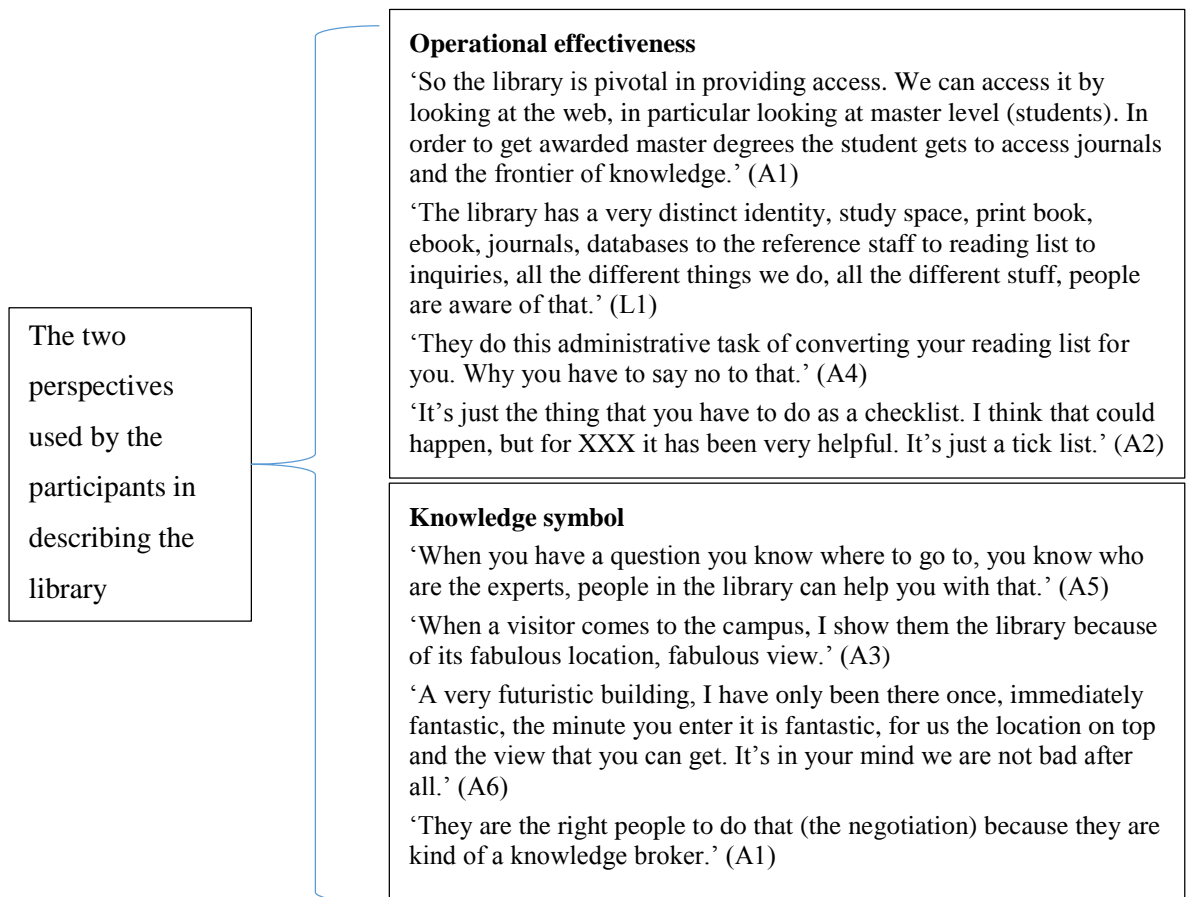
Nevertheless, conducting research in the researcher's own institution brought both advantages and disadvantages (Tietze, 2012). The researcher's status as a research student restricted the access to several documents; nonetheless, a good relationship with the Library and faculty administrators resulted in securing access to some valuable documents. University-related documents such as University reports and the Library's strategic framework documents are examples of documents suggested by participants, and documents related to the Library building and to open access were sought after these topics were mentioned in interviews.

### **3.7 Saturation Point**

Saturation in a qualitative study is related to sampling, and the sampling process should stop when no new data related to the categories or question emerge. As suggested by Bryman (2012), the sampling process should not proceed when no new data or a new dimension of theoretical category insight emerges. The number of participants in a qualitative snowball data collection method reaches its saturation point when either no new cases are given or the sample is as large as is manageable (Saunders et al., 2009). Using snowball sampling accelerated the process of information becoming exhausted or made redundant (Pickard, 2007). As mentioned before, this is related to the use of the snowball sampling data collection method in which samples are fit to specific criteria sets (Pickard, 2007).

In this study, saturation was achieved when the participants mentioned repetitive perceptions that could be coded in the existing code, and no consecutive perceptions offered by participants would generate new codes and categories. For instance, participants repetitively mentioned perceptions that could be divided into two perspectives used when describing the Library: the operational effectiveness group and the knowledge symbolic group. This is illustrated in Figure 3.2.

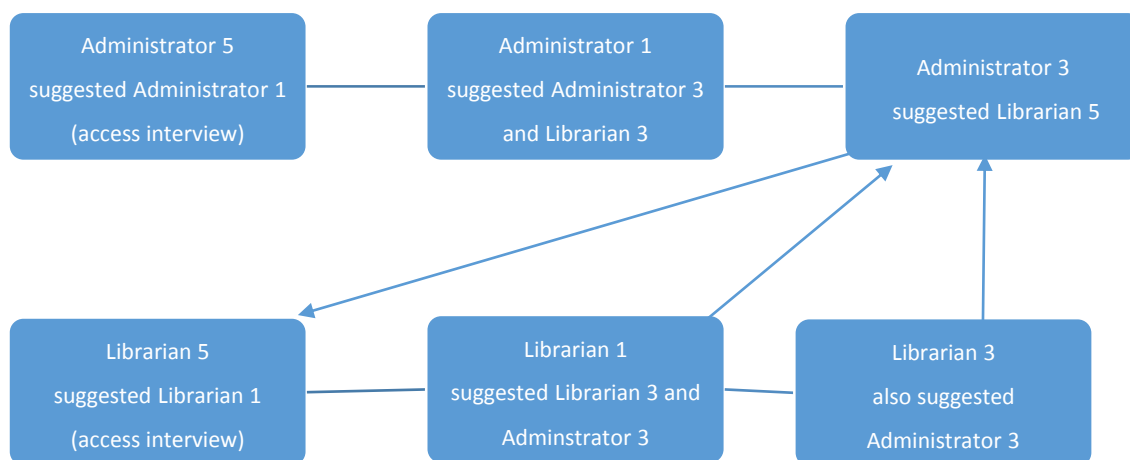




**Figure 3.2: Example of Data Saturation through Participants’ Perceptions**

This suggests that even though participants used their own perceptions in describing the Library, the most-used perspectives revolved around the Library’s operational effectiveness and symbolic knowledge value.

The sampling process was also considered saturated when the current participants stopped suggesting new names or the same names were suggested repetitively. As explained by Pickard (2007) and Bryman (2012), the use of set-up criteria accelerates the process of redundancy. An example of the snowball sampling method pattern in this study is shown in Figure 3.3.



**Figure 3.3: Example of Snowball Sampling Saturation Point**

In the example, during the access interview, Administrator 5 suggested names of potential participants that were considered to have useful information for the study. Among the names suggested was Administrator 1. In the access meeting with Librarian 5, several librarians' and administrators' names were suggested, among which was Librarian 1. In the subsequent interview sessions with Administrator 1 and Librarian 1, both suggested Administrator 3 and Librarian 3. Administrator 3 further suggested Librarian 5, and Librarian 3 suggested Administrator 3. At this point, there was a hint that the number of participants had nearly reached the saturation point.

### 3.8 Data Analysis

The data analysis process is a process used to 'conceptualise the studied phenomenon to understand it in abstract terms' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 231). This involves the process of cross-referencing of data and of grouping and regrouping the data into some sensible abstract terms. This is done through the process of coding and categorising. Coding is widely discussed as a data analysis method within inductive research and grounded theory approaches.

Coding is the process of reviewing data and giving labels to a piece of data that has potential and significance for the themes' development. Coding is also applied to data salient to the context of the social world that is being studied (Bryman, 2012, p. 568).

Categorising is the descriptive level of coding, in which the description in the categories helps to explain the coding (Bezeley, 2009). Coding is an analytical process that is sometimes only understood by its coder and brings no meaning to others. Therefore, a code needs to be explained and codes with a similar meaning need to be grouped and described. Through the process of categories, codes are explained and similar codes are grouped and given names that represent the themes of the codes.

### **3.8.1 Data Analysis Process**

The data analysis process started with thorough reading and rereading of the transcribed interviews and documents, followed by drawing out some interesting issues and outstanding words and phrases, and proceeded with the coding and categorising process. Charmaz (2014) described the data analysis stage as ‘a constant comparison method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis’ (p. 7).

Bezeley (2009) stated that describing, comparing and relating are the first steps in analysing data. This involves describing the themes, their characteristics and boundaries. Describing the characteristic of the themes is done by asking questions, such as: How many participants talked about this? How did they talk about it? What is missing? The next step is to compare the ideas with other themes, asking how the ideas are expressed differently in different themes. The last of these steps, according to Bezeley (2009), is to relate the ideas to existing literature to understand the conditions, consequences and circumstances of such ideas and determine the concepts of the ideas.

In this study, the collected corpus of the text, that is, the transcribed interviews and documents collected, was thoroughly read to discover ideas and meanings that were embedded within the text. The process was done repeatedly until certain words, phrases or sentences started to make sense. These meanings then were given a coded name and similar coded references were categorised together as a theme. In essence, the themes consisted of ideas and meanings gathered from the data and were grouped together to create meaning beyond the superficial meaning of the words and phrases.

### **3.8.2 Coding and Categorising**

Charmaz (2014) defined coding as an activity of ‘constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses’ (p. 7). To

generate code from data, researchers are advised to be selective and adopt a process of conceptualising abstract data. The conceptualisation of data is needed because of the nature of qualitative data, which does not allow prestandardisation of data during the collection process (Sanders et al., 2009). Thus, the process of grouping and regrouping of the data needs to be executed during the data analysis process.

Next, the codes were categorised with a description that was meaningful to the research framework. This was done by analysing the code and comparing the code with the existing categories. Coding is the process of reviewing data and giving labels to pieces of data that are salient and have the potential for theme development (Bryman, 2012, p. 568), and categorising is the descriptive level of coding, where the description of the categories helps to explain the coding (Bezeley, 2009). A code needs to be described, and codes with similar meanings need to be grouped. Through this process, categories of codes are explained, similar codes are grouped and groups are given names that represent the theme of the code. In this study, several themes emerged from the data collected.

Categorising involves the process of grouping themes in order to give a description of the findings. This process of going back and forth between the categories and code leads to an in-depth understanding of the data. Denscombe (2010) described this stage as the first stage of data analysis, which requires the researcher to group bits of the 'raw data' into particular categories. This is done by careful scrutiny of the data, which allows the researcher to see whether some particular pieces of the data have something in common. There is a possibility that pieces of data will refer to the same issue, involve the same statements and describe the same emotion. A similar word or phrase may also be used in relation to a specific topic (Denscombe, 2010).

Categories have more descriptive powers, whereas codes are treated as indicators of a concept (Saunders et al., 2009). Through categories, patterns of similar meaning will emerge and regroup into a theme that represents a concept. As described by Saunders and others (2009), the data need to be in a fluid state, to enable the process of comparing and going back to the data, for a continuous process of revision and comparison.

The process of coding involves the process of conceptualising an abstract idea (Saunders et al., 2009). The transcribed interview was read and reread to understand the answer. The coded references then emerged and gave meaning beyond the question context. For

instance, in the interview, a participant was talking about the new Library building but the evaluation of the new building was linked with the participant's experience. Because the participant had more than user experience with the Library through participating in committees and meetings and collaborating activities, the judgements of such evaluation are not linked only to specific ideas about the Library.

Next was the process of grouping and regrouping of the coded references and the abstract meaning into a word or phrase that could define the abstract meaning. For instance, 'beautiful building' and 'iconic building' could be represented by the aesthetic code whereas 'the body of knowledge', 'a symbol' and 'public perception' could be grouped into the symbolic value and public perception codes.

Because perception could not be deduced from a given hypothesis (Charmaz, 2014), it could be abstractly linked with the identity of the Library as an organisation.

### **3.8.3 The Sense-Making Process**

According to Denscombe (2010), the second stage of the data analysis process comes after the process of comparing categories and themes. In the process, the researcher needs to identify concepts or abstract categories that encapsulate the categories. According to Charmaz (2014), this is 'the process of offering an imaginative interpretation of data that makes sense of the studied phenomenon' (p. 231). The process of data sense making begins with moving from describing the themes to suggesting concepts that are represented by the themes.

In this stage, there is a need to categorise the themes as part of the process of building a theoretical framework to make sense or give meaning to the data or to articulate theoretical claims pertaining to the scope, depth, power and relevance of a given analysis (Charmaz, 2014). In this stage, the theoretical researcher needs to 'acknowledge subjectivity in theorizing and hence recognize the role of experience, standpoints, and interactions, including one's own' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 231).

The process of sense making or giving meaning is discussed in Chapter 6 in this study. The findings were written and rewritten, with guidance from the existing literature. The original contribution in this process is the systematical shaping of concept and theory using meaning and ideas that link the findings with the related body of knowledge.

### 3.8.4 Development of Themes

The main themes that emerged from the data analysis were operational effectiveness, knowledge symbol, conformance and manipulation, and machine- and knowledge-related metaphors. These themes were built from related coded references, for example, online collection, building visit, reading list and administrative task and machine-related metaphors.

Examples of the relationships between themes, categories and codes are presented in Table 3.6.

**Table 3.6: Examples of Themes, Categories and Codes**

Theme	Category	Code
Operational effectiveness	Library success image	Online collection
Operational effectiveness	Library success image—counter-interpreted	Administrative
Knowledge symbol	Library image and identity	Building
Metaphor	Library image and identity—cognitive	Machine-related metaphor
Conformance	Legitimacy strategy	Strategic framework, online collection
Manipulating	Legitimacy strategy—connection?	Cultural role
Operational effectiveness	Student experience	Publisher, collection access
Operational effectiveness	Student employability	Course, accreditation bodies
Operational effectiveness	Student experience—academic contribution to the context and content through reading list	Reading list, modern university

#### *3.8.4.1 Selection of Themes Based on Common Words*

A repeated word by several participants indicates a common idea on a particular issue related to the word (Bazeley, 2007). According to Bazeley (2007), repetitious words signify a significant idea by participants that are useful to develop a theme because people repeat ideas that are significant to them, and the words used can offer a concrete basis for theme development. Repetitive ideas by participants is a common outcome when using the semi-structured interview method, in which participants are free to express their opinions using the same ideas and words. In this process, understanding of the themes is based on the participants' own understanding of their social context, and is less significant when using structured interviews (Bazeley, 2007).

For instance, a word often repeated in the interviews was 'employability', which was widely mentioned by the participants. The word was repetitively used in University documents such as the University mission and aim documents. Thus, employability became a salient coded reference as well as a theme in this study. Examples of employability as a common word used in interviews are shown in Table 3.7.

**Table 3.7: Examples of Selection of Themes Based on Common Words**

Business in education and RGU has a very strong reputation for **employability** and it is at the top three and wants to stay there, where's the new learning, what is it that people want to learn, is it health, supporting an ageing population? (Academic 2)

Students leave the university equipped with the information handling skills for lifelong learning. Students are more confident and independent learners and able to contribute to the university's **employability** record. (Administrator1)

What is important to the university now is **employability**, is the differentiator, since as long as I have been in the university we have been very proud of the employability. But the emphasis on employability has come to the fore. There are no two ways about that. (Academic 1)

**Employability** remains for RGU the most important thing. You know, this university topping the **employability** league table at UG and PG level I think for us where we are geographically is very important. (Academic 1)

#### *3.8.4.2 Selection of Themes Based on Richness of Explanations*

Studying perception also means that perceptions should be analysed beyond their simple meaning. Instead, some thought should be applied to understand the underlying meaning

that is embedded in the perceptions. This process is enabled by the use of an interpretative perspective and qualitative analysis method. The perceptions can be further analysed as part of the context they represent (Silverman, 1993).

In this study, the richness of explanation analysis is best illustrated by the metaphor themes. The metaphors used were so significant that they emerged as ways of thinking and perspectives used by the constituents. Participants may not have used the same metaphoric words or phrases, but the metaphoric words and phrases used could be clearly categorised into groups of metaphors. This was done when all related words and phrases had been grouped and regrouped.

#### 3.8.4.3 Example of a Developed Theme

An example of a developed theme is presented in Table 3.8. It is important to note that the development of themes in this study was guided by the objectives of the study. This study was aimed at exploring academic libraries' position, factors that influence the position and alternative ways to describe the academic library's position in the university. Factors that influence the position were identified as the main themes: operational effectiveness, legitimisation strategy and knowledge symbol. For the purpose of explaining the themes developed in the study, an example of excerpts from the theme metaphors is shown in Table 3.8. The full interview is in Appendix 3-4.

**Table 3.8: Examples of Metaphoric Words and Phrases Used and Their Group of Metaphors**

Participant	Metaphoric words use	Code	Category	Theme
Academic 2	It is very useful for me teaching the new undergraduates, who keep asking me the same questions over and over again. Rather than me having to teach them how to reference properly, I could ask them, have you been to the library induction? So that is	Metaphor—machine-related	The library efficiency is equal to a machine and machine-related parts (process and repetitive task).	Operational effectiveness



Participant	Metaphoric words use	Code	Category	Theme
	your problem, go and arrange your induction. Maybe it's just me shirking the responsibility; again it is useful as a service.			
Academic 2	It's definitely a beautiful building. Maybe we should invest and leave behind an iconic building that will always house a library, I can't be so sure.	Metaphor—iconic building	The library building is a knowledge symbol (iconic building).	Operational effectiveness
Academic 2	There is a symbolic function, and that symbolic function is less applicable in the business school setting. It is going to be different if there is a large social school, history department, psychology department where the physical function will be more significant than they are here. What symbolises that, what service?	Metaphor—symbolic	The library building is a knowledge symbol.	Knowledge symbol
Academic 2	A part of me is saying that it's the body of knowledge, a symbol, I can completely understand from the public perception, but is that the best decision? I just don't know.	Metaphor—knowledge symbol	The library building is a knowledge symbol.	Knowledge symbol
Academic 2	It is just the thing that you have to do as a checklist. I think that could happen, but for	Metaphor—tick box/tick list	The library efficiency is equal to a machine and	Operational effectiveness

Participant	Metaphoric words use	Code	Category	Theme
	X it has been very helpful. It is just a tick list.		machine-related parts.	

In the excerpts in Table 3.8, the participant did not specifically use the word ‘metaphor’ in the conversation yet the richness of the description and the use of words to describe a particular situation indicated the use of a metaphor in the interview. Metaphor is defined as a word used to confirm the mental models used to generate perception regarding a particular institution, situation or idea (Giesecke, 2011). Metaphors can be used to connect terms with the newly developed images or concepts of a library (Giesecke, 2011; Nitecki, 1993).

The use of non-directive interview questions in this study has contributed to various responses and in this study prompted metaphors as examples of the cognitive ideas used in describing the Library. General questions such as ‘As an academic how do you perceive the role of the library?’ and ‘How is the library contributing to the university mission?’ were asked of the participants. The development of this theme is shown in Appendix 5-1.

As shown in Table 3.8, Academic 2, who was also a research student, stated, ‘It is just the thing that you have to do as a checklist. I think that could happen, but for X it has been very helpful. It is just a tick list.’

The participant explained that it is considered compulsory that a list of references for developing a new course is made in consultation with the Library, yet the process is regarded as a bureaucratic process rather than a consultation process. Phrases such as ‘tick list’ exemplifies the description of the Library’s role as a bureaucratic or process role rather than as making a contribution to the process. It is similar to the use of the phrases ‘the same questions over and over again’, ‘rather than me having to teach them how to reference properly’, which refers to a process and a repetitive task and is associated with a machine and machine-related parts. This describes the machine-related metaphor, which can be described as the Library being a vital organisation in the University by providing support services to the teaching and learning activities in the University. However, it can

also be interpreted as the Library's role in teaching and learning not contributing to the body of knowledge.

Other examples from the interview with Academic 2 suggest the metaphor of the Library as a knowledge symbol. This can be seen in the statement 'A part of me is saying that it's the body of knowledge, a symbol, I can completely understand from the public perception, but is that the best decision? I just don't know.' The words 'symbol' and 'public perception' indicate the Library has a symbolic value in the public perception. This is supported by the statement made by Academic 2, 'It's definitely a beautiful building. Maybe we should invest and leave behind an iconic building that will always house a library, I can't be so sure.'

In the above statements, words and phrases such as 'body of knowledge' and 'symbol' by Academic 2 directly described the Library as a knowledge symbol, as did the words 'iconic' and 'invest'. In a way, the Library was perceived to be as efficient as a machine and as having a symbolic value, as represented by the Library building. From the findings gathered, it is clear that the statements discussed above include metaphors to describe the Library. Statements such as 'knowledge symbol' and 'tick box' further confirm the findings.

In this study, it is important to note that the small number of participants does not reflect the intensity of the matters discussed. As suggested by Bazeley (2007), people repeat ideas that are significant to them. The statement analysis is based on source which the code could have been mentioned more than once in an interview, such as in the example in the interview with Academic 2. Therefore, the number of participants presented in the discussion is not meant for statistical generalisation. It is only for the purpose of describing the statements in relation to the themes developed.

### **3.9 Reflections from the Study**

Planning and performing this study was not without challenges. The researcher faced several challenges, categorised into two main categories: first, doing research as a practitioner, and second, studying one's own organisation. This is an acknowledgement of the subjectivity in theorising and hence recognition of the role of experience, standpoints and interactions, including one's own (Charmaz, 2014).

### **3.9.1 A Practitioner Perspective**

In doing research, practitioners prefer more straightforward research with direct beneficial outcomes (ACRL, 2010). Practitioners, in this case, academic librarians, tend to do research to highlight what they do best and to promote their value to the rest of the university community (ACRL, 2010). This is shown by the quality of research publications by practitioners, which have been said to have ‘little difference in the quality and organisation of published reports’ compared with publications by academic researchers (Kennedy & Brancolini, 2012 p.431).

Generally, there are several reasons why academic librarians can face problems when conducting academic empirical research. Among the reasons are a lack of knowledge of research methods and processes, unfamiliarity with research jargon, lack of support for research and lack of training in doing research (Kennedy & Brancolini, 2012). As a practitioner, the researcher was concerned about having a lack of research skills as well as a lack of understanding of research philosophy and research outcomes, especially in designing the study and data analysis activities.

To overcome this concern, an effort was made to learn and understand the research-related issues. This effort included gathering information through reading books and journal articles as well as attending several research-related events and courses such as training sessions, conferences and colloquiums. Events organised by the University included postgraduate research methods classes as well as conferences and colloquiums organised by the Scottish Graduate School through the Information Science Pathway, such as iDocQ, which the researcher had the opportunity to organise. These events provided an opportunity to develop networks with other information science researchers in Scotland and induce some knowledge sharing among the LIS researchers.

### **3.9.2 Researching One’s Own Organisation**

The second challenge was related to conducting research in the researcher’s own institution. Saunders et al. (2009) claimed that researching one’s own institution comes with advantages as well as disadvantages. Understanding the complexity of the organisation was one of the advantages because it meant that less time was needed to study the context of the institution. However, the assumptions and preconceptions that the researcher had through knowing the organisation too well are listed as disadvantages

that can prevent exploration of some issues that are taken for granted (Saunders et al., 2009). There was also the problem of access because of the researcher's student status, which prevented access to several meetings' minutes and University documents.

Being a research student in the institution did not increase the researcher's familiarity with the institution, its system or environment; nevertheless, the participants assumed that the researcher had full knowledge of the Library and the University. This brought other advantages and disadvantages to the research, because some participants tended to omit some vital pieces of information during the interviews, which they treated as common knowledge, and these were not made available to the researcher as a research student, thus leaving a missing piece of information for the researcher to discover later.

Therefore, some parts of this research were focused on understanding the University and the Library, and thus the selection of a single-case study and the qualitative data collection method. Activities such as access interviews, meetings and Library events contributed rich input to the researcher's knowledge of the institution. These activities brought advantages to the study, particularly in the sense making of collected data.

Awareness of some local organisational issues contributed to the data analysis process, for example, in understanding what participants actually meant when they said something symbolic, and the sarcasm they used during the interviews and throughout the research inquiry. This awareness was beneficial in the data analysis process and making sense of the findings (Tietze, 2012). This understanding might not have been accomplished without the researcher's awareness and knowledge of the University and the Library.

This understanding influenced the way the researcher viewed and analysed the data since the tacit meaning and the intensity of a statement could only be captured by a person who had the appropriate contextual knowledge. The choice to conduct the research at the researcher's own institution was not made purely in order to understand and develop conceptual advancement on the subject; it also was intended to give the researcher the experience of being involved and embedded within the University structurally and politically (Tietze, 2012, p. 62). This was considered an invaluable experience for the researcher, who comes from a different country with a different cultural background.

## **Chapter 4: The Case**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter introduces the case study by locating the Library in the setting of the University as well as in the HE environment in Scotland. Therefore, it begins with a discussion of the general developments and changes that have influenced the Library such as developments in the HE environment in Scotland and the University. The discussion also includes descriptions of the case and its structural position in the context of the University. Next, the chapter introduces the Library and discusses the Library's involvement in the University and the University's structure and processes, and the Library's focus, which is the Library's new building and the IR.

### **4.2 The Case**

The case chosen was the Robert Gordon University (RGU) Library situated in Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom (UK). It is an academic library that serves a post-1992 university. The Library was chosen because of its characteristics, which are both unique and common at the same time. This is in line with a suggestion by Saunders et al. (2009) that a case should be a unique case as well as a common one.

According to Pickard (2007), a qualitative case study is mainly the study of a specific purpose, and the case in this study was chosen according to the specific purpose (Pickard, 2007). For instance, in this study, the academic library's position was the specific purpose to be studied, and the Library was the system that fell within the boundaries, which dictated the case as the purpose and not the system (Pickard, 2007). In other words, a single-case study is predefined by focus and scope as well as being emergent and self-defined as a case (Buchanan, 2012).

The Library serves the University by providing services and facilities such as lending of books, access to online materials, Library classes, interlibrary loans, reading spaces and discussion spaces. As a new academic library, the Library (as is the case with many other new academic libraries) has different characteristics from those of the ancient and pre-1960s university libraries. This is connected to the Library's focus, which leans towards the support of teaching as opposed to research. The focus is influenced by the parent

institution being a post-1992s universities, which is more dominant in teaching (Wakeham & Garfield, 2005). As a consequence, post-1992s university libraries have been found to be struggling to balance their focus between supporting teaching and supporting research activities (Wakeham & Garfield, 2005) because, despite their lack of experience and resources in supporting research, post-1992 university libraries are expected to support the universities' research agenda while maintaining their support of the teaching.

A more exciting development was the recent granting to the Library of a new and breathtaking building on a new campus. This occurred despite the University mission, which emphasises online teaching and learning. In the competitive environment of HE, being granted a new building is perceived as a silent metaphor of academic libraries' success (Crane-Closet, 2012). This portrays an academic library's ability to secure the university's investment in the HE environment (Crane-Closet, 2012) as suggested that academic libraries new building hold a symbol of value for the University (Hardesty, 1997).

Finally, from the literature reviewed, it was found that previous studies on academic libraries' position have focused on well-established academic libraries that reside in research universities rather than on new academic libraries, such as post-1992s academic libraries. For instance, studies by Robertson (2015), Fister (2010), Estabrook (2007), Grimes (1998) and Lynch et al. (2007) focused on academic libraries associated with research universities. Therefore, choosing a post-1992s university library expands the information collected as well as further elaborating the findings to other types of academic libraries such as the new academic library.

As mentioned in the discussion on the data collection strategy in section 3.4.1, the snowball sampling method requires access to the organisation studied and requires a gatekeeper as the initial access point to the organisation. The choice of the Library as a case was also related to the sampling method chosen. The Library was considered suitable because it was the researcher's own institution's library, which eased access to the organisation as well as the introduction to the gatekeeper. In general, the Library was chosen for its ability to provide understanding on academic libraries' position as well as to benefit the sampling and networking activities.

### 4.3 Higher Education in Scotland

The HE system in Scotland has expanded vastly since the 1960s. New universities and colleges now exist and offer further undergraduate and postgraduate education to Scottish students, students from the rest of the UK and international students. The HE system in Scotland is considered distinct from that of the rest of the UK. Currently, there are 19 HE institutes in Scotland, comprising 16 universities and three other institutes, which can be divided into several sectors. Gallacher (2014), Iannelli et al. (2011) and Briggs (2007) divided the institutions into five sectors, namely, ancient universities, 1960s universities, post-1992s universities, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and the Scotland Colleges (Briggs, 2007; Gallacher, 2014; Iannelli et al., 2011). Audit Scotland (2016) divided these institutions into four groups: ancient universities, chartered universities, modern universities and the small specialist institutions and other. These sectors and groups can be associated with the percentages of funds they receive from the funding agencies (Gallacher, 2014), which are shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Total Grants for Teaching and Research for Selected Types of Universities for 2017–2018**

Type of university	Total funding allocation for teaching (£)	%	Total funding allocation for research (£)	%
Ancient universities	200,538,030	31.0	183,721,000	65.9
1960s/Chartered universities	157,738,481	24.5	70,518,000	25.3
Post-1992/Modern universities	222,617,604	34.4	16,008,000	5.7
Others	65,564,046	10.1	8,370,000	3.0
Total	646,458,161	100	278,617,000	100

Source: <http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Announcements/2017/>

Ancient universities are universities that were established in the 15th and 16th centuries. Four universities are in this category: Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews and Aberdeen. All four are in the top 200 universities ranking in the *Times Higher Education* World University Ranking 2016–2017 (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world->



university-rankings/2017), although only the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow are in the top 100 (27 and 88 in 2017 respectively). The Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh are also members of the Russell Group of universities, which was established to represent the interests of universities that claim excellence in teaching and research (Gallacher, 2014).

A distinctive feature of these universities is their dominant role in research: 65.9% of Scottish Funding Council (SFC) funding on research goes to these institutions. They also enjoy the second-largest portion of SFC teaching funding for 2017–2018 at 31.0% (see Table 4.1).

The next group is the 1960s or chartered group universities, which consists of Dundee, Heriot-Watt, Strathclyde and Stirling. Like the previous group, these universities are expected to teach and conduct research with a broad curriculum and be at the same level as the ancient universities. Although their performance is significantly behind the four ancient universities in teaching and research, in the 2017–2018 SFC grant allocation for teaching and research they received a big portion of the SFC, 24.5% and 25.3% respectively (see Table 4.1). These universities play a major role as providers of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Scotland (Gallacher, 2014).

The third group is the post-1992s or modern universities. They are similar to polytechnics in England, providing more vocationally oriented HE programmes, and were promoted to university status under the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. In this group are Abertay University, Glasgow Caledonian University, Edinburgh Napier University, the University of the West of Scotland, RGU and Queen Margaret University, and the group has recently been joined by the University of Highlands and Islands. These universities provide major opportunities for undergraduate education in Scotland, offering full-time as well as part-time courses, and also teach postgraduates and one-quarter of the Scottish students. Although their strength in teaching and learning has seen them receive one-third (34.4%) of the Strategic Collaboration Fund (SCF) funding for teaching, their performance for research remains limited, with only 5.7% of SCF funding for research received for the period 2017–2018 (see Table 4.1). Despite their distinct role in providing local HE opportunities, these universities also emphasise their national and international roles (Gallacher, 2014).

One of the challenges of the post-1992s universities in Scotland is maintaining, recruiting and retaining new students, and this has emerged as one of the biggest challenges for the post-1992s or modern universities in Scotland (Gallacher, 2014). This is because the post-1992s student market sector is local and regional. As explained by Gallacher (2014), ‘These universities draw many of their students from the regions in which they are based, and a number of them have also established strong links with the colleges in their areas’ (p. 98). Other contributing factors include the reported shrinking and ageing of the Scottish population, which has made the challenges more intense. Scotland has been predicted to have a decrease in population (Briggs, 2006). Further, it has been noted that HE in Scotland has become highly stratified, causing a significant stratification in the entry level of students according to their social class and the universities they choose (Iannelli et al., 2011). This has created a greater challenge for the post-1992s universities in Scotland: to pursue a larger market for student recruitment and retention of students by expanding their student market elsewhere.

The fourth group according to Audit Scotland (2016) is the small specialist institutions, which consist of the Glasgow School of Art, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Scotland’s Rural College and the Open University in Scotland. These institutions provide undergraduate study that is mainly full-time; they also have a relatively high number of postgraduate students (over one-third of all of their students). For instance, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland is a national academy specialising in art, drama and music. Although there is research in specialist areas, the numbers involved are relatively low; specialised and intensive teaching is offered in dance, drama, music, production and film through undergraduate and postgraduate courses with relatively small numbers of researchers (Gallacher, 2014). This group received a total of 10.1% and 3.0% of SCF funding for teaching and research for 2017–2018 (see Table 4.1).

The last sector according to Gallacher (2014) is the Scotland Colleges, which consist of 26 colleges as a result of mergers and the regionalist programme in 2013. These colleges provide vocational education for the National Higher Certificate and Diploma levels. These colleges are also providers of vocational education and training for apprentices, technicians and administrative staff, and feeders to universities because many students now use these colleges to transition to further study. While much of this provision was traditionally part-time, there has been a significant growth in full-time HE provision with limited postgraduate provision. Overall, then, these colleges mainly provide short-cycle

HE that leads on to further study or enhances graduates' employment prospects (Gallacher, 2014).

#### **4.4 The University**

The University has a long history as a vocational institute of education. The University started as a facility to educate boys in the early 19th century. It had evolved into a technical college by 1910, and in 1965, the college changed into an institute of technology (Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology) with some expansion in its departments, notably by the establishment of the Department of Business Management Studies, which later become the Aberdeen Business School.

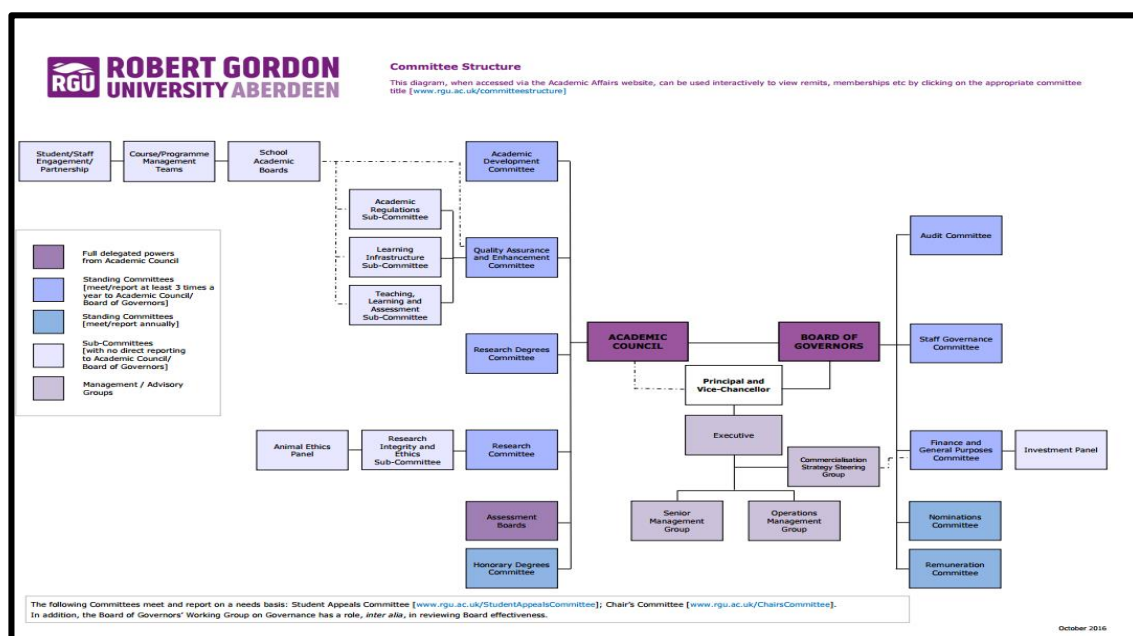
In 1991, the campaign for the institute to be awarded full university status was launched. Three criteria have been set by the Scottish Higher Funding Council for an institute within its environment to be awarded full university status. The three criteria are accreditation by the Council for National Academic Awards and total full-time equivalent of at least 4,000 students, at least 300 of whom are in Scottish Higher Funding Council funding areas. The institute had clearly met all three criteria (Ellington, 2002). Upon satisfying the three criteria, in June 1992, the institute was elevated to full university status.

Previously, the University had had three faculties, namely, the Aberdeen Business School, Faculty of Health and Social Care, and Faculty of Design and Technology, which provides undergraduate and postgraduate programmes for multiple disciplines. However, recently, with the most recent development in 2016, the University has developed into 11 schools: the Aberdeen Business School, the School of Applied Social Studies, the School of Computing Science and Digital Media, the School of Creative and Cultural Business, the School of Engineering, Gray's School of Art, the School of Health Sciences, the Law School, the School of Nursing and Midwifery, the School of Pharmacy and Life Sciences, and the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and Built Environment. There are also a number of supporting and administrative departments that help to enhance the student learning experience in the University.

As shown in Figure 4.1. the University is governed by the Order of Council, and the highest governance body of the University is the Board of Governors, whose members include independent governors from the industrial and public sectors, combined with staff and student representatives. The Board has the responsibility to execute the University's

objectives and to exercise governed power on behalf of the university. The involves, among other responsibilities, student admission as well as creating and maintaining the codes of conduct and regulations required for the maintenance of standards and good order within the University.

For the operational day-to-day management and control of the University, authority is delegated to the vice-chancellor. In addition, the Board is supported by several standing committees and subcommittees. For operational matters that are academic related, the Board has delegated its power and duties to the Academic Council. The Council is delegated with the responsibility of planning, coordinating, developing and supervising the academic work. It is also entrusted with maintaining the University's academic standards.



**Figure 4.1: Committee Structure (as of October 2016)**

The Academic Council is supported by several standing committees and working groups in which the Academic Council has the liberty to appoint its members. Among the standing committees under the Academic Council are the Academic Development Committee, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, Research Degrees Committee, Research Committee, Assessment Board and Honorary Degrees Committee. The members of these committees are appointed as appropriate to their role and function.

As a 'new university', the University is concentrating on building its reputation in the Scottish as well as the UK HE environment. The University's vision is to build its

reputation in Scotland and beyond by becoming a distinctive university that will lead and shape the future of HE. The University aims to address issues that concern the local as well as the global community. To achieve such aims, the University sets its priorities on specialised niches, such as oil and gas, health and well-being, and creative industries, along with big data, employability of graduates and engaging with the community (RGU, 2013).

#### **4.4.1 Providing Access to Underrepresented Students in Scotland**

As discussed above, one of the biggest challenges in the Scotland HE environment is the share of the new student market and maintaining student retention. The shrinking local student market (Briggs, 2006), as well as the stratified university entry level in Scotland (Iannelli et al., 2011), has forced universities in Scotland, especially the post-1992s universities, to take extra measures to ensure their supply of students. To deal with these matters, it has been suggested that universities in Scotland need to match students' expectations by offering appropriate programmes (Briggs, 2006). In response to this challenge, the University has set several strategic aims, among others, to extend University access to underrepresented groups in North East Scotland as well as to a wider population from the UK and international student sectors (RGU, 2013).

This is in line with findings from previous studies on students' choice of HE institutions in Scotland that have proposed that post-1992s universities should open up more opportunities for school leavers from the underrepresented society groups to have access to tertiary education (Gallacher, 2014; Iannelli, 2011). This includes mature and working students as well as online students. The University has addressed this challenge by promoting its excellent student experience in online learning and off-campus as well as blended courses.

The University has acknowledged this challenge as its mission. In the University's mission document, *A Clear Future*, the challenge is addressed through expanding the access to HE to underrepresented students. The University has set an aim to motivate and facilitate individuals from underrepresented groups in North East Scotland to access the University's provision, to facilitate a wider take-up of courses for UK and international students by developing the reach of the University's provision, and to engage with

employers to develop workforce skills and capabilities, to meet the needs of the economy and society (RGU, 2017).

#### **4.4.2 A Modern University**

According to Bryant (2012), modern universities are not related solely to online experiences, which is how some institutions interpret them to be. A modern university also involves a variable mix of modes of student engagement, including online, community and on campus, and uses various modes of teaching and learning such as work-based learning, employer-led learning and postgraduate research combined with a variation of the primary three. This increases the learner experience as well as enhancing the measurable and tacit learner outcomes, beyond what can be achieved through any single mode (Bryant, 2012).

In the case studied, the University wishes to be distinguished and recognised for its teaching excellence and translational research, and the employability rate of its graduates, and these elements have been used as promotional materials by the University. The University is focused on the employability rate and teaching excellence. For instance, the University promotes itself as the receiver of a gold rating in the Teaching Excellence Framework and the Top Rated University For Employability (<http://www.rgu.ac.uk/>).

Among the challenges of a post-1992s university is balancing the focus between research and teaching, because new universities have a past history of teaching and learning, for instance, a high number of staff and students who are working in vocational, less academically traditional subject areas. This may affect both their attitudes towards research and the research integration into teaching (Wakeham & Garfield, 2005). In line with that, the University's research and learning missions focus on translational research and the development of students' maximum potential to excel in the world of tomorrow (RGU, 2013).

A university's mission is supported by platforms and devices that include the services of an academic library. In supporting the mission, academic libraries are also faced with other challenges from their own digital environment, especially scholarly communication and open access. According to Bryant (2012):

A tension arises where learners bring skills to higher education built on open systems, secure to maintain privacy but free to access and share. They produce content at no cost on these platforms and share them with a network of their choosing or wider. This is made even more complex when the higher education institution becomes focused on an instrument or platform and not on the reason for using that instrument or platform. (p. 1)

To address this, academic libraries are advised to set the right priorities to avoid tension between the university, the library and its constituents.

#### **4.4.3 Employability**

Employability is one of the core metrics in measuring universities' performance in the UK. According to Universities of Scotland (2017), the universities in Scotland have demonstrated their hard work in developing and embedding employability skills into graduates, since graduates from Scottish HE institutions have continued to be highly valued in the job market and the universities have been vital to Scotland's economy.

In line with the statement made by the Universities of Scotland, it has been the University's mission to be known for:

the impact of its teaching, scholarship and translational research, the employability of its graduates, its influence in the region and nation, its growing global profile, and its strong interdisciplinary focus on a small number of key questions and issues of concern to the local and global community. (RGU, 2013)

Employability has also become the University's strategic priority and the University has aimed to 'build on our record of strong employability and support for the city and region. These priorities will be amplified in a series of supplementary strategic policy documents' (RGU, 2013).

The achievement of the employability strategy is shown in the latest statistics from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey, which show that the University has a top employment record, with 96.5% of its graduates in work or further study within six months after leaving the University. The University is ranked sixth in the UK out of 151 universities in the data pool for the Higher Education Statistics Agency survey, which

measured the proportion of UK-domiciled full-time first degree leavers in work or further study six months after finishing their course (RGU, 2017).

Academic libraries have a connection to the employability success in universities in several ways, and one of them is through information literacy. Although information literacy is rarely recognised explicitly as an employability skill, information literacy has provide opportunities for academic libraries to develop their strategies to enhance related skills among students which including analysis and critical thinking, data handling, problem-solving and effective IT use. Academic libraries should focus on translating the terminology related to employability to express skills such as ‘entrepreneurial skills’, ‘problem-solving’ and ‘team working’ in their information literacy classes (Mawson & Haworth, 2018).

## **4.5 The Library**

The Library’s establishment can be traced back to as early as 1931, when it was officially opened as the Central Library and Reading Hall for the institute, along with several small specialist libraries to cover its multiple disciplines and multi-location activities. In 1968, the Library occupied its own building and started a central service for the institute. However, in 1998, along with the Faculty of Management, a part of the Central Library moved to a new building on a newly developed campus, which was praised at the time as ‘the 21st-century campus’. The new campus library was named in honour of a member of a local philanthropist family (Ellington, 2002).

Recently, in the summer of 2013, the Library once again moved to a new library building on the University’s modern new campus. With the relocation, the University’s library was initially merged again. The new modern designed building occupies a seven-storey central tower in the University’s new main campus development, which has been described as an innovative campus for its design and style (Anderson, 2013). It was reported that the design of the Library was done in response to the Library users’ feedback and usage needs represented by data from a student survey. As a result, the new building is equipped with, among others facilities, dedicated spaces for individual and group study, and silent reading areas, and offers plenty of space for informal and flexible study along with facilities such as cafés and seminar spaces. The building is also equipped with access to online information as well as dedicated spaces for printed materials (Anderson, 2013).



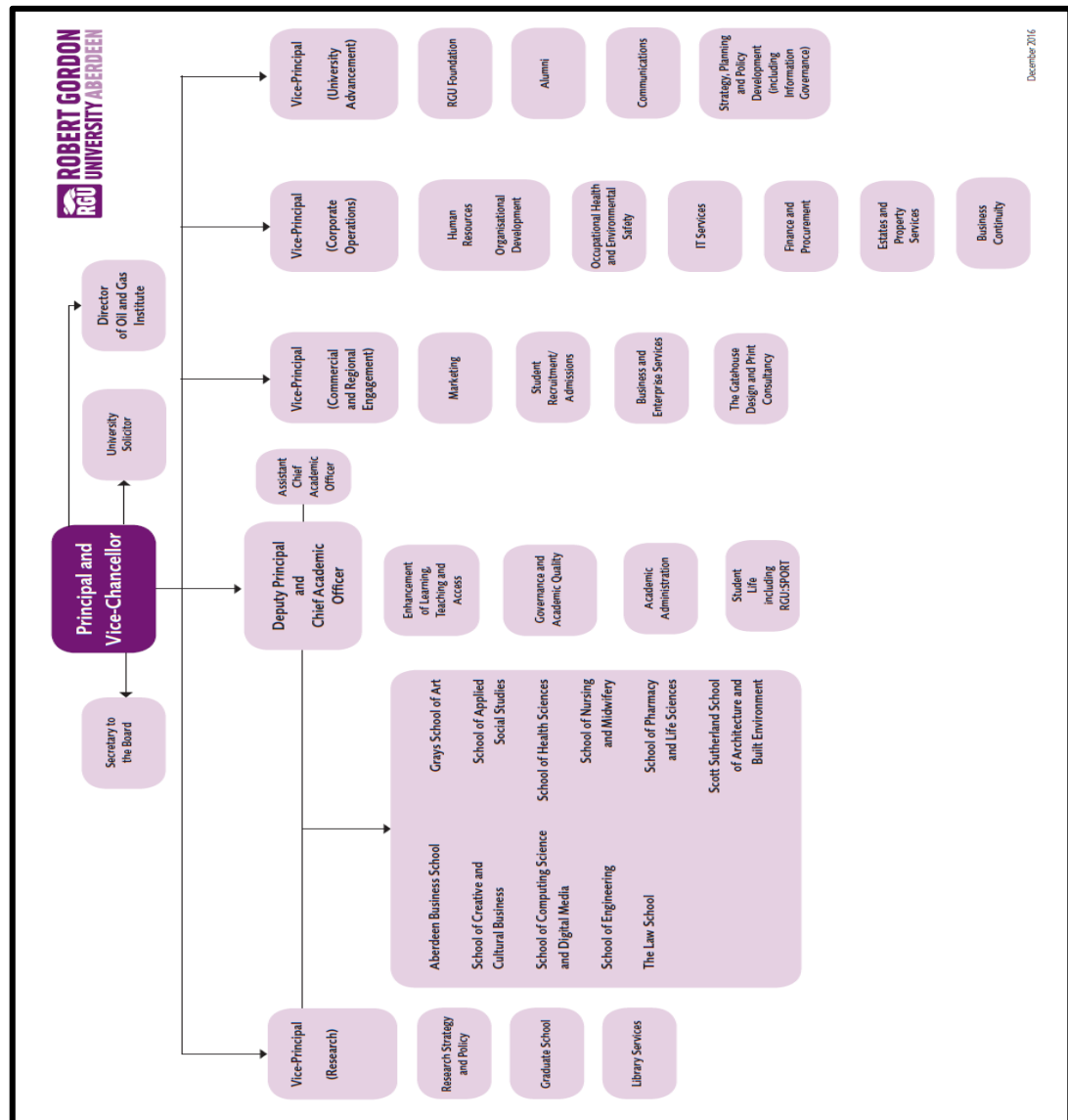
#### **4.5.1 Library Involvement in the University Committee**

The Library is involved in several important committees, for instance, according to the University website, the Library is involved in the Academic Council, the Research Committee and the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee. The Academic Development Committee has the role of advising on the academic portfolio of the University in response to the ongoing HE market. It also advises on new course approval and collaborative ventures, and is involved with maintaining the University's standards and maintaining performance indicators for the student learning experience and specific indications related to teaching and learning.

The Research Degrees Committee has the role of advising the University on matters that are related to the strategic direction, priorities and activities of the University's research. The committee is crucial for guiding the University to be internationally recognised in applied research and for demonstrating the University's research for the benefit of the community. In addition to the committees mentioned above, the Library is involved in faculty meetings regarding quality assurance and enhancement. The Library's involvement in such a committee shows that the Library operates within the University's central network. According to Jantz (2012), the centrality or hierarchical aspects of an organisation such as an academic library is referred as the academic library's authority in the decision-making process. The more centralised the library, the more the library is involved in the decision-making processes (Jantz, 2012).

#### **4.5.2 The Library in the University Structure**

Since October 2016, the Library has reported to the vice-principal (research), who oversees research, together with the Research Strategy and Support Unit, and the Graduate School. The Library's position in the University's organisational structure is shown in Figure 4.2.



**Figure 4.2: The University Organisational Chart (as of December 2016)**

Figure 4.2 shows that the Library is under the portfolio of research and answers to the vice-principal (research). This portfolio has a direct link to the academic portfolio, which is headed by a deputy principal. Being in the jurisdiction of research services and directly related to the academic portfolio defines the Library's role in the University, which is to support the research, teaching and learning.

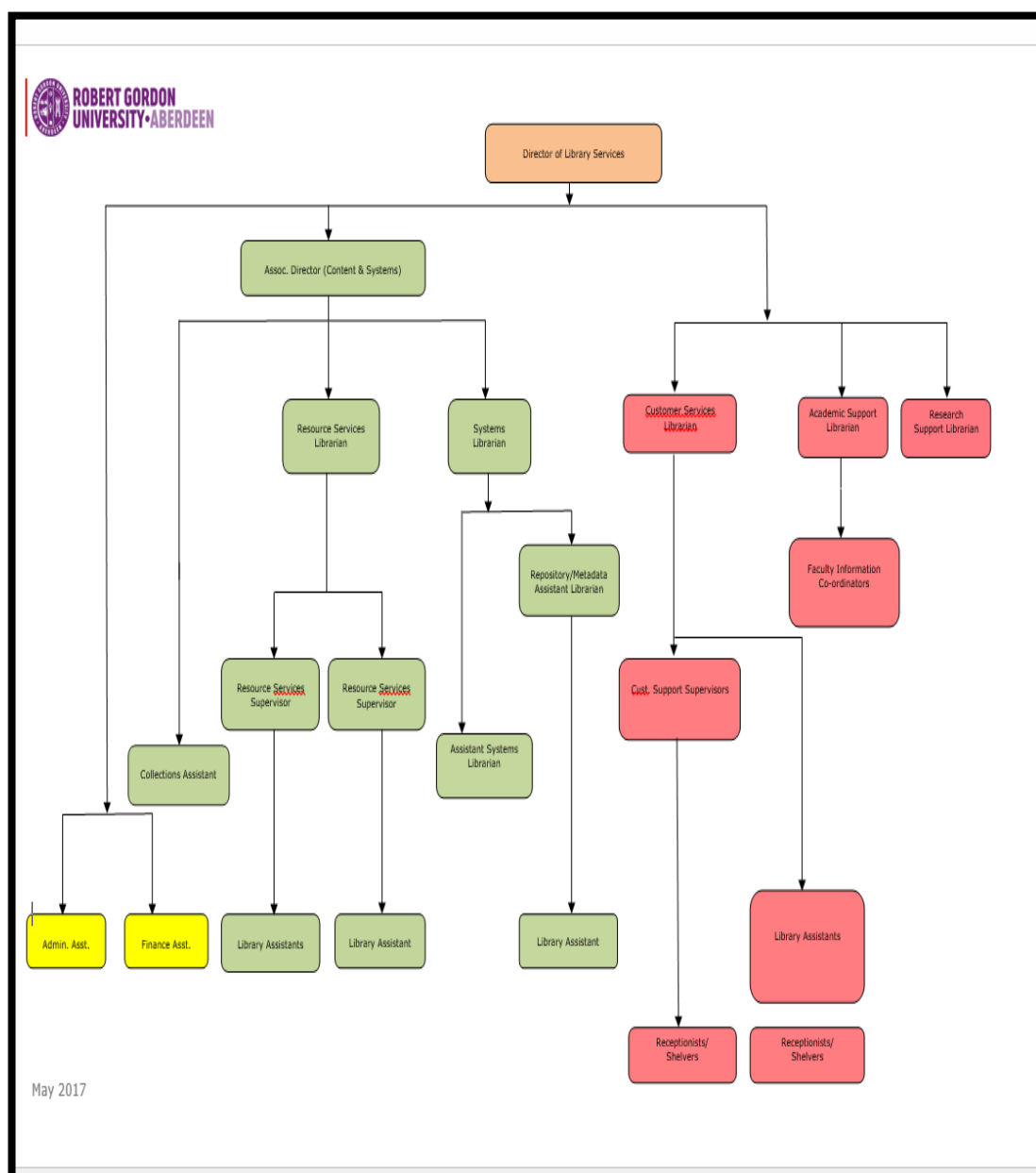
However, the position of academic libraries in a university structure is subject to change, and according to Brophy (2000), this is highly related to the development of their university's interests and mission. As stated before, it is widely accepted that an academic library is a reflection of its university's interests (Brophy, 2000). For instance, the history of the Library's structural position in the University indicates that its structural position is not permanent. From 1997 until 1999, the chief librarian was appointed as the acting directorate of information, which is a significant post in the University and serves as a strategic member of the University (Ellington, 2002). Within that period, as the director of information, the chief librarian was heading other service departments, which consisted of four main education services departments—the Library, Computing Services, Educational Development, and Graphics and Printing (Ellington, 2002).

However, the Services Department was disbanded in 1999 from the University's structure. This is when the University realised that 'IT is an important part of the University, [and] needs overall control by a higher-level IT specialist' (Ellington, 2002, p. 249). A permanent director of information was perceived as more capable of managing IT-related matters and was appointed from the industry. This resulted in the chief librarian resuming the previous role of heading the library services (Ellington, 2002).

#### **4.5.3 The Library Structure**

At the organisation level, the Library is led by the director of library services and assisted by two associate directors: the associate director of academic and reader services and the associate director of content and systems. The associate director of academic and reader services is responsible for the Library's services, which include liaison librarians and customer support services. The associate director of content and systems is responsible for collection and system development, which includes collection curator, information resources manager, e-services and e-system division. The Library is also supported by an

administration manager for administrative support services. The Library's organisation chart is presented in Figure 4.3.



**Figure 4.3: The Library Structure (as of May 2017)**

In the organisational chart shown in Figure 4.3, the first and second layers are top managers of the Library who are involved in important committees in the University, and the third layer librarians are middle managers who are involved in committees according to their role and function. For instance, while the liaison librarian is involved in the faculty level of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee meetings and new course validation meetings, the Library's top managers, such as the director of library services, are involved in the University's level of the same committee. The e-services and e-system divisions are involved with the IT Services unit.

In addition to the top managers that are involved in key university committees, the Library's middle managers are equally important and have a dynamic role to play in the University. This is especially related to their role in employing the Library's strategic actions and ensuring their successful implementation (Jeal, 2014) because they are the ones who interpret the strategic action in interacting with the Library's constituency and create the everyday library values for the Library constituents (Jeal, 2014).

#### **4.5.4 The Library Focus**

In response to the competitive market of the HE environment, universities have learned to market themselves distinctively, for instance, by promoting their performance in a national survey. Their aim is to emphasise the student experience and promote the University's performance in the surveys, in order to emphasise the University's position in the national and international league tables. The expected reaction of an academic library to such a situation is to become responsive to the trends (Hurst, 2013). After all, an academic library is an organisation that depends closely upon its institution for resources, and its character and structural position is expected to reflect the university's mission, aims and interests (Brophy, 2000).

In this case study, the Library serves a new and modern university that wishes to differentiate its identity through focusing on teaching and learning as well as translational research. The Library has reacted by aligning to the University's strategic plan, *A Clear Future*. As mentioned by Hurst (2012), while universities adopt business frameworks and terminology, their libraries will try to conform to the frameworks and adapt the terminology by showing how their own activities can be aligned with the university's institutional goals.

This has led to some challenges, especially in linking library services and roles to broader outcomes of the university goals, such as contributions to student recruitment and retention (Hurst, 2012). For instance, in the Library's case, by aligning to the University mission, the Library's challenge is to provide the needed resources in the time needed. This requires considering the types of courses being offered off campus, online and through blended methods to support mature, part-time students' studying habits, which are not restricted to the Library's opening hours (Gallacher, 2014; Iannelli, 2011).

#### *4.5.4.1 OpenAIR and Open Access*

The character of an academic library is a reflection of its university (Borphy, 2000). In other words, an academic library's character is built upon its institution's needs, for instance, academic library services are planned with an emphasis on the institution's aims and missions (Borphy, 2000). It is perceived that an academic library's role and function are determined by its wider environment, which includes the university and the HE in which it is situated. Therefore, there is a need to consider the universities and the HE environment itself in order to understand the needs and emphasis imposed on the libraries.

As mentioned above, the Library is linking its services to the outcome of the University goals and this is done by, among other ways, focusing on open access and IR. Through OpenAIR, the University's IR, the Library has created awareness of research access as well as open access. According to Johnson and Copeland (2008) 'Involvement in this project led to an awareness of the developments taking place in universities that were establishing institutional repositories, and an appreciation that a coordinated approach to the development work would offer opportunities and avoid duplication of effort' (Johnson & Copeland, 2008 p.1). This has also led the Library to become one of the leading national e-thesis projects funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee, a body funded by the UK's Higher Education Funding Councils (Johnson & Copeland, 2008).

The repositories have benefited the University and Library in several ways, including the issue of storage and usage. The growing collection of PhD theses has taken up a significant amount of shelf space and their access has raised concern over the visibility and impact of the University's research output. This brings benefits to universities because publications stored in the IR will contribute to scholarly communication, university outputs will be exposed and the university's researchers and publications will

be openly available on the web, which will be likely to be used and cited more (Johnson & Copeland, 2008). In a more recent development, the Library has been given the responsibility to review the IR policy in response to the changing landscape of research and library systems.

#### *4.5.4.2 The Library's New Building*

The concepts of value in academic library services are changing as well (Hurst, 2013). These are related to the national trends in HE and the increased influence from the market on academic libraries' focus and works. As a result, there are also growing challenges in providing library spaces, collections, staff and services (Hurst, 2013).

Having an excellent student experience is one of the focal points of the strategies used by the University to ensure its student retention. To enhance the students' learning experience, the University recently developed a new campus, which has created a conducive environment in which to support students with diverse interests and backgrounds (RGU, 2013). The new development has brought together faculties, facilities and activities on one campus for a livelier environment. This allows staff and students from different disciplines to enjoy the benefits of working together, which was not possible before (Anderson, 2013).

One of the most striking designs in the development of the University's new campus belongs to the Library building, which is a nine-storey tower overlooking the River Dee. The development of the Library building was aimed towards complementing the concept of a university in a garden campus and the building is a striking development in terms of the innovative design and style (Anderson, 2013). The new library occupies seven stories of the tower, and is perceived as making an impact on the city skyline (Anderson, 2013).

Brophy (2000) stated that designing an academic library is a much-specialised field and requires years of experience from both architects and librarians. The design of the Library's new building can be seen as reflecting such inputs. For instance, the individual study spaces on the upper floors are clearly defined for silent and individual study, whereas the social study spaces on the lower floor were designed for collaborative learning and to cater for group discussions as well as informal learning activities (Anderson, 2013).

To enhance the student experience, a 'street' that runs through the spine of the building was specially designed to house cafés and gift shops, which incorporates the concept of a café in a library. This concept 'works well' for constituents and has encouraged learning by providing spaces for group study, as well as comfortable spaces for meetings and discussions (Montgomery, 2014). There is also an event space in the amphitheatre near the main entrance to the Library tower and this has the purpose of drawing visitors from the local community to the Library (Anderson, 2013). In essence, the design as well as the incorporation of constituents' needs in one building has enhanced the Library's role as a central space for students' learning and enhanced the students' experience in the University.



## **Chapter 5: Findings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings from the data collected and analysed in this study. Among the main themes to emerge in this study are operational effectiveness, knowledge symbol, metaphors and legitimation strategies. These main themes are widely discussed in the interviews as well as in the documents analysed and related to both the literature reviewed and the findings of the study. In this chapter, some excerpts from the interviews are highlighted in the discussion to provide a better explanation and a more comprehensive view of the Library's legitimacy as well as the contexts in which they are evaluated. All transcripts from this study were given the equal attention as all the participants' comments were useful and had a unique perspective. For instance, comments from Academics 1, 2, 3 and 5 were useful in discussing the operational effectiveness themes, and comments from Administrators 1 and 2 and Librarians 1, 2 and 3 were valuable in discussing the legitimation strategy. Overall, all the participants' comments provided eloquent and analytical perspectives on the Library's position. This chapter first discusses the findings from the data analysis process.

### **5.2 Operational Effectiveness**

In this study, the Library's services and roles were perceived as needed and accepted. The Library services, such as Library classes, collections and spaces were considered critical, useful and pivotal to the Library's constituents. The findings indicated that the Library's effectiveness was the basis of the Library's operational success. For instance, the Library collections were commented on as being crucial for students to have access to the frontiers of knowledge and the Library space was useful in providing access to social and individual styles of learning. For instance, Academic 1 commented on how students relied on the Library for access to online resources and how the access was pivotal for university courses:

So the library is pivotal in providing access. We can access it by looking at the web, in particular looking at master level (students). In order to get awarded master degrees the student gets to access journals and the frontier of knowledge.

Other library services were also appreciated, from the Library's ordinary library services, such as interlibrary loans and referencing, to the extraordinary Library services, such as help in translating foreign articles:

As a student, I really appreciate library help in helping me doing RefWorks, interlibrary loans, translating foreign articles, really valuable. (Academic 4).

According to Librarian 3, this was the Library's identity and it was built upon, among other factors, the Library's effectiveness. It was the Library's identity, according to Librarian 3, that differentiated it from other student support services in the University:

The library has a very distinct identity, study space, print books, ebooks, journals, databases, the reference staff, reading lists, inquiries, all the different things we do, all the different stuff, people are aware of that.

### **5.2.1 Support to Teaching and Learning**

Academic libraries are highly influenced by their university environment (Brophy, 2000) and the findings show how the Library was supporting the University as a modern university. Others universities may have different factors that influence their library's effectiveness, and in this study, it is the University mission to enhanced students' experiences in relation to produce independent students and maintain its high performance in the graduates' employability rate.

According to the University's mission and aims document, the University is promoted as a modern university that is distinguished by its online teaching, translational research and employability success rate. The University's mission document states:

RGU aspires to be recognised, in Scotland and beyond, as a distinctive university leading and shaping the debate on the future of higher education and placing students at the centre of the education it offers. It will be known for the impact of its teaching, scholarship and translational research, the employability of its graduates, its influence in the region and nation, its growing global profile, and its strong interdisciplinary focus on a small number of key questions and issues of concern to the local and global community. It will achieve its goals in partnership with academic, voluntary, public and business organisations that share its ideals and aspirations.

The interviews showed that the participants perceived the Library as more focused towards teaching and learning. The University was perceived as a teaching university that focused particularly on online teaching. This was no surprise since the University had a long history as a teaching institution. As commented by Academic 3:

So my view is supportive of the library that has given the remit of what I see in teaching and learning.

Participants also noticed that the Library's focus on teaching was more visible than the Library's focus on research:

The library here is very focused on academic teaching [...], there is a need for the library to change or to add on interest in research. (Administrator 2)

It was perceived that the Library was focusing intensively on supporting teaching and learning. This was done by providing access to online information through online collections. The increase access to online materials was explained as the impact of students' migration from using printed books and journals to using digital and electronic materials:

I suppose, fundamentally that is what they are about. But how that happens to change over time? Because hard copy is much less than what it used to be. So you don't have a library full with books for the students to look at books and journals because much of that is available digitally and electronically. (Academic 1)

Moreover, this was perceived as a norm. Academics recommended online collections to students, especially to online and distance students, for resources that were only available online to ensure that they had access to books used in modules. As explained by Academic 1:

I have adopted a view (that) I won't recommend a text unless it's available on e-access. Because that can get to the distance learning student and that means everybody theoretically everybody can have access to the text.

In another situation, participants acknowledged that the current development in online collections had led massive numbers of ebooks being available to the Library user. Academic 3, for instance, found this useful:

Springer, I used a lot of Springer, we have 4–5–6 hundreds of ebooks by Springer. It is an ebook collection. I do find it useful that I can use the library resource and find a relevant title and I can access the full text of the books through the full-text collection.

Participants acknowledged the current development in the Library's online collection and saw this as the Library's support to teaching and learning activities in the University. Therefore, they suggested that the Library be involved more in guiding users on how to use the collection effectively. As suggested by Academic 5:

The library needs to know how the people are using this kind of new information resource and how we can use that in teaching and learning effectively and credibly.

Further, in becoming a modern university, the University had recognised the challenges of reaching students 'at different stages of life', by creating an online environment that would support students with diverse abilities in learning, including teaching and learning models that support distance, online and mature students. For this reason, the Library was described as a leader in teaching and learning technology. As stated by Administrator 1:

The library has been at the forefront of the technology in learning and teaching. Things like ASPIRE, so I think the library is quite forward and proactive looking forward into the future.

#### *5.2.1.1 Independent Students and Employability*

Academic libraries are making fundamental contributions to students' complementary skills. Information skills are perceived as equally crucial to students as academic skills. Information skills complement academic skills and are sought after by employers (Delany & Bates, 2014). Thus, these complementary skills help develop independent graduates, and academic libraries are contributing to the development of independent students through, among other methods, promoting self and social learning (Montgomery, 2014).

The University's mission document explains that independent students and graduates contribute to the University's employability record:

Students leave the University equipped with the information handling skills for lifelong learning. Students are more confident and independent learners and able to contribute to the University's employability record.

In this study, Administrator 1 defined independent students as those who are capable of conducting a given task independently and able to generate the requested outcomes:

And to me one of the things that we need to do is make sure when our students are leaving RGU, they are independent, that when you give them a piece of work, they can go off quite happily on their own to research a topic and produce a report or a diagram or whatever outcome you are looking for, they can do that independently.

This was done by the Library through, among other ways, teaching the students to conduct topical research independently using databases and to evaluate the credibility of information. This was further explained by Administrator 1:

The function the library plays in that is really important. Because I know that the library staff does a lot of sessions on using databases, how to use the library, how to research for information using the web. And what credibility you can put on sources in a time of academic rigour. To me the library is fundamental; they complement the kind of skills they learn from the academics.

The connection between independent graduates and the University's employability rate was significant because the participants were fully aware of the importance of employability achievement to the University. The University had been using the employability achievement rate to build its reputation. It was perceived as the University's promotional point and the reason why students should come to the University. As explained by Academic 1:

I think that is all good. Because that is how we are declaring to the world this is the reason why you should come to RGU wrapped up in this theme and we can help you become employable with the association of the body of knowledge and the support team. I think this is good because it differentiates RGU from others and I think we need to differentiate (the) University.

An excellent example given by Academic 1 was the University's MBA programme. It was explained that students registered for the MBA programme for the opportunity to obtain a new job, improve their employability prospects or start a new business, in addition to expanding their knowledge:

For students signing for the MBA, there are significant opportunity courses, financially and in terms of time. Therefore, they don't want to do this just for expanding their mind.

They want to do it in order to get a new job, improve their own prospects, start a new business, or whatever. Therefore, the MBA [...] has a kind of impact on employability and employability being tested to its learning experience. How does the learning experience we learn in the MBA make you more employable—make you more promotable?

However, other participants perceived that the University's employability rate was highly influenced by external agents. The University's success in employability was perceived as influenced by the professional and accreditation bodies because the programmes offered were very job oriented. Participants perceived that the University was producing more accredited as well as professional graduates than graduates from non-professional programmes, thus making the graduates work ready, which in return had influenced the University's employability rate:

Because we teach so many courses where the student is to be aligning with regulatory bodies. Whether it's engineering, nursing, social work, they're all going to have to be registered with that regulatory body when they get their degree award. So we're in partnership with other employer associations and have to produce good graduates. So we have to keep that flow and produce a work-ready graduate coming through. (Academic 5)

Another agent mentioned by participants was the industries. According to Academic 2, new courses were designed as needed by the industries, according to feedback from the industries, and were tailor-made to suit the needs of the industries:

How do we create the content around this and getting feedback from the industries saying what we need to do is this, if this going to be. Of course, it is a very vocationally focused course and especially, I think education has different purposes, not always vocational, but in an MSc in a business school, the majority of people are doing that to get a job. That is ultimate; few people will be coming in because they want to explore from the philosophical perspective.

The main industry in the locality was also seen as having influenced the University's high employability rate. That oil and gas industry jobs were abundant locally could explain the University's high employability rate:

The employability is easy to explain, the fact that we are in Aberdeen, there is buoyancy in the job market compared to other parts of the UK. If this university was in

Sunderland, I do not think we would have the (best) employability rate in the UK.  
(Academic 3)

Although some participants perceived the University's employability rate to be mainly influenced by professional and accreditation bodies, industries and locality, others saw the Library's contribution in developing independent students through equipping them with the complementary skills needed in their work life as having a significant connection with the University graduates' employability rate.

#### *5.2.1.2 Student Experience*

It is common for UK universities to be measuring their performance based on student experience survey outcomes, such as the NSS from which the outcomes were used to justify budget allocations to academic libraries (Hurst, 2013; Nicholas et al., 2010). This has consequently provided library users with a powerful consumer voice (Hurst, 2013) and hence emphasised the importance of academic libraries promoting their response to students' feedback and comments.

According to the findings, the library was regarded as a good and well performing department in several student surveys, such as the NSS and International Student Barometer, and was also perceived as making contributions to the University's overall performance. This was also supported by the interviews with administrators and academics. For instance, Administrator 1 commented that:

In the student surveys like in the NSS and the SCEQ the feedback on the library is very good. Library staff normally get a positive response from the students. They are very helpful and in terms of the resources, I don't think there is an issue with the resources.

Among ways to maintain the Library's performance in such surveys was addressing the feedback received from the surveys. The Library had responded to the feedback and their response was available in the Library documents. For instance, the Library's new building was seen as an answer to student feedback, which requested more learning space and social interactions on the campus.

The *Annual Appraisal of Student-Facing Service Self-Evaluation: Library Services (2012/2013)* document reported that the new library building was seen as an improvement of individual and group learning spaces:

A complementary Collaborative Learning Centre will be opened in the first semester of 2013/14. The new library and collaborative learning space are a response to student feedback over many years requesting improved individual and quiet study (the primary focus of the new library), also accessible, IT-enabled group learning spaces.

Participants were well aware of these responses and acknowledged them as the Library contributing to the student learning experience. For instance, the Library extending its opening hours during examination weeks was seen by participants as a support to students' learning style. For this reason, the Library was described by Academic 6 as a true support department:

when they extended the opening hours, for the students during exam periods or opened the library for 24 hours, that required colleagues changing their working habits and so on. I think they are a true support department.

The Library's performance in student experience surveys and the actions taken by the Library in response to outcomes from the surveys indicated that the Library enhanced the students' experience in the University.

### **5.2.2 The Effective Reading List Services**

It was also found that the Library's operational success and effectiveness were related to the reading list services, ASPIRE. The Library was described as doing an essential and proactive service through ASPIRE:

Reading list is the trickiest one, I meant with ASPIRE we are doing a lot of things, at the moment trying to increase the number of lists we've got. And the work is halted for a while and we will continue because it takes some time to work our way around and to everybody. (Librarian 2)

According to Librarian 2, this trickiest situation happen because some of the reading lists were underdeveloped and needed to be restructured in order for them to be better for students and what the Library did was something extra to help speed up the reading list developing process. As stated by Librarian 2:

There is still work to do with the reading lists, some are excellent reading lists that people provide; others need a little bit more thought on how they can be developed and structured. Because you are expecting the students to use the lists as well, we need to



have a small project this semester, to go to every course and school, speak to them, develop their reading lists and materials. We can help support people by helping them to develop their reading list and see if we could help a little bit more.

Academics 4, 5 and 1 commented that the Library had been very helpful in suggesting and updating reading materials and was recognised as ‘saving time’ and taking away the ‘pain of doing clerical work’. As commented by Academic 4:

They do this administrative task of converting your reading list for you. Why you have to say no to that.

They also commented that the services provided had saved them a lot of time:

Like in the ASPIRE reading list you know how to find the latest edition, but getting help means great saving of time. (Academic 4)

### **5.2.3 The Library Role regarding Online Journals**

The Library was reported as being involved in an open access journal project. The Library involvement was in developing guidelines and a physical setting for online journals was described by Academics 4 and 5 as helpful, crucial and great collaboration and teamwork between the Library and faculty:

It has been very helpful, the library support is being very helpful and continues to be helpful. (Academic 4)

Academic 4 also described the journal project as an example of how the Library could collaborate and work side by side with the faculty:

It thinks as in the e-learning journal goes; that side of help is absolutely crucial and I can't do without that support. I think it is a very good example of collaborative working.

On the same note, Academic 5 described the help his team received from the Library as ‘getting us off the ground’ and ‘a learning process’, and the Library’s role as ‘very central’, and this had changed the ideas about the Library:

So that is (a) long way removed from the idea of going to the library to borrow books.

#### **5.2.4 A Support Department**

In this study, some of the Library's roles based on the Library's effectiveness were described as performing a clerical and unprofessional role. For instance, the contribution to the reading list service was perceived to be administrative and the Library was perceived as a servant in providing services to the constituents. Services that were perceived as extra help were described as 'does the work for you' and 'do most of the work for you'. Although participants were pleased with the extra services they received from the Library, the library was described as doing administrative tasks:

They do this administrative task of converting your reading list for you. Why you have to say no to that. It's great that the library could use its resources to support that. (Academic 4)

A participant suggested that to avoid being seen as performing a non-professional role, the Library should work together with the rest of the University instead of serving the University as a servant. As suggested by Administrator 3:

The library seems like the servant providing this and providing that; instead, the library should be working in partnership with the University.

### **5.3 Legitimation Strategies Implemented**

In this study, it was found that the Library had implemented two types of legitimation strategies to maintain and multiply its legitimacy and position in the University. The two strategies implemented were identified as conformance and manipulation strategies. There was evidence that the conformance strategy was implemented by the Library mainly through the Library's strategic framework, whereas the manipulation strategy was implemented through the IR and the Library's role in cultural and community engagement. Examples of such strategies implemented by the Library were found in the interviews and documents analysed.

#### **5.3.1 Conformance Strategy**

Conformance strategy is about adjusting an organisation's identity and promoting sameness and homogeneity with existing dominant norms (O'Kane et al., 2015), which in the case of the Library were mainly the University environment and norms. In

this study, the Library was identified as using a conformance strategy, for instance, in the Library Strategic Framework. The strategy was executed by first adopting the University's aim and mission in the framework and then aligning the Library's future to the mission and norms. In cases where the Library conflicted with the University norms, acquiescence was adopted by consciously complying with the University's norms through attending committee meetings. Conformance strategies are applied with an anticipation of specific benefits that may come from social support to resources (O'Kane et al., 2015; Oliver, 1991).

#### *5.3.1.1 The Library Strategic Framework (2014-2019)*

The Library Strategic Framework (2014–2019) had documented the Library's efforts to conform to the University's mission and aims, according to the librarians. For instance, in the interviews, the librarians described the framework as having several purposes. Librarian 2 described the framework as a display of the Library's contribution to 'things that matter' to the University and as the Library's response to the University's current political situation:

The library strategic plan? Well, I think X has to do that in order to show we contribute to the things that matter to the university. And that is your task in this sort of political situation.

The framework was also seen as a document to guide the Library to tie its future with 'what the university is doing now and the next five years'. As described by Librarian 1:

I think it does, one of the things that we are trying to do that is tying with the University direction for the future as well as for ourselves there is always a sort of wider looking at it making sure that we are supporting what the university is doing now and in the next five years. Ensuring what we doing is on that.

The framework was also described as a self-improvement document incorporating things that people wanted, thus responding to the constituency feedback. As described by Librarian 3:

But the truth is that you have to do as much as you can. You can hear responses from the students, see what they're saying, for self-improvement, you will try and do the things people want, for example 24-hour opening and things like that.

The framework was also used to promote the Library's sameness with the University's missions and aims, and this was done by adopting the terminology used in the University's mission in the framework. Several terms and phrases were used with similar and parallel meanings and purposes. For instance, in the documents, the Library had explicitly promoted its conformance to the University's mission by incorporating phrases that explicitly promoted sameness, such as 'to be aligned with the university strategic plan' and 'to be integrated with the university teaching, learning and research activities'.

The Library had implemented conformance strategies through the framework, mainly through the online collections to support the university teaching and learning mission. They have been developed using the University's mission as a guideline. The framework had also been used to promote the Library's sameness and as proof of the Library's response to its users' feedback.

Similar meaning terms and phrases were also used in the framework to describe the Library's support for the University's online learning mission. For instance, to support the underrepresented students in the region and international students, the University had aimed towards 'extending access to learning' and to 'enable individuals to achieve their ambitions throughout life whatever their circumstances'. This was translated by the Library as providing 'in time' access to online library resources to 'provide access to the best resources for the individual students when they need them, and in the most appropriate format'.

Other examples of adopting terminology from the University mission and aims document were related to the development of the 'virtual library environment'. The Library had translated this in the framework into 'providing effective access to library resources through developing online collections supplemented with physical resources where necessary'.

#### *5.3.1.2 The Library Online Collections Are Following a Trend*

The Library supported the University's mission through, among other ways, its online collection. This was seen by the participants as a trend. The trend was identified as the impact of collection development standardisation processes among academic libraries whereby online collections are accumulated aggressively through publisher and aggregator packages. As a consequence, the online collections of academic libraries are

identical in content (Quinn, 2000). This development is a strong normative force that acts as the means of professionalism among libraries, but unfortunately has led to identical but less efficient academic library collections in the long run (Jantz, 2012).

Moreover, in the interviews, the participants described the Library's online collection development as predictable. Although they acknowledged that the development had allowed the Library to have a 'much wider holding than they otherwise would have', the participants evaluated and regarded the online collection development as following a 'trend' of 'economic imperative' to supply academic libraries with online resources. As explained by Academic 3:

No that it is a trend actually. It is probably that the library has committed to an ebooks publisher. The reality is that publishers have the incentive to grow towards ebooks and there is sort of an economic imperative going on in that direction.

However, as an outcome, participants urged the Library to strike a balance between the need for printed and the need for online materials. For instance, Academics 5 and 6 believed that for special subject areas such as law, social sciences and humanities, the need for printed books remained high because books in these fields were still in printed mode and not many were available in an online form:

Depending on the module that we are looking at, undergraduate or postgraduate, also looking at trying to get more ebooks, but in law, it's still a bit difficult. (Academic 6)

The participants also commented on the publisher business and licensing model, which had made it difficult for students to use the ebooks, especially if a course was built around the books:

Changes also come with the licensing agreement that makes it very difficult for students and staff to use this ebook title. They still like people to buy the book. (Academic 1)

Thus, participants suggested that the Library re-evaluate the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the online collection in the Library and balance that with the requirement for printed materials for specific programmes:

...so the university has to try and see if there is a balance to be struck between face-to-face learning and online learning, and if they want more online learning they have to make the resources available and all of that to make it efficient and cost-effective. You

don't want to have a lot of library resources available to the online learner as it's not economically viable.

It was perceived that the Library had aligned its strategic framework with the University's mission and aim by purposely adopting language and terminology derived from the University's mission in its strategic framework. Participants also acknowledged that the Library conformed to the University's mission through the Library's online resources collection, although it was re-evaluating it, and they suggested that the Library reconsider the action taken. The Library also adopted acquiescent actions to fulfil expectations and to avoid conflicts. In general, the Library had consciously applied a conformance strategy and it was evaluated and re-evaluated by its constituency as acceptable.

### *5.3.1.3 Acquiescence*

Acquiescence is defined as a conscious obedience to the values, norms or expectations of an organisation, which is achieved by choosing to comply with institutional pressures in anticipation of specific self-serving benefits, such as social support, resources and predictability (Oliver, 1991). In this study, the Library's acquiescence action was described as being compliant to institutional expectations, through which the Library anticipated benefits. For example, by attending committee meetings that were described as 'not connected to library's works', 'waste of time' and with the purpose of 'just trying to be nice', or by attending validation meetings, as described by Librarian 1:

So no matter if you go along to one or two of those meetings, you meet the panel and they visit the library and you show them the view. You're just trying to be nice.

Attending such meetings was seen as appropriate by the librarians and acceptable within the University norms. The Library's role was perceived as closely engaged with teaching and learning; therefore, it was expected that the Library be involved in teaching- and research-related committees, such as validation meetings. Although the librarians were aware that some of the questions asked could be answered through their online services, they deliberately attended such meetings to answer questions. As described by Librarian 2:

There are questions from time to time to think about the courses or a particular query about, for example, will you be able to support this course with ebooks? Most of those

are online and we are to answer it if we can, never been asked anything unable to answer.

Librarians felt that attending such meetings could avoid conflict, and although their attendance did not make any significant contribution to the meeting, nonetheless they felt that their presence was necessary:

I am just there and I listen to other questions and sit quietly. (Librarian 2)

The librarians chose to be acquiescent to avoid conflict because it was the norm for a librarian to attend such meetings and they conformed to the norm even though it was unproductive for them to sit quietly and listen to others:

I'd rather be there to answer anything rather than something coming up and you're not there to answer. It's good to be invited to come along.

Acquiescence was an alternative form of conforming to the University norms, rules and regulations. The Library adhered to the taken-for-granted norm that attending teaching- and learning-related meetings was necessary even though it seemed inappropriate.

### **5.3.2 Manipulation Strategy**

A manipulating strategy requires organisations to manipulate their role according to what they deem appropriate in an attempt to influence the constituency's perception (O'Kane et al., 2015). Manipulation is related to purposeful and opportunistic attempts to co-opt, influence or control institutional pressures and evaluations (Oliver, 1991), and it is considered a more proactive and aggressive strategy than a conformance strategy (O'Kane et al., 2015). In this study, there was evidence that the Library had taken several actions associated with manipulation strategies. The Library was perceived as manipulating its current role to support the University's research mission through involvement in the IR, open access, Research Excellence Framework (REF) reports and Research Data Management (RDM). The Library had also developed a new role in supporting the University's cultural and community engagement.

#### ***5.3.2.1 Institutional Repositories and Open Access***

The Library's current role in supporting the University's research mission was to further develop and maintain the University IR. In the interviews, the participants suggested that

the Library be deeply involved in the IR alongside researchers to manage their research publications and the metadata. As described by Administrator 2:

Over time we need to get them a little more involved in the beginning, literally helping the researcher to formulate metadata and thinking about how to describe and curate a piece of data (and) that might be unusual.

The librarians saw their role in IR as maintaining the Library's current role in open access. It was an extended contribution from their past achievement in managing open access publications in the University. As stated by Librarian 3:

This is actually something that we can do, something to contribute to the open access by having things in the repository. There is always something else that we can contribute.

It was considered that the Library had been successful in creating awareness of open access publications, and with the coming of the REF, the Library needed to do more to support the university research:

I think it is viable that some people are less foreign about it, is that a job done?, I don't think it so, as there is pressure to publish in an open access mode for the upcoming REF, we have to do more to let people know about it and support people. (Librarian 3)

The Library had the knowledge and skills to maintain the IR as well as to manage issues related to open access publications. According to the University documents, the relationship between the IR and open access awareness was significant. For instance, the University Research Council had agreed that all research papers (including journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters and similar material) be made available in the University repository, in the form of either the author's final manuscript or the formally published version.

Further, these should be made available in OpenAIR in an open access format. It was stated that the Research Council had agreed that the University's research publications were to be committed to 'green' open access to ensure 'cost-effective, wide dissemination and compliance with future Research Excellence Framework requirements':

All research papers (including journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters and similar material) should be made available in the university repository either in the



form of the author's final manuscript or the formally published version (where copyright allows). These should be made available in OpenAIR, the RGU Institutional Repository, upon acceptance of publication but no more than 3 months later\*\*. Where it is not possible to deposit an open access version of the full-text paper a record of publication should be created in OpenAIR with a link to an externally held version. Details of items which are not accessible on open access (either on publication or after an embargo period) will not be included in OpenAIR. (Refer Appendix 5-2).

The Library was using its knowledge of open access to maintain the IR. The Library's current knowledge was used to develop the Library's new role and the role was accepted as an extended role of the Library. Moreover, the Library's report on OpenAIR had been incorporated into the University's research reporting the University's open access publications.

#### *5.3.2.2 Research Excellence Framework and Research Data Management*

In relation to supporting the University's research mission, the Library's role in generating the REF publications report was acknowledged and described as 'sorting out the publication' to avoid 'mad panic':

In the recent REF last winter, the library got involved at the end to help in sorting out the publication and it became quite clear to everybody that if the librarian had been involved from the beginning, it wouldn't be mad panic after all and it has been a valuable lesson as well. (Administrator 2)

Administrator 2 obviously agreed that the Library had an important role to play in REF, especially in preparing the REF report. With expertise in 'sorting out' the publication, the Library's contribution was crucial and needed from the very beginning because REF and RDM were related to the University's research performance:

Yes, I think so, if RDM works well, it will have an impact on our citation, big impact on our publication and on REF, there are some very clear links in performance with one and another, and I think they (the Library) have a very important part to play in the research agenda here. (Administrator 2)

Moreover, the Library was seen as the right department to be involved in the assessment exercise because the Library was recognised as having the 'skill and willingness' to become involved:

I think they get the willingness and skill to get involved, whether they get the time I don't really know. I can't answer that question. (Administrator 2)

Involvement in the University's research agenda was an important and significant role because the University had promoted its unique identity through applying and building research, in contrast to other universities that were involved in more theoretical research, and this is what distinguished the University from other universities. As stated by Administrator 1:

RGU is an institution that is seen very much as a teaching institution. We do research but not in the same league as Edinburgh University or Aberdeen University and the nature of our research is very different. It's very applied and building. Research is something that we want to do but we will never be Edinburgh University or Aberdeen University and our mission would change completely. We would be a different institution if that was the case.

It was recognised that the big issue surrounding the University's research was related to the cultural change in doing research, according to Administrator 2, because the University's research culture as a whole needed to change and the issue was bigger than the Library:

No, I don't think so. The big issue here is the cultural change in research, that librarians should have some role in encouraging, but I think that it's bigger than the Library.

However, the librarians perceived the Library's role in supporting the University's research mission as a momentary role and they believed that the role had no direct link with the Library but was something that the Library was asked to contribute. For example, Librarian 2 talked about the role as 'not directly with the Library':

Oh, we are involved. Sometimes you are asked to support things such as the REF programme. We take part in that. We help in getting the document ready to be submitted to the committee. Should we do that? Some of the projects are coming up and we are asked. The thing to do in response to that, we have the RDM thing. Not directly with the library.

Librarian 2 believed that the Library's role in supporting research was limited to maintaining the IR and assigning metadata. Librarian 2 mentioned this in her interview:

I'm not exactly sure because we have not done anything yet. What are the portions of the data to be saved in the subject repository and the standard that needs to be applied to describing the data, I think we will be involved in that.

Nonetheless, other participants had different perspectives on the Library's role in supporting the University's research mission. There was a mix of approval of the Library's role in supporting the research mission through involvement in the IR, REF and RDM and the perception that the Library's role in supporting the mission should focus on supporting direct individual research. For instance, Administrator 1 suggested that the Library should be more involved in REF and RDM beyond IR:

I think the biggest part of their role will be around repositories but we need to get a little more involved than maintaining, not really maintaining data, really working alongside with the current data need.

However, other participants viewed the library's role in supporting the University's research mission as still embedded mainly in the provision of serving individuals and groups of users through familiar services offered by libraries, such as lending books, providing access to the database and teaching users how to use library resources, both physically and online. The Library's role in supporting the University's research mission, such as in supporting IR, REF and RDM, were secondary. This was evidenced in interviews with Academic 5:

The service and role that come first to my mind, well it's the physical books, and their provision of these and the borrowing of those, databases, and there is the skill to appropriately use the databases. The last one, there is no point in having a repository if we don't have the proper skill to use it.

Academic 3 also commented that the Library's role in supporting the University's research mission should focus more on individuals than the agenda:

My personal interest is not how the library is supporting the university mission, (it is) how the library can support my students whether they are research students or undergraduates.

The lack of awareness from participants regarding the Library role in IR, REF and RDM elicited a perception that the manipulation strategy through roles in IR, REF and RDM

had not been well executed. Participants' ideas of library's research support role does not reflect the Library's role in IR, RDM and REF, this was stated by Academic 5:

With the REF submission this winter, they used them (the library) a lot, but whether that fed down to the individual researcher I'm not sure. I think it is time for them to move up their profile.

The library's role in supporting the University's research agenda was evidence that the Library was preserving its previous achievement in developing a new role, for instance, the Library's achievement in creating awareness of open access to manipulate its role in supporting research, as suggested by Suchman (1995). Nonetheless, the Library's role in supporting the University's research mission was both accepted and questioned. The role was accepted as the Library's extended role, yet it was questioned whether the Library's role in supporting individual research was balanced with supporting the University's research mission.

#### *5.3.2.3 University Mandate*

The findings indicated that the University had made it compulsory for all the University's research outputs in the form of publications to be deposited in the University's IR. The University's Research Council mandated the requirement for the publication depositions in the University's IR (OpenAIR). The requirement includes, first, that all research papers, including journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters and similar material, be made available in the University's repository in the form of either the author's final manuscript or the formally published version within three months of it being published. Second, the article was to be published as an open access publication.

In addition to the above requirements, it was mandated that Library reports regarding the OpenAIR status be incorporated into the RDM reports. This was included in the University Mandate: Open Access Post Ref 2014:

All research papers (including journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters and similar material) should be made available in an open access form. All staff is required to make their research outputs open access wherever possible through the university repository.

The library had the knowledge and skills to maintain the IR and manage open access publications as mandate was given to the Library to manage the OpenAIR. Constituents also assumed that with pressure from HE for research publications to be published in the open access mode, the Library would have a more prominent role in supporting the University's research agenda beyond the IR.

As described by Jantz (2012), the centrality or hierarchical aspects of an organisation are referred to as the organisation's authorities involved in the decision-making process. The more the centralised organisation is involved in the decision-making processes, the more centrality the organisation has (Jantz, 2012). Consequently, the Library's role in supporting the University's IR had provided librarians with the opportunity to showcase their expertise, knowledge and skill in managing the University's publication and open access related issues. Further, by mandating the role as the manager of the IR, the Research Council had given the Library authority in managing the IR.

The Library's endorsed role and knowledge in managing and maintaining the IR and its contribution towards open access activities on campus were evidence of the Library's contribution to the University's research agendas. They were also evidence that the Library had manipulated its existing expertise and skill in supporting University research. This suggests that the Library had applied manipulating strategies, which were manifested in the Library's efforts to maintain and multiply its legitimacy through research-related roles.

#### *5.3.2.4 Cultural Role*

Academic libraries' involvement in cultural and art programmes is not something uncommon. It has been described as one of the efforts made by academic libraries to be culturally central on campus (Quinn, 2000). In the interviews, the Library's role in supporting cultural and community programmes was discussed in relation to the Library's connection with hosting cultural events. In the documents analysed, the Library's involvement in the cultural activities was discussed mainly in connection with the director of library services' role in the cultural animateur programme.

According to related documents, a cultural animateur is an appointed resident who invigorates or encourages cultural activities in the University by planning and executing cultural events. The role was projected to start innovations, build new connections and

established links with the community. This residency was supported by the Aberdeen City Council's Vibrant Aberdeen Fund. At RGU, the Library's head of service was in charge of the programmes working and working with the animateur-in-residence to produce a series of programmes to enhance cultural life on and off campus, such as the Open House Programme, Nae Futrets and the Open Space Project (see Appendices 5-3, 5-4).

The Library's head of service's role in the cultural and community programme was perceived as related to the university's community mission. In the documents collected, it was stated by the director of the library services that the cultural programme run by the cultural animateur was aimed at enhancing the regional cultural life and was a brilliant idea for enhancing people's affection for the local culture and language. It was also aimed at enhancing the University's contributions to the region's cultural life and peoples' affection for community and cultural events. This was stated in a document from the University News November 2014 entitled 'RGU shines a spotlight on north-east dialect with Doric Do' and it was stated without a clear link to the Library, as shown in Appendix 5-4:

X, director of library services at RGU, has been heading up the university's new cultural programme Open House, working with animateur-in-residence X to produce a series of events aimed at enhancing the region's cultural life.

Nevertheless, the librarians perceived the cultural events as an avenue for the Library to reach out to the community and become connected. The Library had hosted several events such as dance performances. According to Librarian 2, this was a major development of the Library's cultural engagement strand:

The library has a cultural engagement strand, like today there's going to be a dance event. Big development there.

Librarian 3 described the cultural activities as an extension of the Library Heritage and Cultural Collection activities. Previously, the Library's cultural and community outreach had been through the collection's activities such as exhibitions and talks. The Library was perceived as having expanded its role beyond the collection's related activities:

It just something that the library itself will try to develop and expand on. So it is mostly, the closest we get is the Cultural and Heritage, (where) the people get connected to us [...] yeah I get to say it's (the dance) more than that.

## **5.4 The Library Metaphors**

Metaphors help to confirm the mental models used to generate perception regarding a particular institution, situation or idea (Giesecke, 2011). Metaphors have been used to connect terms with the newly developed images of a library and are a reflection of the conceptual and mental models of a library (Giesecke, 2011; Nitecki, 1993). The metaphors identified in this study were examples of the cognitive ideas used in describing the Library.

From the findings, two groups of metaphors were identified as being used to describe the Library: machine metaphors, which described the Library as a machine, and knowledge symbol metaphors. Through metaphors, the Library was described as a machine and its parts, and as a knowledge symbol through descriptions of the Library as a knowledge investment, knowledge promotion tools and knowledge broker. Identifying metaphors used in this study helped to explain some of the constituents' main and simple ideas about the Library.

### **5.4.1 The Library as a Tool**

In the interviews, the Library was described as a 'tool' that was crucial in supporting teaching and learning processes. For instance, academics described the library's role in supporting teaching and learning as related to the process of developing students' skill. This was complementary to the teachers' role in developing the students' analysis and evaluation skills, which were described as related to the body of knowledge. As stated by Academic 1:

So the library provides the tool and I will provide the context and content of the knowledge.

This view was supported by Academic 2, who described the library role as related to repetitive tasks:

It is very useful for me teaching the new undergraduates who keep asking me the same questions over and over again. Rather than me having to teach them how to reference properly, I could ask them, have you been to the library induction? ... So that is your problem, go and arrange your induction. Maybe it is just me shirking the responsibility; again it is useful as a service.

This process and the repetitive tasks had created frustration for academics because the tasks had taken a large percentage of their teaching time and restrained them from doing the actual process of teaching. The Library's role in the process was seen as reducing the amount of time teachers spent on processing and repetitive tasks. As argued by Academic 1:

I don't think that is the best use of my time. I'm getting frustrated because we are getting more process. The expectation (is) I would then convey this process in the module, with subsequent subject knowledge you get to squeeze out of the module, so you end up doing something else because you have to provide a way for these processes. If the library can provide these processes that means that I don't need to diminish my module. I can give them a greater parameter and a greater diameter in terms of depth.

In contrast, the Library's role in the validation committee was described as a tick list. In the interviews, the Library's role in verifying resources needed in course validation meetings was described as a checklist or tick list process. Although the Library's role in checking and suggesting reference materials related to new courses was appreciated, nonetheless it was described as bureaucratic:

It is just the thing that you have to do as a checklist. I think that could happen, but for X it has been very helpful. It is just a tick list. (Academic 2)

#### **5.4.2 The Nut and Bolt of Open Access**

The Library was regarded as a key part of the University's open access initiative and was described as a 'nut and bolt'. In the interviews and documents, the Library's contributions to an open access journal were regarded as 'valuable' and 'uplifting'. The Library was involved in setting up an open access journal, such as by developing reviewer guidelines and defining the journal's concept. As described by Academic 5:

Yea... I think he tries to and I try to understand, I think to understand information in the way academics and students use it. It's sometimes hard for me to understand exactly what is happening and how the library is developing and X tries to explain it to me. Sometimes, he explains what creative commons licence is by showing me journals from other universities. Online journals and how to access them and I try to understand open access, ... all these things that come on now, but I suppose for somebody like me who...



it is still easy to just go and look for the physical text. It's a learning process but he clearly has some expertise I think.

The open access journal and the open access concept are a new concept to some academics and students; therefore, the expertise offered by the library was regarded as a learning process by participants. The expertise was described as a 'nut and bolt' and the librarian involved was described as a 'mechanic' who utilised the resources available to operate the journal:

X has been really good at the nuts and bolts and the mechanics of how to utilise the resources that are available to us. (Academic 5)

Because of the Library's expertise in matters related to open access, the Library was described as a machine. First, the Library was involved in tasks that were repetitive and process related rather than deeply contributing to the body of knowledge. Second, the Library offered skills and expertise that were pivotal to the process and essential to ensuring the process was smooth, just like what is needed to make a machine run well.

#### **5.4.3 Knowledge Broker**

Academic libraries are known as the department in the university that represents the institution's aspiration for knowledge (Hardesty, 1991). Hence, in this study, the Library was described using metaphors related to knowledge. In the interviews, the Library was described as a 'knowledge broker' and 'knowledge investment'. The Library's role in managing online collections was described as a 'knowledge broker'.

In the interviews, the Library's knowledge of online resources was acknowledged as very 'up to date' with recent developments in the online publishing world. Thus, the Library was the right party to negotiate for online resource subscriptions with publishers. For this reason, the Library was described as a knowledge broker by Academic 1:

They are the right people to do that (the negotiation) because they are kind of a knowledge broker.

The Library as a knowledge broker played an important role in securing access to online collections. According to Academic 1, the library as a 'knowledge broker' was significant because of the ever-changing business models used by publishers for online resource subscriptions. This had made it very difficult for students and staff to access and use the

online collections because of licensing restrictions and the Library's expertise was needed to negotiate the best access plan for the collections. This was a more strategic role for the Library than the operational base role:

That is a more strategic role rather than operational role than putting books on the shelves [...] that is a huge contribution if the Library would move in that direction. (Academic 2)

Academic 1 described the strategic role as much more important than the Library's operational role. This strategic role was predicted by the participant to become an essential role for the Library in the future and the strategic role would shape the Library's direction towards the 'brave new world' and 'become part of the strategy':

The publishing world is going through turbulence and the library itself has to become the strategic thinker. It has to be aware of what is going on and try to influence that dynamic (...) so I think we need to brave new world, we need to be a strategic thinker when it comes to the library, so the library has to become part of the strategy.

The role involved librarians enhancing their understanding of legal issues related to database subscriptions and changes in database interfaces, and how constituents accessed and used the databases:

Yes.... almost the role of ambassador at this strategic level [...]. The huge legal issue here, may be part of the Library role at the strategic level, interface changing and compare how people access (the resources). (Academic 1)

The librarians also recognised the strategic negotiation role as one of the Library's significant roles that connected users with resources and had a huge impact on the Library. This was stated by Librarians 1 and 3. It was believed that the Library had the responsibility to ensure its constituents had access to online resources to avoid problems and critics from the constituents. As commented upon by Librarian 1:

You assist a type of negotiation role, with a better connection to the resources for the need for the courses. If that doesn't work very well, the student will suffer [and] for that also the library will be criticised.

#### 5.4.4 Knowledge Investment

The knowledge-related metaphors were also related to the Library's new building. The building was metaphorically described as a 'knowledge investment' and a 'knowledge symbol'. The knowledge investment metaphor was related to the building as a symbol of progress and a 'legacy' to the University and the local community:

... this huge building that they have been spending on, it should be a legacy, and that is essential to the community that lives in Aberdeen. It's important they see progress and it's important to see investment in knowledge in (the) university. (Academic 2)

It was perceived that such investment was also important to build a building that was beautiful and would later become an iconic building:

It's definitely a beautiful building. Maybe we should invest and leave behind an iconic building. (Academic 2)

Moreover, the investment put into the building was understood by participants as a political move by the University planner to show the University's progress in knowledge. As described by Academic 2:

I can understand why we do that but for me, I can understand if I'm the university planner and developing a new building ...it is political as well.

The related political issues were a concern for both the internal and the external constituents of the University. Externally, it was important to promote the glory of knowledge through the building, and internally, it could be used to enhance staff and student morale. According to Academic 2, in comparison with other libraries' buildings:

The provision is to build a building as part of glory. Look, AU have a new library; we better have ours. I really think that it would be better spent on staff, people, experts and on technology, computers. I know it is a difficult time for the library. They do have an important function, the big building.

The findings indicated that the metaphor of the Library as a knowledge investment was further questioned. Participants questioned whether the investment was the right decision. Although participants understood the politics behind the decision, they still questioned whether the decision was the best decision. As commented by Academic 2:

A part of me is saying that it's the body of knowledge, a symbol, I can completely understand from the public perception, but is that the best decision? I just don't know.

Among the questions asked by the participants was whether there was a need for such a building for the Library when the University was promoting the online environment because this was seen as an ironic situation. In the interviews, participants admitted that they seldom visited the Library physically because they used the library virtually. As commented upon by Academic 3:

To be honest I spend a small amount of time in the building because I'm doing research using an online journal.

They spent a minimal amount of time in the building and this had increased the sceptical question regarding the need for an enormous building for the Library. Thus, they questioned the decision made when the University was heading towards providing online education. As further commented on by Academic 3:

You could be very sceptical about it; you would ask why there is a lot of money to invest in a beautiful building when education is increasingly moving to online provision.

Generally, although participants understood the political issue behind the need for showing the Library's new building as a knowledge investment, nonetheless, they criticised the decision.

#### **5.4.5 Knowledge Promotion Tool**

Although the decision to build such a big building was questioned, the image that the building brought to the public was acceptable. The building was perceived as being strategically planned and physically positioned at the centre of the campus, towering over the campus with a futuristic design, which according to some participants, had increased the University's image:

A very futuristic building. I have only been there once, immediately fantastic, the minute you enter it is fantastic, for us the location on top and the view that you can get. It's in your mind we are not bad after all. (Academic 6)

It was found that participants focused more on the building's aesthetic value, rather than its function as a library, as described by Academic 2:

When a visitor comes to the campus, I show them the library because of its fabulous location, fabulous view.

Hence, participants associated the building with a promotional tool. They believed that the Library's new building was used as a tool to promote the University to visitors and the local community. Nonetheless, the building's glory could not justify the funds used to build a new big library building, especially in the University's challenging budget environment. According to Academic 2, this was when the budget should be invested in staff skill, expertise and technology:

I really think that it would be better spent on staff, people, experts and on technology, computers. I know it is a difficult time for the... they do have an important function, the big building. When people are coming, I will show them the building. That is the majority of the interest.

It was argued that such a big library building was not as relevant for a contemporary school such as a business school as it was for the field of social studies, such as history and psychology, where a big building was needed to house large printed collections relevant for the areas of study. As stated by Academic 1:

There is a symbolic function, and that symbolic function is less applicable in the business school setting. It is going to be different if there is a large social school, history department, psychology department, where the physical functions will be more significant than they are here.

The need for such a big library building was questioned because the University did not have a large social subject school. Therefore, spending millions on such a building in a time of recession was perceived by some participants as unjustified.

#### **5.4.6 Counter-Interpretation of Metaphors**

Metaphors were one example of how a cognitive idea was used to describe the Library. The metaphors helped to confirm how participants were describing the Library and analytically evaluating the Library. Thus, a metaphor is a window to understanding the background and position of academic libraries as evaluated by its constituents (Giesecke,

2011). From the findings above, it was clear that two groups of metaphors were used to describe the Library. Nonetheless, because understanding metaphors requires an analytical thinking approach, this opened up the possibility for the metaphors to be counter-interpreted.

For instance, a metaphor that describes an academic library as ‘the bedrock’ of a university could be vertically interpreted as the library providing a solid foundation and stability to the university. However, the metaphor could also be cross-interpreted as the library’s position being at the very bottom of the university’s structure, far from the intellectual and creative creation process (Bracke, 2012). Metaphors, especially the heart of the university metaphor, are not without drawbacks; metaphors are less precise and are self-limiting, sentimental and open to misconceptions of ideas (Grimes, 1998). Hence, academic and research libraries have struggled to find the right metaphors to describe the importance of libraries to their constituency (Giesecke, 2011).

In this study, metaphors identified from the findings could be counter-interpreted. For instance, the machine-related metaphor factually described the Library as related to a mechanical process that is related to consistency. As stated by Academic 1:

Because the library is doing the mechanism of the process, I am confident that the library can do it better than me and more consistently; therefore, students have a better experience.

This could be interpreted as the Library’s machine function being based on consistency, which is related to process and repetitive tasks. Although repetitive and process tasks are vital for students’ experience, the metaphor can be also interpreted as the Library’s contribution being related only to the process task and having no contribution to ‘body of knowledge’:

For me, if the library can do all these kinds of process and skill developmental issues, I can do more on the body of knowledge, the analysis and the evaluation.

From the findings, it was perceived that the knowledge-related metaphors were more focused on the aesthetic value of the Library than the Library’s role in knowledge-related activities. This was mentioned by Academic 3:

As for the library, it is not as well stocked as other libraries I have been to; I won't be expected to be browsing shelves and having interest.

In general, although the Library as a machine-related service was perceived as vital to enhancing students' experience, the Library as a machine was also described as the library services making no contribution to the development of body knowledge.

## **Chapter 6: Discussion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

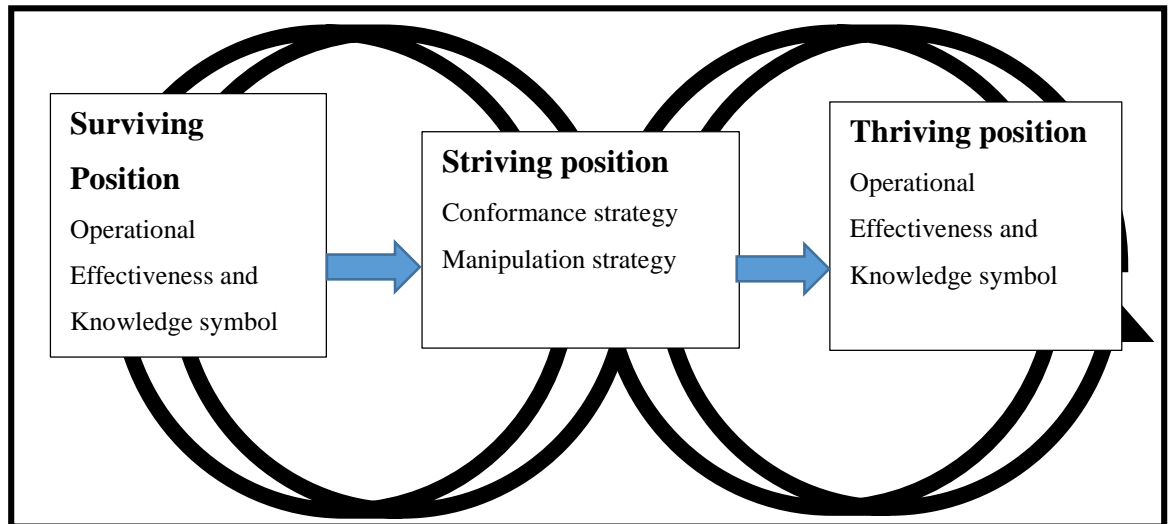
To understand the factors that influenced the Library's position, this chapter proceeds with a discussion of the themes that emerged from the findings. The themes are grouped and discussed under the main themes of this study, which are operational effectiveness, legitimisation strategy, which includes conformance and manipulation strategies, and metaphors of the library as a machine and knowledge symbol.

In this study it was found that operational effectiveness had influenced the surviving and thriving positions, the striving position was influenced by the legitimisation strategy implemented and the knowledge symbol had influenced the thriving position. This chapter presents further analysis of the themes and presents a model to understand academic libraries' position in relation to the themes and related literature. Next, this chapter explains how an academic library can be a dynamic organisation. Finally, this chapter suggests some contributions made to the understanding of academic libraries' position through discussing the model from the perspective of the legitimacy building theory of institutional theory.

### **6.2 The Themes**

This section discusses the main themes that emerged from the study, and the themes are elaborated in the model of academic libraries' dynamic position shown in Figure 6.1. This study explored alternative ways to understand academic libraries' position in universities. From the literature reviewed in Section 2.6, it was found that it is possible to understand an academic library's position by describing the library as a dynamic organisation through the surviving, striving and thriving positions. A dynamic organisation is described as 'the process of institutional change—from destabilisation of the institutional order to return to stability in evaluators' legitimacy judgments' (Bitektine & Haack, 2015, p. 50) and this is done by approaching legitimacy not as a property or an asset owned by the organisation but as a judgement, with respect to the organisation, rendered by individuals and by groups of constituents (Bitektine, 2011). Thus, this study developed a model to understand the positions and present the progress of the position through interconnected development, as illustrated in Figure 6.1.





**Figure 6.1: The Model of Academic Libraries' Dynamic Position**

### **6.2.1 The Model of Academic Libraries' Dynamic Position**

As shown in Figure 6.1, the academic library position is represented by two interconnected loops used to describe the positioning process, which is progressive. The connected loops indicate that the dynamic position is a cycle of positioning processes. The first loop illustrates the surviving position as the process of conferring basic legitimacy, which is based on constituents' self-interest. This is based on questioning the organisation's behaviour against its institution's norms, rules and regulations, and is related to pragmatic legitimacy as the basic state of legitimacy (Bitektine, 2011; Deephouse et al., 2016; Suchman 1995).

Hence, the surviving position is associated with constituents' self-interest evaluations. This type of legitimacy or position is indicated by manifestations of constituents' perceptions (Bitektine, 2011). In this study, it was found that the surviving position was influenced by operational effectiveness. This is no surprise because according to Crumpton (2013), in many cases, academic libraries are part of an effectiveness plan for the campus that is intended to promote efficiency in the execution of programmes and services for the campus.

In Figure 6.1, the striving position is represented by the interconnected area of two loops. The evaluation in the striving position is related to the question of whether the Library is a beneficial organisation for its constituents. This question is in the realm of socio-political legitimacy, which involves more active judgements, and is an extended

evaluation of the surviving position, which leads to further questions and evaluation. The position is a less secure position because it is subject to a more active evaluation as compared with the surviving position, which involves a more passive evaluation (Bitektine, 2011). This position could be indicated by the presence of legitimization strategies applied by the Library because the strategies are more useful to a striving organisation than a surviving organisation (Suchman, 1995).

The model shows that the striving position was influenced by the conformance and manipulation strategies that were implemented by the Library. Just being efficient is insufficient for libraries' survival in the changing environment of HE. Sustaining efficiency also means recognising and adapting to changes; hence, academic libraries need to constantly improve their operational effectiveness to achieve superiority (Crumpton, 2013). The evidence from this study suggests that the Library's dynamic position was influenced by the success level of its legitimacy strategy pursuits in the striving position. This is not uncommon; Saunders (2015) mentioned that no academic libraries can respond to every new trend in the field, but they can strategise and prioritise their actions as a response to emerging trends and current issues, and also in allocating resources.

Overall, strategies are vital in enhancing sources of structural power and position. This subscribes to the suggestion by Chandon and Jarvenpaa (2001) that strategy helps to facilitate acceptance of successful IT projects, and enhances sources of structural power and the positioning process. Hence, the success level of a legitimacy strategy applied will determine the progression of the positions.

Finally, the thriving position is represented by the last loop. The position is indicated by organisation unique identity that confirms reputation of organisations in universities (O'Kane et al., 2015). Thriving position involve questioning and further evaluating the identities, which is a process of developing a disability, an extended process from the striving position. This is indicated by among others the metaphors constituents use to describe the library, such as the machine- and knowledge-related metaphors found in this study.

### **6.2.2 Legitimacy in Every Position**

Strategic legitimacy theory, based on studies by Suchman (1995), Zimmerman and Zeitz (2001), Bitektine (2011) and Bitektine and Haack (2015), was chosen to explain the model and elaborate on the findings from this study. Three forms of legitimacy influence the dynamic of organisation legitimacy: pragmatic legitimacy, based on audience self-interest; moral legitimacy, based on normative approval; and cognitive legitimacy, based on comprehensibility and taken-for-grantedness. Through the model (see Figure 6.1), this study further proposes that different legitimacies are granted at different library positions. As argued by Suchman (1995), the legitimacies can co-exist in most real-world settings and they are interrelated in a less strict hierarchy.

Suchman (1995) also suggested that ‘the movements from the pragmatic to the moral to the cognitive have made the legitimacies more indefinable, more indirect to obtain and more difficult to manipulate, as well as subtler, more profound and more self-sustaining. Nonetheless, by managing their legitimacy, organisations can make a huge transformation within any given cultural context’ (Suchman, 1995, p. 586). Through a combination of strategies, an organisation can alter the type and amount of legitimacy it possesses or desires (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002, p. 426).

### **6.2.3 Operational Effectiveness is the Basis of Surviving Position**

From the findings, it was perceived that the Library had a significant role in supporting the University teaching and learning activities. These activities were related to students’ experience, complementary skills and employability. In this study, the Library’s role in supporting teaching and learning was accepted by its constituency. This acceptance action was demonstrated in the endorsements given by the participants to the Library’s role, which they described as proactive, bespoke, useful and very knowledgeable, and critical to the University’s success.

Endorsements are examples of a source’s legitimacy, whereby favourable opinions of the organisation are given by individuals and groups of people outside the organisation (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). The endorsements given by the participants demonstrated that they accepted the Library’s role of supporting University activities, especially the teaching and learning activities. Hence, the Library was perceived as being in the

surviving position, where to survive is to be accepted and perceived as credible, and failure to survive is to be questioned and replaced (Scott, 2014).

In this study, the main factor that influenced the acceptance of the Library's role was the Library's own effectiveness in providing services and its collections. The Library's efficient role was related to the area that mattered the most to the University: teaching and learning. The University was previously a vocational institution and had a long history as a teaching institute (Ellington, 2002). Thus, effectiveness in supporting teaching and learning was strongly related to the University's mission.

For instance, the Library's role, as discussed in Sections 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.1.2, was perceived as contributing to students' complementary academic skills, and according to Montgomery (2014), this is because through promoting self and social learning, academic libraries contribute to the richness of the students' learning experience and develop independent graduates. Complementary skills such as library information skills are as crucial as academic skills and sought after by employers, thus contributing to graduates' employability (Delany & Bates, 2014). Moreover, librarians believe that information literacy and library classes are the way to rearticulate academic libraries' role in the academic environment and to exclude threats from other agents and organisations (O'Connor, 2009).

The Library's other role in open access journals was also endorsed. Although the role was not a familiar library role to the participants, they had found the role had changed their perception about the Library. Instead of relying to the Library for books, a participant remarked that through the services, the role had changed his idea about the Library: 'A move from the idea of going to the library to borrow books'. (Academic 5) This is not a surprise as academic libraries' role in scholarly communication endorses the libraries' ability to master the flow of scholarly communication and to use the expertise to benefit several user groups, particularly the university management (Reinsfelder, 2012; Reinsfelder & Anderson, 2013).

#### *6.2.3.1 Operational Effectiveness as the Source of Pragmatic Legitimacy*

Operational effectiveness is defined as performing similar activities better than competitors (Crumpton, 2013). An operationally effective organisation is better at utilising its inputs by producing better outputs as confirmed, validated and accredited by

its constituents and relevant bodies. Operational effectiveness also includes the ability to continuously improve over time and is not limited to efficiency (Crompton, 2013). Pritchard (1996) connected the definition of effectiveness with the ability of libraries to survive. An effective library focuses more on achieving quality of service and contributes to the success of the institution in an operationally effective manner (Pritchard, 1996). Hence, the effectiveness of an academic library's operation is related to how the library uses its resources and produces better outputs as confirmed by feedback and support from its constituents and its contributions to university success.

In this study, it was evident that the Library's operation was confirmed as effective by its constituents. For instance, the Library's role in supporting teaching and learning was confirmed as very 'helpful', 'crucial' and at the 'forefront of the learning technology', and the Library's support of scholarly communication was described as a 'long way removed from the idea of going to the library to borrow books'. Previous studies have shown that although university leaders have recognised the symbolic value of academic libraries, it is the functional role of the library in service to the university's mission that ultimately garners budgetary support (Grimes, 1998; Lynch et al., 2007). Findings from this study support the findings by Lynch and others (2007) and Grimes (1998) that functional roles influence constituents' perceptions of the Library's effectiveness.

This has confirmed that the Library's operational effectiveness was based on the constituents' evaluation, and as suggested in pragmatic legitimacy, constituents evaluated the pragmatic legitimacy through their self-interest or they presumed that the organisation provided them with favourable exchanges relative to alternative forms or structures (Bitektine, 2011). Significantly, organisations seeking to gain pragmatic legitimacy can rarely rely on internal characteristics of the organisation; this dispositional appeal is based on assumptions of good character, which requires an established record of consistent performance (Bitektine, 2011).

In this study, the Library had established records of effectiveness, which were discussed by the constituents in the study, thereby confirming its pragmatic legitimacy. This also confirmed the surviving position, which is based on being accepted and perceived as credible in the organisation. Being an academic library in a surviving position also means eliminating the risk of being replaced by other organisations that provide similar or better roles. The surviving position is based on the basic yet essential library roles. Libraries are

generally recognised as having the ability to survive because they have survived some turbulent times in the past (NLS, 2010).

However, being conferred pragmatic legitimacy through operational effectiveness alone is not enough to help an organisation stay ahead of rivals. Academic libraries need to multiply their legitimacy while maintaining the current one because of the rapid changes of best practices in today's rapidly changing environment. The point to make here is that there is a need for strategically planned and executed activities because such activities will have consequences in the future and the future of libraries should not be in the hands of fate or unknown developments in technology (Crumpton, 2013). Moreover, different types of legitimacy often reinforce one another (Suchman, 1995).

#### **6.2.4 Strategy Influences Socio-Political Legitimacy**

Strategic planning is a process of envisioning the future and translating this vision into broadly defined goals or objectives (Saunders, 2015), and strategic choice is 'a managerial perspective and emphasizes the ways in which organizations instrumentally manipulate and deploy evocative symbols in order to garner societal support' (Suchman, 1995, p. 572). Organisations can take proactive steps to acquire legitimacy by attempting to change themselves, such as by creating a new structure, managerial team or business model, and attempting to change their environment and other organisations operating within their environment (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2001).

The strategic implementation process involves several steps, which include planning and assessment. In the case of academic libraries, although the specific goals of a strategy will vary from one library to another, it is important for the library to align its strategic plan with its institutional mission and goals. As a whole, these strategies can offer a perspective on how libraries are envisioning their future, and where they are planning to concentrate efforts and resources (Saunders, 2015). This strategic legitimization process is defined as a process of proactive steps to acquire legitimacy through the strategies, whereby the strategies when applied in appropriate situations within organisations will result in the multiplication of legitimacy (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002).

Appropriate situations in which to apply a particular strategic action are described using strategic actions of conformance, such as compliance, compromise and avoidance, to meet and anticipate expectations from constituents and use the manipulation of strategic

actions, such as cooperation and influence, to control institutional pressures as interventions between the organisation's norms and beliefs and the university's norms and beliefs (O'Kane et al., 2015).

In this study, it was found that strategy implementation by academic libraries is central to the libraries' position to progress. The dynamic position is influenced by the success level of such a strategy. Suchman (1995) suggested that, in implementing multiple legitimacy strategies, the success level of such strategies is related to how the strategies were planned and implemented.

For instance, academic libraries support to communication and data management needs to be balanced with the core service areas, such as instruction and collection development (O'Kane et al., 2015). At the same time, these should be aligned with the mission and goals of the university. In other words, a strategy that is well planned and executed will result in a high level of success, and the success of such a strategy depends on the ability to interpret the university environment's social cues; misinterpreting social cues can lead to misaligned identity-shaping strategies that will result in legitimacy discounts (O'Kane et al., 2015).

In this study, it was found that two strategies were implemented by the Library and these strategies had different success levels. The first was the conformance strategy, which involved activities such as supporting and promoting online collections and being acquiescent. It was also implemented through the Library's Five Year Strategic Framework. The conformance strategy was successfully implemented and received positive feedback from the participants, for instance, the framework as a display of the Library's contribution to 'things that matter' to the University, as a response to the University's current political situation, a guide and self-improvement document that incorporated responses to the constituency feedback. The framework was also used to promote the Library's sameness with the University's missions and aims, and this was done by adopting the terminology used in the University's mission in the framework.

Because academic libraries do not operate in a vacuum, it is important for them to align their strategic plan with the mission and goals of their parent institution. This is to demonstrate how they directly support the goals and mission of the parent institution. In this study, it was perceived that the Library prioritised the conformance strategy. This

was seen as a common strategy in the case of academic libraries (McNicol, 2005). Many academic libraries align their own plans with those of their parent institution. Indeed, it is impossible for academic libraries to respond to all trends; hence, prioritisation is important. and libraries can use the mission and goals of their parent institution as a guide for prioritising their own goals and allocating their resources (McNicol, 2005).

The Library had also implemented a conformance strategy through its framework. The framework was recognised as guide documents that promote the Library's contribution to the University's important 'matters'. It was also described as a very important document for the Library in the University's current political situation. Through the framework, the Library intentionally and explicitly promoted its sameness to the University mission by using the same words and phrases as those used in the University mission. Words and phrases had also been interpreted by the Library and were featured in the framework.

Another example of a conformance strategy is acquiescence. Acquiescence is a passive way for an organisation to seek support (Bitektine & Haack, 2015). It is also defined as conscious obedience to the values, norms or expectations of an organisation, and is achieved by choosing to comply with institutional pressures in anticipation of specific self-serving benefits, such as social support, resources and predictability (Oliver, 1991). The Library was acquiescent in attending course validation meetings. Although it was perceived that the Library's role in such meetings was not greatly significant, librarians continued to attend such meetings to avoid conflicts and to meet expectations.

In seeking legitimacy, a conformance strategy was chosen because of its simple process. It is easy for managers to reposition their organisation within a pre-existing institutional environment. Conformity can be achieved by organisations' own actions and manipulation of their own structures, and does not require managers to break out of prevailing cognitive frames (Oliver, 1991). For instance, in this study, the Library's own conformance action required the Library to promote its sameness with the University's interest. By demonstrating the sameness in its framework and by adopting the culture of online learning, conformity was achieved.

A manipulation strategy, in contrast, is an active response strategy because it is intended to actively change or exert power over the content of the expectations themselves or the



sources that seek to express or enforce them. Hence, manipulation can be defined as a purposeful and opportunistic attempt to co-opt, influence or control institutional pressures and evaluations (Oliver, 1991). In this study, the manipulating strategy was not successfully implemented. Although the Library's support for open access and IR was described as extended library services, certain issues had hindered the success of the strategy. For instance, the Library's role in RDM and REF was described as not related to the Library, participants also commented that it was the time for the Library 'to move up their profile' to include the Library's role in research.

Moreover, in the cultural role, the role was described as the Library's 'big development' and new strand, and an extension to the Library's Heritage and Cultural Collection. However, the role was only connected to the director of library services. It was quite unusual that the Library did not aggressively manipulate the cultural role as one of the new reality roles in the University. According to Quinn (2000), academic libraries' involvement in cultural and art programmes is not uncommon and is one of academic libraries' efforts to be culturally central on campus.

In this study, it was found that the manipulation strategy was implemented in a less proactive and aggressive manner. The Library's role in the IR was regarded as an extension of its current skill in managing IR and open access. The Library was perceived as manipulating its current achievement to support the University's research mission although the role was seen as not part of the Library 'profile'. Instead, participants suggested that the Library should focus more on supporting individual researchers' and students' needs rather than supporting the University's research agenda. Moreover, participants viewed the Library's role of supporting the University's research mission as secondary because the role was not being promoted and was less known, hence the suggestion for the Library to 'move up their profile'.

A lesser level of the strategy's success had produced mixed outcomes for the striving position as well as the normative legitimacy expected as a consequence of strategy implementation. In general, legitimacy through normative evaluation takes one of three forms: evaluations of outputs and consequences, evaluations of techniques and procedures, and evaluations of categories and structures. In this study, consequential legitimacy was the expected outcome. Consequential legitimacy is conferred when an organisation is judged for its accomplishments. In sectors lacking market competition

such as an academic library, a consequential measure of organisational effectiveness is usually imposed, focusing on specific characteristics of materials or objects on which the organisation has performed some operation (Suchman, 1995).

In this study, the strategies implemented led to different judgement outcomes. While the conformance strategy was perceived as successfully implemented, the manipulation strategy was seen as not having been implemented successfully, hence the mixed outcomes result. The Library was in the striving position but with challenges in its operation. This had influenced the conferring of normative legitimacy. This morally related legitimacy reflects a positive normative evaluation of whether the activity is 'the right thing to do'. These judgements, in turn, usually reflect beliefs about whether the activity effectively promotes societal welfare, as defined by the constituents' socially constructed value system (Suchman, 1995).

For instance, in this study, the Library's support for the University's research agenda was evaluated as not being the Library's direct role in the University. Participants saw this role as a seasonal role that should be balanced with the Library's perceived main focus in supporting research, which was supporting individual research. Nonetheless, at its core, this legitimacy reflects a prosocial logic that does not originate from narrow self-interest. As mentioned before, this type of legitimacy has proven to be more resistant to self-interested manipulation than purely pragmatic considerations (Suchman, 1995).

#### *6.2.4.1 The Manipulation Strategy Success's Degree Is Questioned*

In this study, it was concluded that the success of the manipulation strategy was questionable. Unlike the well-promoted and firmly endorsed conformance strategy, the manipulation strategy was executed unobtrusively, thereby lessening the strategy's success. The roles related to the manipulating strategy, such as research support and the culture and community role, were promoted less and were disassociated with the Library because no link was made to the Library in the cultural role. Academic constituents commented that the Library's support for the University's research mission was not 'my personal interest' and 'not very visible', and librarians described the role as 'quite official' and 'not directly with the library'.

These comments support findings from studies of academic libraries from the perspectives of university administrators that concluded that the libraries' involvement in

roles other than the information provision role has less approval from university administrators. The administrators do not perceive academic libraries as attracting donors, being innovative departments or having a non-significant role in campus planning and decision-making (Estabrook, 2007; Fister, 2010).

The Library's ability to demonstrate and manipulate its value in this position was tremendously critical. The main factor that led to the unsuccessful manipulating strategy implementation in this study was the lack of promotion or demonstration of the value and benefits of the Library's research and cultural and community roles. This was suggested by the constituents' lack of knowledge of the Library's roles. Therefore, the process of choosing the right strategy depended on the Library's ability to understand its environment and to foresee the consequences of every strategic option chosen.

To manipulate value and position, such as by implementing a manipulation strategy, libraries are advised to have a sensing ability to absorb and understand the nature and extent of environmental impacts to the library (Chan & Soong, 2011). Two major outcomes are expected from a sensing activity. First, libraries will understand the extent of the challenges and their potential consequences to the library. Second, the sensing process enables libraries to develop necessary goals and legitimise strategies and proposals that help realign and reconfigure library resources to be prepared for new challenges and changes (Chan & Soong, 2011). Sensing ability is also needed in advancing the institution's mission by supporting the institution's strategic initiatives according to what matters to its university (Franklin, 2012).

#### *6.2.4.2 The Legitimation Strategy and Its Success Level*

In general, it is suggested here that the Library implemented a legitimation strategy to maintain and multiply its legitimacy through identification of its conformance and manipulation strategies. However, the level of success of such strategies was evaluated further by asking the question of whether or not the Library's role and function were appropriate to the norms and culture of the University according to the constituents' evaluation (Bitektine, 2011).

The Library used the conformance strategy to promote its sameness and support to the University's mission, among other ways, through the Library Strategic Frameworks, by being acquiescent and through its online collections. The Library's involvement in IR,

REF and RDM and cultural role were indicators of its manipulation strategy. Nonetheless, from the findings, it appears that the implementation of the strategies had different levels of success.

From the findings, it can be confirmed that the conformance strategy implemented was noticed and accepted with mixed perceptions. Although the conformance strategic actions were both endorsed and scrutinised by participants, overall, it was perceived that the Library's conformance strategy was implemented with a high level of success. This was due to several factors. First, the strategy imposed was related to information provision, such as through the development of its online collections, and this was seen as supporting students with flexible study modes.

Information provision is the most accepted and familiar role of academic libraries in universities (Estabrook, 2007; Fister, 2010; Robertson, 2015). Hence, it was evaluated as an appropriate and beneficial strategic action by the Library. The conformance strategy was evaluated as appropriate, which is likely to be because the strategic actions executed were operationally related activities that included access to online resources and this had a direct impact on students' experience and promoted the Library's effectiveness.

Generally, operational effectiveness appears to be more meaningful to libraries because operational perspective is more focused on what library constituents accomplish and how librarians can support their endeavours (ACRL, 2010). Consequently, the online resources of academic libraries are identical in content and have become predictable (Quinn, 2000). Jantz (2012) suggested that the predictable movement in research libraries is a strong normative force that acts as the means of professionalism among libraries. Jantz also warned that this situation would lead to identical but less efficient academic libraries in the long run.

Next, the findings showed that the Library had intentionally aligned itself with the University mission. For instance, the Library had deliberately used its frameworks as a strategic action to display that it was aligned with the University mission and aims. Staying aligned with their university's mission is important to academic libraries' success because academic libraries are evaluated against their university's broader outcomes, for example, by their contribution to university goals (Hurst, 2013) through adopting businesslike frameworks and terminology (Hurst, 2013; Nicholson 2015; Quinn, 2000).

Moreover, in implementing multiple legitimacy strategies, the success level of such strategies is related to how the strategies are planned and implemented; in other words, the organisation needs to deliberately implement its strategies (Suchman, 1995). Therefore, a well-planned and executed strategy will result in a high level of success.

Although the Library's strategic action was perceived as following a trend of a common strategy among academic libraries in providing access to online collections, it was evaluated as beneficial. The trend is the impact of collection development standardisation processes among academic libraries, whereby academic libraries have aggressively added aggregator packages to their online collections following the publishers' economic imperatives (Quinn, 2000). Yet, the conformance strategy implemented was evaluated as appropriate by the Library's constituents.

#### **6.2.5 Operational Effectiveness and Knowledge Symbol the Basis of Cognitive Legitimacy**

A traditional academic library's identity is based on three elements: the library services, the library collection and the library as a place (Sennyey, 2009). A library has strong external legitimacy if, for instance, it is included in definitions of 'the good life' in local communities and given a well-defined place in a wider institution, such as a university. In this study, the Library had shaped its identity based on its services and collection, and as a place, hence the operational effectiveness identity (Hansson, 2015). This was described by participants as the distinct identity that made the library unique from the rest of the departments in the University.

Academic libraries need to stay efficient because their contribution to students' experience is crucial. It is common for UK universities to measure their libraries' performance based on student experience survey outcomes, such as the NSS and student barometer survey. The outcomes from such surveys influence universities' budget allocation to academic libraries (Hurst, 2013; Nicholas et al., 2010).

This has consequently provided the library user with a powerful consumer's voice (Hurst, 2013) and has forced academic libraries to adopt business models to stay efficient. Examples of such business models are the use of mission and vision statements and service quality concepts, and an interest in leadership among library administrators (Hurst 2013; Quinn 2000). The adoption of business models within academia generally and academic

libraries in particular has resulted in a prevalence and standardisation of policies, procedures, strategies, goals and deadlines, along with the specialisation of library work into increasingly narrow roles. In return, this has contributed to the growth of bureaucratisation (Nicholson 2015; Quinn, 2000).

Further, with the growth of bureaucratisation, academic libraries tend to copy each other. The growth of bureaucratisation in libraries has created a shared identity across university and academic libraries. This in return has delayed the libraries' development of their own distinct identity (Jantz, 2012) and thus their individual progress. In this study, the Library's effectiveness in relation to the online collection was described as following a trend and following publishers' 'economic imperative' direction. In addition, the reason for the Library's new building was described as to compete with other local academic libraries.

This study proposes that cognitive legitimacy was conferred through the machine metaphor used to describe the Library. The metaphors represent how cognitive ideas are used to describe the Library. Thus, a metaphor is a window to understanding the background and position of academic libraries as evaluated by its constituents (Giesecke, 2011). A previous study (Lynch et al., 2007) emphasised the importance of cognitive ideas, for example, in the use of symbolic value as academic libraries' emotional connotations.

In this study, two types of metaphors were identified as used to describe the Library. The first type comprised the machine-related metaphors based on the Library's effectiveness and efficiency. The idea of the academic library as a machine was manifested in the description of the Library as a tool and a nut and bolt. These metaphors can be interpreted as the library being a vital part of an institution, necessary for it to run smoothly, and the library as a member of the institution that is consistent and efficient. The Library image as an efficient organisation is apparently not uncommon because many academic libraries are claimed to be part of institutional effectiveness plans to promote efficiency in the execution of programmes and services on campus (Crumpton, 2013).

The second type metaphors related to a knowledge symbol based on the Library's value as the University's symbol of knowledge. In this study, the Library was described as knowledge investment, knowledge broker and knowledge promotion. These metaphors

supports a previous study that described academic libraries as the department that represents the institution's highest aspiration for knowledge (Hardesty, 1991). The cognitive idea of the Library as a knowledge symbol is related to the metaphor 'the heart of the university'. Although the use of such metaphors to negotiate for resources in a university is not advisable, the metaphor is still cogent in describing academic libraries' position; hence, the knowledge symbol metaphor in describing the Library is a source of cognitive legitimacy.

#### *6.2.5.1 The Library's Identities Challenged*

In this study, in addition to operational effectiveness, constituents identified the Library as the symbol of knowledge for the University. This is the identity of the Library in the University. However, the identity is not without contestation, related to the different perspectives constituents used to evaluate the Library, because constituents used their own experiences to evaluate the Library position as a phenomenon (Cullen & Calvert, 1995). For instance, in this study, participants questioned the 'knowledge investment' made in the building, although they fully understood the political reasons behind the investments. They asked whether the decision was the best decision when the University was moving towards the online environment and the number of print collections was considered less significant. A massive space to house the printed library collection materials was considered unjustified. From the participants' perspectives, the investment would be better used on enhancing staff knowledge and skills and upgrading the IT facilities.

The Library's effectiveness identity was also scrutinised. The Library's effective and efficient role was considered an unprofessional role (see Section 5.4.1) and the Library's online collections were perceived as following trends. Moreover, the Library's identity based on machine metaphor (see Section 5.4.2) was perceived as having no contribution towards the body of knowledge. Academic libraries are advised to build their legitimacy in a university through their distinctive identity. Conforming to dominant academic norms and meeting the anticipated requirements through a manipulation strategy will only result in becoming a part of a shared university identity (O'Kane et al., 2015).

To achieve legitimacy through a unique identity, organisations should shape the department's own distinctive identity by complementing and reinforcing preliminary

legitimacy claims made through both strategies: conformance and manipulation (O’Kane et al., 2015). This is done by complementing the academic library’s position as representative of the highest aspiration of the university, that of knowledge (Hardesty, 1991). Only then can the library’s position as ‘a symbol of the intellectual purpose of the institution’ (Lynch et al., 2007, p. 226) be achieved.

In this study, although constituents had accepted the Library as a knowledge symbol, a juxtaposition situation had occurred. This is perceived as happening when academic libraries’ identities are still revolving around the effectiveness symbol of knowledge, which has been regarded as the shared identity of academic libraries in universities (Crumpton, 2013). As a result, the Library’s identities were less capable of reinforcing the thriving position. A thriving library is built upon a unique identity based on its reputation (NLS, 2010), and uniqueness is essential for organisations in a university to earn a reputation (O’Kane et al., 2015). In this study, it was perceived that the Library had yet to achieve its unique identity.

### **6.3 Problems with Strategy Implementation**

In light of the above discussion, it is perceived that the Library was facing some problems in managing its legitimization strategies. Failure to address these problems could lead the Library to becoming vulnerable to anticipated changes in the mix of its constituents’ demands (Suchman, 1995). The problems faced by the Library in this study are discussed below.

#### **6.3.1 Support Department Limited the Library Contributions**

The Library was described as a support department and a ‘servant’ (see Section 5.4.4). The Library’s contribution to teaching and learning was perceived as not making a significant contribution to the body of knowledge; instead, it was regarded as doing process and repetitive tasks. The Library was also described as providing ‘administrative’ services and was perceived as a ‘servant’ rather than a partner in services. In this study, it was found that the Library’s contribution to the university was limited to within the boundary of a support department.

Findings from the study show some resemblance with the findings from a study by Chandon and Jarvanpaa (2001). According to Chandon and Jarvanpaa, academic



libraries' peripheral department status limits their power because the status has created a boundary of power and the libraries' efforts to claim more are contested.

As support departments, although academic libraries are successful departments in universities, they still face great challenges in increasing their interorganisational power. Academic libraries position is questioned and libraries have been advised to employ behavioural as well as structural strategies to increase their position (Candon & Jarvenpaa, 2001). For instance, academic libraries were suggested to focus more on developing students' critical thinking skills than to focus turning students into search experts, critical thinking skills and comprehensive knowledge of information search strategies contributes to the employability of graduates (Delaney & Bates, 2015).

Therefore, academic librarians are advised to upgrade their skills beyond library and information management qualifications and courses, to such skills as financial, organisational and human resource management (Candon & Jarvenpaa, 2001). When the status of a peripheral department such as an academic library is contested, the library should implement strategies to increase its interorganisational power, and academic libraries are advised to implement strategies that will increase their status, for instance, a non-threatening strategy of enhancing their power base (Chandon & Jarvenpaa, 2001).

### **6.3.2 Part of Academic Libraries' Trends**

In this study, the Library's online collections were perceived as following trends (see Section 5.3.1.2). According to Quinn (2000) and Nicolas (2015), this is not uncommon in academic libraries' situations and is due to bureaucratisation, which results in academic libraries' collections becoming increasingly similar, standardised and predictable (Quinn, 2000). Thus, this has delayed academic libraries' individual progress. As a result of this bureaucratisation process, the organisation compromises the constituents' needs by using the strategy to conform to the university's mission. For instance, the findings indicate that the conformance strategy in the online collection had compromised the Library's support of the printed materials needed by particular areas of study, such as humanities and law (see Section 5.3.1.2).

Hence, academic libraries are advised to balance the cost-effectiveness of online access with the needs of traditional areas of study. Lynch and others (2007) argued that, although technology can reduce materials to a fraction of their original size, it has yet to decrease

demands for physical space in libraries. Spaces are still necessary to house the print collections needed by particular areas of study (Lynch et al., 2007). Academic libraries are perceived as having adopted cultural acts in a way to preserve their status quo, making it very difficult to implement new innovations and resulting in the libraries' inability to respond to a rapidly changing environment that requires flexibility and creativity (Jantz, 2017).

### **6.3.3 Neglecting the Library Resources and Capability**

The study has shown that, in manipulating legitimacy strategies, the Library had failed to manipulate its new cultural role for its own benefit. As discussed in Section 5.3.2.4, the Library was seen as neglecting its own resources and capability in implementing the manipulation strategy; as a result, the strategy was implemented unsuccessfully. It was suggested that some academic libraries are hesitant to forge into new areas, perhaps because of limited resources or uncertainty about the importance of the new areas to the fields of library science and HE generally. Indeed, committing resources to emerging areas could risk wasting the Library's valuable resources and losing some credibility (Saunders, 2015). Therefore, academic libraries are advised to balance between emphasis on the traditional role and emphasis on the new role, because some new roles could represent a leadership opportunity for academic libraries in universities (Saunders, 2015) and academic libraries can achieved this by envisioning their future and by fully use their capabilities and resources.

## **6.4 Dynamic Academic Libraries**

The model of academic libraries' dynamic position was developed based on the findings from this study. The model is illustrated in Figure 6.1. Through the model, this study suggests that the Library's position in the University was dynamic, evidenced by the Library's multiple positions as illustrated in the model. The Library was perceived to be in the surviving position and, at the same time, the striving position, and implementing strategies to achieve the thriving position. These multiple positions of the Library support Suchman's (1995) arguments that in managing multiple legitimacies, the legitimacies can co-exist in a non-strict hierarchy, from pragmatic to socio-political to cognitive legitimacy, suggesting a progressive situation of the legitimacy.

As with legitimacy, organisational status implies the act of social acceptance and a certain critical value of performance based on several dimensions of legitimacy. Organisations that claim to have higher status may be sufficiently acceptable to others (Bitektine, 2011). Organisational status such as position can be conceptualised as items on an ordinal scale, rather than as a dichotomous structure of legitimacy dimensions that categorise them: ‘organization’s form and behaviour either fits or does not fit with the established social norms (socio-political legitimacy) and cognitive categories (cognitive legitimacy)’ (Bitektine, 2011, p. 161).

A dichotomous judgement is when an academic library’s legitimacy is measured as either legitimate or non-legitimate (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008), forcing the library into the false sense of legitimacy wherein one situation organisations are evaluated as fully complying with stakeholders’ expectations yet in another situations their legitimacy was withdrawn (Busse et al., 2016). Evaluating academic libraries position using dichotomous and binary measurement eliminated the ability to capture academic libraries’ real position in the University. Instead, by evaluating the Library using the surviving, striving and thriving position has shown that the Library was in the surviving position and was progressing into the striving position to secure the thriving position.

Hence, by understanding the Library position using the surviving, striving and thriving position help explain why some academic libraries roles are other roles are unrecognised (Estabrook, 2007; Fister, 2010; Petraityte, 2014; Robertson, 2015). By being a surviving academic library base on being effective does not automatically impose legitimacy on the libraries other roles such as cultural role, instead, becoming a striving academic library open the opportunity to be elevated to a thriving academic library.

#### **6.4.1 From Stable Position to Destabilisation of the Stable Position Again**

This study also suggests that academic libraries’ dynamic position is a progression process from a stable position of surviving to a destabilised position of striving and back to the stable position of thriving. It is noted that, although Bitektine and Haack (2015) defined a dynamic organisation as ‘the process of institutional change from destabilisation of the institutional order to return to stability in evaluators’ legitimacy judgments’ (p. 50), in academic libraries’ dynamic positioning, the cycle of positioning starts with a stable position.

As shown in the model, both the stable positions of surviving and thriving are influenced by operational effectiveness and knowledge symbol which also the basis for the library's pragmatic as well as cognitive ideas. This supports Bitektine and Haack's (2015) argument that 'in a stable institutional environment the choice of norms is "obvious," since it is taken for granted that a particular set of norms (e.g., an established technological or environmental standard) applies to a given type of organization' (p. 54).

This is argued here because the knowledge symbol is a commonly shared cognitive idea related to academic libraries, as a result of their long-enjoyed special symbolic position. It is the cognitive idea that is manifested through the metaphor 'the heart of the university' and it serves as the identity of academic libraries. This identity has established a powerful emotional link between the libraries and the libraries' constituents (Grimes, 1998; Hardesty, 1991; Lynch et al., 2007).

As mentioned above, operational effectiveness also serves as the basis for the cognitive idea of the thriving position. Together with the knowledge symbol, these two factors influence the thriving position. In this study, the operational effectiveness idea was manifested through the metaphor of the Library as a machine to describe the Library (see Section 6.2.5). However, academic libraries' operational effectiveness has been described as a part of campus effectiveness in which academic libraries are named as champions (Crompton, 2013). This reveals the act of taken-for-grantedness, whereby cognitive legitimacy 'spares the organization from increased scrutiny and distrust of external social actors by making the organization understandable and taken for granted for its audiences and permitting cognitive typification of this organization into a preexisting category' (Bitektine, 2011, p. 157).

In this study, the Library's effectiveness in managing online collections was perceived to be the result of copying other academic libraries and was labelled as 'following trends'. According to Quinn (2000) and Nicolas (2015), this is not uncommon in academic libraries and is the result of bureaucratising in academic libraries. As a consequence, academic libraries have become increasingly similar, standardised and predictable (Nicholson, 2015; Quinn, 2000). Nonetheless, academic libraries are advised to build their legitimacy through a distinctive identity. Conforming to dominant academic norms and meeting the anticipated requirements has resulted in academic libraries becoming a part of a shared identity (O'Kane et al., 2015).

Therefore, this study suggests that, in the Library's case of dynamic positioning, the positioning starts with the stable surviving position, which is base from the cognitive ideas of operational effectiveness and knowledge symbol as a consequence from the cognitive ideas in the thriving position. The cognitive ideas had developed into the prevalence norms and the taken-for-granted identity of the Library. This is in line with the definition of cognitive legitimacy as a status given according to the constituents' knowledge about an organisation. In this study, the Library's identity of being effective and as a knowledge symbol were so familiar and taken for granted (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). The ideas were so familiar that they had become a routine evaluation of the Library—'a matter of compliance' and the routines of 'the way we do things' (Scott, 2014, p. 66)—and, in return, these ideas had become the self-interest for the pragmatic considerations (Suchman, 1995).

#### **6.4.2 Dynamic Position Derived from the Striving Position**

This study proposes that academic libraries' dynamic position is mainly derived from the striving position, which is the destabilisation stage in the academic libraries' dynamic position. As shown in the model (see Figure 6.1), the striving position is influenced by the strategy implementation. The model shows that a striving position is influenced by the conformance and manipulating strategies—the legitimization strategies that are implemented with the aim of maintaining and multiplying an organisation's legitimacy (Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Suchman, 1995, Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2001).

As suggested by Suchman (1995), the movements from the pragmatic to the moral to the cognitive have rendered the legitimacies more indefinable and indirect to obtain, and more difficult to manipulate. In this study, the progression from the surviving to the thriving position is proved to be a difficult step. Although it was widely suggested that the use strategies, an 'organisation can alter the type and amount of legitimacy they possess or desire' (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002, p. 426), however it was shown in this study that the position's progression to success was also determined by the Library's effort in implementing the legitimization strategy.

In this study, it was reported that the striving position was influenced by the strategies' implementation and the strategies were implemented with different levels of success (see Section 6.2.4.1). The success of a striving position is determined by how the strategy is

evaluated through moral evaluation of normative legitimacy: ‘Sociopolitical normative legitimacy is also known as normative legitimacy and it is derived from the norms and values of society or from a level of the societal environment relevant to the new venture’ (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002 p.419).

As was evident in this study, the manipulation strategy, which included cultural role and supporting research, was implemented non-aggressively, whereas the conformance strategy related to supporting teaching and learning was implemented successfully. This is as commented by Saunders (2015), that academic libraries are still emphasising traditional service areas and giving limited attention to the emerging services. This could be a reflection of the priorities and goals of the parent institutions or be due to uncertainty about the relative importance of related areas. In this study, the choice of strategy was perceived as heavily influenced by the University’s focus on teaching and learning as compared with research. A well-planned and executed strategy will result in a high level of success. Hence, the organisation needs to deliberately implement its strategies (Suchman, 1995), and academic libraries are urged to become more sophisticated in marketing their value because marketing, when done successfully, can anticipate user needs and translate these needs into innovative services (Jantz, 2017).

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### 7.1 Introduction

This study focused on understanding the academic library's position and exploring the issues behind the position-conferring process of a particular library: the Library. This is in line with the study's research objective to generate understanding on how an academic library's position is conferred by its constituents and what occurs behind the conferring process. This chapter presents the conclusions of the study and highlights its theoretical contributions as well as the contributions made to the LIS. The chapter further explains the study's limitations and provides recommendations for future research.

### 7.2 Research Objectives

This study has provided in-depth information on the academic library's position, and this includes the positioning process. The findings presented in Chapter 5 and the discussions presented in Chapter 6 suggest that the Library's position was dynamic and progressing. These findings, which are discussed in this chapter, have responded to the objectives of the study. The objectives are recapped here before discussion on how the research objectives have been met and specific conclusions that can be drawn from the findings.

This study had the objective to:

1. understand what influences academic libraries' position and positioning process
2. explore alternative ways to describe academic libraries' position in a university.

*Objective 1: To understand what influences academic libraries' position and the positioning process*

This study examined an academic library's position and positioning process, as presented in Chapters 5 and 6. From the findings in Chapter 5, it can be concluded that the Library's position was evaluated with different levels of evaluation based on the themes analysed. For instance, with respect to the operational effectiveness theme, the library was evaluated based on audience self-interest, and this became the basis for the surviving position. Constituents questioned the Library's pragmatic legitimacy (Suchman, 1995) and whether the Library was an accepted and needed member of the organisation. The

outcomes of this question were analysed in Chapter 6 and it was concluded that its operational effectiveness was the basis of the Library's surviving position as well as a resource for the Library's pragmatic legitimacy.

In reality, when the Library was conferred the surviving position the constituents' evaluation on the Library does not stop there, instead the Library was further evaluated. Constituents asked further question on whether or not the Library is perceived as beneficial or hazardous to its constituents. It was concluded here that the Library was an accepted and needed organisation, which indicated that the Library was a surviving organisation in the University. The Library was also strategising its resources towards conforming to the University mission as well as manipulating its current skills and knowledge to maintain and enhance its current position. Through the conformance and manipulating strategies, strategies were applied to promote, maintain and multiply its legitimacy (Suchman, 1995; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2001) where ) that legitimacies co-exist in reality (Suchman, 1995).

Chapter 6 also discussed the themes in this study that emerged from the findings in Chapter 5. It was revealed that the themes of this study were operational effectiveness, conformance and manipulating strategies and the machine and knowledge symbol metaphors. It was concluded in Section 6.2 that the Library's position was influenced by the factors identified as the study's themes.

From the discussion in Chapter 6, it was also found that the themes had influenced the Library's position. This is in line with Suchman's (1995) suggestion that, as with legitimacy, changing from pragmatic legitimacy to normative legitimacy has become more difficult (Suchman, 1995), and the progression from striving to thriving has become more challenging. Hence, success in implementing strategies has become the changing point for academic libraries' dynamic position.

Therefore, it can be concluded that academic libraries' dynamic position is influenced mostly by the legitimacy strategic actions they take to maintain and multiply their legitimacy and enhance their position. This finding is in line with a suggestion by Suchman (1995) and Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) that organisations such as academic libraries should multiply their legitimacy by deliberately implementing such strategic actions.



*Objective 2: To explore alternative ways to describe academic libraries' position in a university.*

As discussed in Section 6.2.1, this study developed a model that illustrates an academic library's position using the alternative positions of surviving, striving and thriving. This is in line with the findings of this study that the Library's position was dynamic, and it progressed from the surviving position to the striving position to the thriving position, which supports the use of the positions as an alternative way to measure academic libraries' position,

As discussed in Section 6.2.2, using multilevel legitimacy theory helped in explaining the progression of the position. In Section 6.3, some conformity, as well as unique elements of the academic library's dynamic position, was discussed. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model successfully contributed to the understanding of the academic library's position.

### **7.3 Theoretical Contribution**

As a conclusion, the model of academic libraries' dynamic position has enhanced the understanding of the academic's library position. The model was developed based on the key findings in this study and presented based on the seminal work of Suchman (1995), Bitektin (2011) and Bitektine and Haack (2015). Two elements from their seminal works were discovered to be similar to the findings made in this study. First, the findings showed that the Library's position in the University was dynamic. This conforms to the description of a dynamic organisation by Bitektine and Haack (2015). As suggested by Bitektine and Haack (2015), the social dynamic of an institution is the change from destabilisation of the institution to the return to stability in evaluators' legitimacy judgements. By measuring the Library using surviving, striving and thriving positions, this study has illustrated how the changes happen and explained the changes using examples taken from the study.

However, this study has also highlighted the dissimilarity between academic libraries' dynamic organisation with other organisations, for instance, the profit base organisation studied by Suchman (1995), Bitektin (2011) and Bitektine and Haack (2015). For academic libraries, the cycle of dynamic positioning starts with the stable position of surviving and moves to destabilisation of the striving position and then back to the stable

position of thriving. However, the dynamic organisation suggested by Bitektine and Haack (2015) is the process of moving from destabilisation of an organisation to the return to stability in evaluators' legitimacy judgements, and all these stages are arranged in a loose hierarchy (Suchman, 1995).

It is argued here that academic libraries' dynamic position is unique compared with the dynamic organisation definition of profit-based organisations by Bitektine and Haack (2015), in which destabilisation endorses their surviving position. However, in the academic libraries' case, destabilisation is an indicator that they are multiplying and maintaining their legitimacy through the positioning process to become a thriving academic library. Hence, this study proposes that the academic library's dynamic positioning is a cycle from the stable position of surviving to the destabilisation position of striving and back to the stable position of thriving.

Secondly, the findings show that the dynamic position is mainly influenced by the striving position, which emphasises the implementation of strategies. As mentioned by Suchman (1995), multiple legitimacy theory has created considerable latitude for managers to manoeuvre their organisation strategically because no organisation can completely satisfy all audiences. However, managerial initiatives can make a substantial difference in the extent to which organisational activities are perceived as desirable, proper and appropriate within any given cultural context (Suchman, 1995). This emphasises that organisation that manage its legitimisation strategy successfully will help the organisation to position itself within its institution. In this study, it was revealed that the level of success of the striving position in managing selected strategic actions had resulted in an uneven level of success of the strategies, which had limited the Library's progress to the thriving position.

Thirdly, the findings show that using an evaluation based on the surviving, striving and thriving position had eliminated the Library being evaluated dichotomously. This conforms with the recommendation that using multiple legitimacy evaluations helps to save organisations from the 'ecological fallacy', a situation where 'observations on macro-level validity cannot be used to infer that evaluators actually judge that entity as proper: their private propriety judgments may differ' (Bitektine & Haack, 2015, p. 60). Instead, a multilevel approach is important to infer homogeneity of individual and group judgements and actions (Bitektine & Haack, 2015).

## **7.4 Contributions to Library and Information Science**

The study is beneficial to academic librarians as a mirror on their current position in universities. It brings to the fore the factors that influence academic libraries' position. In this study, it was found that the factors that influenced the Library's position were operational effectiveness, strategies and knowledge symbol. As discussed in Chapter 6, operational effectiveness and knowledge symbol are the shared identities of academic libraries (Crumpton, 2013; Grimes, 1998; Jantz, 2017; Lynch et al., 2008), and were questioned, challenged and cross-interpreted differently in this study.

Therefore, it is recommended that academic libraries avoid being fully dependent on operational effectiveness and knowledge symbol as factors of its legitimacy and position. Instead, they should focus more on legitimation strategies such as conformance and manipulation. Academic libraries are advised to focus beyond operational effectiveness and especially on their strategy implementation.

It is suggested here that implementing the right strategy is an important step in a successful positioning process. Other studies, for instance, that of Saunders (2015), suggest that in prioritising strategic actions, academic libraries ought to monitor and address both emerging and traditional roles and services because no library can afford to respond to every new trend in the LIS field, and this is done by prioritising the appropriate strategic action (Saunders, 2015).

Section 6.3 discussed the problems encountered in implementing legitimation strategies. From this study, it appears that the perception of academic libraries' status as a support department had created a boundary around the Library's contributions to the university. Hence, academic libraries are urged to understand the consequences of their current position in their university and to understand the dynamic progression of a support department, which has an impact on strategy implementation. This is in line with the suggestion made by Candon and Jarvenpaa (2001) that academic libraries as a support department need help in using strategies to enhance their position and power, because its status had limited the Library's contribution to the University within the parameter of a 'support department'.

Academic libraries are also warned to avoid being part of a trend, although it seems unavoidable. For instance, in relation to academic libraries' online collections being

identical in content (Nicholson, 2015; Quinn, 2000), in this study, participants commented that the Library was ‘following a trend’. Although these trends are a strong normative force in libraries’ professionalism, unfortunately, they have led to identical but less efficient academic library collections in the long run (Jantz, 2012). Moreover, Jantz (2012) suggested that being predictable is a strong normative force in the academic library world, which has delayed academic libraries’ individual progress.

This study also recommends that academic libraries not neglect their own resources and capabilities. As discussed in Section 6.3.3, the Library was seen as neglecting its own resources and capability in implementing the manipulation strategy, especially in the community and cultural role. As a result, the strategy was implemented unsuccessfully. It was suggested that some academic libraries are hesitant to forge into new areas, perhaps because of limited resources or uncertainty about the importance of areas and fields of library science and HE generally. Indeed, committing resources to emerging areas could risk wasting the libraries’ valuable resources and the libraries losing some credibility (Saunders, 2015).

Therefore, academic libraries are urged to balance between emphasis on the traditional role and emphasis on the new role, which could represent a leadership opportunity for academic libraries in universities and HE in general (Saunders, 2015). Academic libraries are also urged to envision their future and plan their efforts and resources to support their strategy in order to respond to all the trends and challenges in LIS (McNicol, 2005).

This study has highlighted the concept of a false sense of legitimacy in measuring academic libraries’ position. In this study, a false sense of legitimacy occurred when the Library’s contribution to teaching and learning was considered a process task and not a significant contribution to the body of knowledge. This is in line with the situation that occurs when an organisation is a legitimate organisation in one situation yet the benefit of being a legitimate organisation is denied to it in another situation (Busse, 2016). This has produced a conflict with the definition of being a legitimate department in a university as described by O’Kane et al. (2015). In this situation, organisations such as academic libraries are advised to evaluate their library position using the model of dynamic academic libraries’ position to avoid the single level of evaluation of legitimacy as elaborated by Bitektine and Haack (2015).

It is suggested here that researchers from the LIS field need to further explore the concept of a false sense of legitimacy and this study has laid the groundwork for understanding this concept. This study has contributed to the understanding of academic libraries' position through , among other ways, the model of academic libraries' dynamic position introduced in Section 6.2.1, which illustrates and explains the academic libraries' position using the alternative positions of surviving, striving and thriving.

## **7.5 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of this study are as follows:

1. The findings in this study were based on a single-case study of an academic library in Scotland. Therefore, it is not intended to be generalised to other cases. Nevertheless, it provides an in-depth analysis based on a unique context. The findings from the in-depth analysis can be expanded by other researchers in other libraries as a basis for comparison with other studies of libraries' position.
2. The interviews conducted in the study were focused on the Library's constituents and were not extended beyond the constituency. This is because the study was an exploratory study, focused on gathering an in-depth understanding of the position and bringing out issues from the context of the study by exploring positions based on the perspectives of the constituents.
3. The concept of the juxtaposition situation of a false sense of legitimacy emerged in the research findings. The findings indicated that such a situation is triggered by the discounting of legitimacy, such as the failure to develop the Library's concrete identity and the evaluation of the Library's position using a single evaluation. Since the main objective of the study was to explore the academic library's position, the situation was not the main focus of the study.
4. This study has identified the factors that influenced the situation, such as the shared university identity as well as the identity-copying trend among academic libraries. All of these factors were found to be aspects of the Library, mainly because the discussions in the interviews were centred on the Library. Therefore, external factors, such as from the university and HE context, were not explored in this study. Perhaps the external factors can be further explored through a more wider focus in future research.

The study has also provided a starting point in the exploration of the academic library position using academic libraries' alternative positions through the model of academic libraries' dynamic position. Potentially, it provides alternative positions to describe the academic library as a dynamic organisation. This kind of explorative research is rarely found in the literature on academic libraries' position.

## **7.6 Recommendations for Further Study**

Based on the above, various aspects can be explored through extending the current study. The following are recommendations for further research based on the outcome of the study:

1. Similar studies could be conducted in other academic libraries, including established and new academic libraries for comparison purposes. This will help to reinforce the generalisability of the findings in this study and to explore other related issues.
2. Because of the proximity of the Library environment in the University, in studying the academic library position, it would be beneficial to view the academic library position in a bigger context of the university (i.e. the HE). This can be achieved by adding a wider scope of participants from the university stakeholders in a future study. Their perspectives would provide empirical evidence of the influence of the university and HE context on the academic library position.
3. LIS researchers could further explore the concept of a false sense of legitimacy in the academic library context as well as in other types of library context. Among issues that need further investigation is whether this concept is also present in other types of libraries and what impact it has on the position of the library. Other issues that need further investigation are the internal as well as external factors that influence the juxtaposition position of a false sense of legitimacy. This could be done by exploring the university aspects as well as the HE aspects that influence the situation. This current study has provided a good basis for future researchers to expand their understanding on this topic through the introduction of the model of academic libraries' dynamic position.

Finally, this study has accomplished its aim, which was to understand the academic library position by exploring the position as a dynamic process. Academic libraries'

positioning is dynamic yet manageable, and libraries have the ability to maintain and enhance their positions through the use of appropriate strategies.

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# **Appendices**

## **Appendix 3-1**

### **Questions for Librarian**

#### **Part 1**

1. How long have you been working with the library?
2. Tell me more about your interaction with the other department/faculty/student/other departments eg: Delta, IT Services,

#### **Part2**

3. What do you think about the Library service (XXXX), Do the you/Academic think it is important/useful?
4. Do you think the academic regard you as an expert in doing information literacy?
5. How do you describe your role in the interaction with other department?

#### **Part3**

6. How is the library strategic plan is helping you with or everyday task?
7. Tell me what do you think about the university mission

#### **Part 4**

8. What are the Library services that are crucial to user?
9. Anything you want to add about the Library

## Appendix3-2

### List of Question for Academic

#### Part 1.

1. How long have you been a lecture here?
2. Tell me more about your interaction with the Library?

#### Part 2

3. As an expert of XXX how do you see the role of academic library in general?
4. As a person responsible in XX how do you see the role of RGU library?
5. As an academician how do you perceive the role of the library?

#### Part 3

6. How the library is contributing to the university mission?
7. What is your expectation of the library to have expertise to deal with such issue?

#### Part 4

8. What is your expectation of the library in term of you as a researcher/ academic/, expert in this university?
9. Anything you want to add about the Library?

## Appendix 3-3

### Question for Administrator

#### Part 1.

1. How long have you been working in the University?
2. Tell me more about your interaction with the Library?

#### Part 2

3. Tell me more about the meeting/project?
4. As a person responsible in XX how do you see the role of the library?

#### Part 3

5. Tell me about the University mission?
6. Are are you/the library is involved in the mission
7. What do see the Library deal with such issue/responsibility?

#### Part 4

8. As an administrator/ manager in this university, how do you see the library role in the University?
9. Anything you want to add about the Library?

#### Appendix 3-4 Example of an interview transcription

Q	Please tell me about yourself, your career and how long have you been working here in RGU
A	I'm XXX, I'm a senior lecturer in the Department of Communication and Media. I'm an LEC, my area is multimedia and communication, I'm working full time as a lecturer for 5 years, prior to that I'm an ad hoc lecture
A	I studied in RGU, as undergraduate in co-operating communication, I work briefly as a web designer in media production collaborative with artist and art organisation where I run a digital film project for the Scottish Screen I did that for 5 years, I also involve in a curation of exhibitions and digital productions, collaborative with individual artist and art organisation such as National film of Scotland, and then I come back to did my master in electronic information, so we are related in the same department with yourself, in Msc I'm teaching ad hoc while working at the art organisation. Focusing on interactive media, digital media production, a lot of my teaching materials are in that area. I'm also just enrolled for Ph.D. in RGU.
Q	Your current responsibility in RGU
A	I look after a different number of modules, modules coordinator, web design, documentary discourse and practice and interacting media project, digital media platform, and practices, a lot of these are media and production focus and digital, intersection between digital technology and culture I guess. I was previously the module co-ordinator for cultural and design and also cinema and society, so again focus on design and culture. I drop the 2 modules because I also course leader for new MSc in digital marketing which launch in September, that is entirely new course, a lot part of my focus is about the development of new course and marketing of new course. I'm the module co-ordinator of a couple modules there, one is production focus and also methods matrix and analytic, it is a computational research method. And research method that perhaps that is more applicable in industry rather being strictly academic research methods.
Q	A quit handful of responsibilities.

A	That quite a lot, I also LEC, it initially should focus on UG the way its work, in another school they may be an LEC but in our school because it's big we have a number of different number of LEC for different areas, my areas is focused on UG provision but the lot of what I'm doing is with the development of the Mac and it's really taking a lot of my focus is because we are using a lot of connection with the industries, new structure less lecture, they work online. Classes are in one day rather than spread over a week. It is a modern way of teaching. Different from other Msc. A lot of what I'm doing as LEC is focused on the new method on that course so that it be successful to be use elsewhere.
Q	Digital archiving experience, please elaborate
A	Involve in curating digital information, physical exhibition and working with artists working with digital practice or moving in that way or something like that, in contact with digital curation. I work with Scottish Screen where in time there pre-youtube and iplayer.
A	I'm not familiar with that, there are not many people and organisation working on that at that time. We are working with a group of artists based in Copenhagen, Super Child, it's working on early web streaming content providing web content for organisation, that was like years ago. Using digital technology to archive people feeling, creating a documentary with different groups of the artistic group and used digital technology or store and distribute that content. Although I did the Information Management I've not work as librarian not as information management practitioner not in that sense anyway. In a broader sense...
Q	Interaction with the library please elaborate
A	The library is involved quite early on, they should be ermm quite involving in the process obviously re a part of the of the validation process is looking at whether you can support the course with resources if you don't have textbooks and resources material it will be difficult to run the course. The library involves early on in reviewing what you proposing whether it have resources implication. Essentially. My interaction with the library, library have been exceedingly supportive. They put together a list of materials even without we ask for it, other if anything they can be budgeting if we want access to the new journal we

	<p>couldn't because they will always remove other journals, so it is one in and one out. To have new stock they have to remove other, certainly, XXX that is the main point of contact that I have with the library have been exceedingly helpful in creating a reading list. Not so much with the new course but in some other module that coming with that course. Just spoke to Anne and Anne was able to put together entire resource list. ASPIRE list. When to ask for purchases, she makes a recommendation on an e-book that we already have which is similar. She has been very good in term of that way recommending alternative sometimes when you request for new stock.</p>
Q	<p>When she suggested another book does that mean that your request is not fulfilled?</p>
A	<p>No not in that sense, I just recently there a book that been ordered but there is also additional electronic that I was not aware of it and she put it on the reading list.</p>
Q	<p>In a previous interview, one of my respondents has told me that the library has been very rigid in deciding on book purchasing. I wonder if this is the same case.</p>
A	<p>No..not in that way, they have been able to purchase it. Partly as a new lecture, do really understand the process how you get about things, I tend to use a lot of books in Google Books, I tend to use a blog, and I still have tended toward that. Because you know if you have access to that it means that you have control, to access it from home always. So I prefer materials from public places. It probably different in different courses, because the subject that I teach, the web development, the majority of it's not in books. The forefront of it is online, blog and that kind of thing. That the main things, the soon it get to publish in the book the technology obviously it will become.., obviously there is kind of text that the pin things on the impact on digital technology, that a different issue. A lot of what I'm doing, I tend to say to student, if you want to purchase a book, if you need a book beside you, here is a book, its cheap and here is a huge list of blog that is worth been reading on a regular basis, actually go and read about architecture, about art, that the things that will help you, so they are not specific to the module. That is far different from other areas that depend heavily on the textbook. It will depend on the subject.</p>

Q	How do you see the library web, and library blog how do you see that in library interaction.
A	The Web will be the main of contact, even with the books, if I tend to have a book I will rather buy one than to use the library. If I can have a second-hand version of it and that also add to my library. I get my books more than going to the library. For most thing, journal articles, even searching for article in google scholar
Q	Sometimes they put it in the article “this article brought to you by RGU Library..”
A	Yeah.. they facilitate the subscription, the interaction between them is that they have become a facility manager managing access for academic, as curatorial, they have a curatorial role in managing and finding articles and creating a list for academic and less so about being issuer of books. That is for us here, in AU who has a big history department or something like that, there are going to be a lot of archival materials which may be have been digitised yet. So the library has a different function there than in a modern university where the majority of textbook is.. something in the business school if focus, as soon as edition is old, it becoming useless. The physical aspect of the. I don’t know how, the future definitely is the managing the subscriptions and the curation of information, that is still something.. there vast amount of information online but majority of people are not good at making what are the relevant information is, searching for information effectively and the library has an ever more important role in term of how do you actually manage the information access, guiding student to that and guiding academic staff through that is a more important role that what in the past.
Q	How the library should evolve from their current role.
A	It is agreed, as what I was saying, the future of the library and the librarian about books is dead. Not everywhere, but in this institution, I can’t see where it is relevant particularly in a few years’ time, you could be very sceptical about it, you would say there a lot of money to invest in a beautiful building, when education is increasing moving to online provision, or we maybe need to invest in people expert and servers and technology more over a physical building. The physical (role) of issuing books I can’t see has any significant in the future surely



	that is the most trivial part of the librarian job anyway, that isn't what being a librarian is about. Books and shelves, I mean it's about managing information and being able to search for it effectively. Find the crowd of information and that is significant and I can only see that. There will be a competition with technology, because that what is technology is able to do that is to automate things for finding the correct information and but there going to be a bespoke service there, like consulting service for information, it putting the aspect of information management aspect more. I don't know.
	Part 2
Q	How about the interaction with the library. Does it help you with your work in the university
A	They have very supportive, actually using the library myself, I haven't done that in quite a long time. I went to the new building, I look around, it obviously beautiful, very impressive space the moveable shelve which is very impressive, but I never use it, to be honest. I use the catalogue I have to update reading list and thing like that for the student, but using the library myself has becoming less incident. I'm using the library as facilitating and managing the access. I do use the library virtually. And it's increasingly just for subscription, I only find the article that I want, get connected and download the article I want. And to have it on my computer, I tend to if this book that I want I tend to own the book. But I want something that I can get quickly and not bulky. I will always try to have the pdf electronic version of those copy. I tend to scribble on them and own them.
	This is just a personal preference, my wife in AU is an avid library user, she never buys a book.
Q	AU library also has a new building and so do us. Do you think this will change the library?
A	I can understand the concept of it as a builder, university planner, I can fully understand that. from the branding perspective, what a university stand for, the symbol of knowledge and progress at the same time project the as the same here (RGU). <b>It's definitely a beautiful building, maybe we should invest and leave behind an iconic building</b> and that will always house a library, I can't be so sure. In term of changing perception. I can understand why we do that but for me..erm

	I can understand if I were the university planner, and I'm developing new building and politically as well. A part of me saying that it's the body of knowledge, a symbol, I can completely understand from the public perception, but is that that best decision, I just don't know.
Q	How do you see the library is using their expertise in supporting you with your task
A	They were pragmatic point are checking through what I've been putting on the proposal. Whether there a new edition kindly check everything, they check for are they available stock. I don't know they probably ..course team probably should in contact I had tried to be with Anne and probably not the case often it can be. I just the thing that you have to do as a checklist. I think that could happen, but for Anne have been very helpful. <b>It just a tick list.</b> I found them very useful with student undergraduate student especially. I went through this so many time they run a workshop, classes and that is very useful.
Q	Is it useful teaching IL at the very early point of contact?
	It is very useful for me teaching the new undergraduate, who keep asking me the same question over and over again, rather than me has to teach them who to reference properly, I could ask them, have you been to the library induction, so that is your problem, go and arrange your induction. Maybe it just me shirking the responsibility, again it is useful as a service.
A	Library shouldn't be helpful, they need to do they role and people will come for their service.
A	Yea creating the list and getting the bibliography slightly mix up and getting it pick up at some meeting, like in designing a new course I'm not really managing bibliography
	<b>Part 3</b>
Q	Please tell me about the university mission, what is important to the university now and how has it change over the years.
A	University mission err hmmm...(unrelated conversation) it's about transforming people transforming future. I should read all of this...
A	How we evolving as an institution, currently the development which is not unique to RGU but to the HE as a whole, universities. where the MOOC

(massive open online course) end up being a bubble or not there are different views on that, for quite long time, Course was signed by RGU entire cohort for every single day. There is new intake each day from time to time, clearly there is a significant interest on that and people have a different view on the success of such courses has validate, there may be a bubble and maybe some of another provider will buy its part, and that was the same way of the .com bubble and Amazon one of the survivors, that bubble still completely change how people shop, how people interact with each other. So the bubble did come and go but it did fundamental went on to change people perspective on online shopping, for instance, we still see why shops closing down, where have I gone to answer the question... For me, I think people change/ moving their view, how they view education, how it can be accessed and what they want from that, whether skill, or the whole programme matters, or should be bespoke you could take one here and one there. So I think that all university have to respond to that somehow, some people will say well we need to put all our stuff online compete directly that way, but it kind questionable whether you can compete head on with, Stanford or other establish university if you are a small modern university. That might be difficult, but I think if we were to look at more not necessary being to create another content, but maybe take the content on the MOOC and tell the student to go and get the content on MOOC and get you Coursera credits as well and what we will do to assess the application of that knowledge. That is why in the new MSc that I design is slightly in a different way, partly responding to the new idea, what we need to do is to curate the information, so the library who..... is to curate the content, around the thing they want to learn rather than curating all the lecture and my time should be spent more meeting with the industries all organisation and companies relate to what we are teaching and bringing people from the industries so the student than is working on a real project where they applying what they have learned probably online probably on another provider, not in RGU to them they are developing a much closer professional community, they are meeting with professional community and we are able to access how they are able to apply this thing. It been a long winding from, but I think the shift from being the crater and the university job to create everything to being about

	curating and coordinating a learning experience. Not necessarily creating the content.
Q	The library play a role in this future
A	Potentially yeah, I could see that could be, I see it is more and more toward curation, not every obviously there will be some input from the academic as well, again it is particular to some areas that I teach, the mere longer you work as lecture, the more you move from practice so your own skill set can rapidly become outdated there will be pocket of expertise that will continue, you may be grown up through research. But more and more about it will be about curating content and people, you are taking people in, all of those could be, raising funding and developing new courses, the MSc Digital marketing is partly market need, there is a need for a course how do we create the expertise we have, gap that we have, how do we create the content around this and getting feedback from the industries saying what we need to do this, if this going to be, of course it is very vocational focus course and especially, I think education have different purposes not always vocational but you in an MSc in business school, majority people are doing that to get a job, that is ultimate, few people will be coming in because they want to explore from the philosophical perspective. You might have been doing that, but to be fair largely application course it becomes very much what are the industries need. How do we need that, how to ensure that the graduate coming from that course..err I'm talking only from that course, it could be very different for another course...that is the total shift oh the role of the academic. And somewhere you want less academic staff to involve and to change people from the industries and it just comes about you are as the coordinator and coordinator and curator of content and activity. Different from the perspective of another course
MM	Yeah different from another module, social works, law, psychology.
Y	
	There won't be one module.
Q	How can the library support that kind of learning or should they go tailored made the services?
A	Ohhhh..Errr Ummm. it comes back to the question to where do you invest your resources. Are you investing on issuing books to people, or do you get rid of the

	book and do a lot less on that and focus more on this type of thing and work on alongside the academic to curate content develop course materials. That is the model, that surely is.
Q	Curating local content would that be more.
A	Could be yeahhhh
A	Curating all the online lecture produce by RGU Staff and put them in place and manage them and student can have access to the materials via library
A	Yeah, I never think that as a role of the library, or something that library should be concern of, perhaps that is.
MM Y	If they want to play a big part in the picture than they should look into that kind of thing.
A	Hemmemm..one of the thing we probably do is badly I seen it as an IT issue, it is curating content but undoubtedly huge amount of duplication that goes on and we lock content to a lecture, in fact a lecture probably a small individual component with each lecture is probably covering then different issue within a lecture and it been better to broken them into ten individually available component that can be restructure and remix with other content along the way and that will cut down a massive amount off duplication, reduce resource, simplification, the ideal if I were designing a new module rather than me going here is the material I could go into a database and right I could go Tick..tick .. tick okay that is class one. And here is the quiz that I want to add besides it. And they could watch the video on something. That would be far batter content should be re-useable and broken down into a very small object. It can be a remix and repurpose. I don't know how the library could play the part in this' this is about a content to be tag effectively, absolutely an information management issue,
	Part 3
Q	I'm looking from the IM issue and the authoritative issue in the organisation, who has the expertise in doing that. Is that the role of the library?
A	Hmmm .. yes almost the role of ambassador at this strategic level, for that to be effective it has to work like flicker..it has to be a user that it say that your content would now be included in a database and that is now, nobody going to be keen on that. Huge legal issue there may be part of library role is to at the strategic

	level, and interface must be changing and compare how people access , and where we are going in the future, that is more strategic role rather than operational role than putting book on shelf is not the purpose and that taken the facilitate to change that, that is a huge contribution if that would move in that direction than I will turn out with that kind of model.
Q	If the library doesn't evolve they won't...
A	Yeah with books that are completely not, that what I can clearly see. As a branding thing, you get this lovely building but the future of that function cannot be about that, what we talking about is a far more significant role at a strategic level intersecting between, legislation, changing how you access information and
Q	Collective individual value library but as individual they might see it less
A	That is the same as the point that you talking about the branding issue its investment, there is something, I don't know about changing the perspective, if my local library will be closing I will signing the petition, I am really against that. But it is partly because that is my young daughter I want her to think that books are amazing, all the knowledge of the world is there, but it is also about books engaging with ideas and  that is something that you should have, there is a place as a symbol as the way that you can look up artist online but there is a place a space for appreciating it, a space a gallery, even when digital curation, there is enough space, I could never at this moment in online gallery, painting you do need to have space, because seeing it there not going to be the same as eighteen foots, Space has a genuine purpose there, but when you displaying digital work. It doesn't add anything, it about taking people together in one place and appreciate the painting, it's considered as a show, it's symbolic seen this is significant object on the screen and make a statement about it value, its contribution to artistic practice, so there is definitely there always be a symbolic (library) role so that what you lost if the local library goes, and it says to my daughter that physical (type) book has become more less important than something that you can touch on screen, but it says that learning and knowledge are important and it has a dedicated space for

	that, if you lost that all together it will be a hugely detrimental. In the practice of a modern university, in business school, it's less so that is a different thing and losing it doesn't be the same as losing the majority of the books. There be so much choice than the book, that is online and get outdated, there is a community of student but there is also other community as well. Even student are here in the institution .A local library has a, it has a function in a local community. And society providing knowledge to anybody in that community it has a very special function, that business school library did not have that social function.
Q	They have the function before; library is the heart of the university. Could they build it again.?
A	Is that the functioning is on in the physical space, I think so but it won't be in isolation, this a speculation that I have at the back of my head, because they are always be competing with IT to some extend so, it shouldn't be a competition, it should be about working together. Perhaps that is what its actual role, facilitator, so you facilitate change, you facilitate at the strategic level, role as a facilitator it is very different from until things are completely automated, there maybe there is understanding as managing the information we put them a place to work., in consultation with groups. Is data scientist will be in stronger position to say. Amazon is always a very good example, when Amazon start with they have people made recommendation on you should buy this book, then they piloted just statistic, people who bought this one also look at this one, and the recommendation were better that the critic, there's a tension there would there be better recommending a system for curating video on lecture, you would say they have knowledge around curator but how its work, maybe they are better in manage the system, but maybe a statistician is better to work out the system. And we should create content, there's a competition there where about working about different the function will have to be fundamentally changed, I don't know who would be better. But certainly in amazon case it is shown that expert was better at working out relevant content, and statistic were better at , but that is no necessarily agree with that, I do not necessarily agree with that, that would make me question how who is best to design the system.

MM	Unless the library change their role
Y	
A	Nobody is in isolation.
Q	What are the library roles and services that represent the library to you?
	<p>There is a symbolic function, and that symbolic function is less applicable in the business school setting , it going to be different is there is a large social school, history department, psychology department where the physical function will be more significant than they are here. What symbolised that, what service.</p> <p>As a manager or curator and content, those are the services that put to me what is library we first see, if you think books, that you think of because of my childhood experience of using the public library, that is part of my childhood, that is very significant but that is a different thing. Errmm I want my daughter to get the good of that, so that what come to mind but that not being the future of that. Even within this community library, they have an educational role on digital how people access information. And my daughter first experience there, take out book and book isolation on a space , educate her on broader education ( Bet that doesn't answer your question at all).</p>
	Part 4
Q	This is the last question, any other comments about the library
	<p>After the conversational around the role and function of the library, I'm very appreciative of the library and the librarians have always been very forthcoming, helpful and all industries are in difficulties, time to work out how they operated university as a whole. I don't think as a part of the library in me, this huge building that they been spending, it should be a legacy, and that is important to the community that lives in Aberdeen, it's important they see progress and it's important to see investment in knowledge in university, from a symbolic, it's symbolically important but at the same time I also then think if spending millions of pounds on this building in the period of recession well is that the best of resource when you have people different department shred, you ...provision is to build a building as part of glory, look AU have a new library, we better have ours. I really think that it be better spent on staff, people, expert and on technology computer. I know it as a difficult time for the ..they do have</p>



	an important function, the big building when people coming, I will show them the building. That is the majority of the interest.
	Library really needs to defend them self. It really not about books, because if is the books
	Librarian has a more significant role in the society where economic that build in information, people have background in information, it think it is a job of a librarian to be more than handling books, there are about curation and access to information and that is more important and difficult and some specific function that a lot of people don't know how to do this. It's a good thing, it should be healthy. It's a difficult period.
	End of interview

## Node number of reference

Name	Number Of Sources Coded	Number Of Coding References
appropriateness	2	4
academic administrative	1	1
Academic student	3	3
Accepted	6	16
Accepted (Associated) Needed	0	0
acquiescence	7	21
Administrative role	2	4
align	4	5
Assessment	6	11
Avoiding	3	6
Benefits of the library	3	10
Budget	1	1
building	5	16
collaboration	3	4
collection	7	13
Committee member research sub committee	1	1
Compering	4	6
Conformance	0	0
consortia	1	1
counterproductive	1	2
Cultural role	6	9
Exceeding expectation	2	2
Employability	6	11
Endorsement	2	4
Engaging with the library	7	20
Essential	1	1
external influence HE	4	11

external influence HE (Nodes)	6	19
Financial resources	6	13
follower	5	6

Reports\\Node number of reference

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Name	Number Of Sources Coded	Number Of Coding References
formal	2	2
Framework	7	9
gap	1	6
Ideal expectation	8	38
Image	12	29
Indirect	1	1
Individual identity	0	0
informal	1	2
Information management	1	1
Information provision	4	4
Institutional repositories	3	8
Intervention	5	7
interviews	14	14
IT	2	2
learning	1	2
Library new building	1	1
low expectation	1	1
Maintaining past achievement	1	1
metaphor	5	19
Moderator	2	5
MOOC	1	1
Needed	11	35
new challenge	7	26
New identity	0	0
New role	8	27

New role is challenged (Nodes)	7	20
New role is not accepted	3	3
NSS	0	0
Open access	6	12
Open access journal	1	2
operational	2	3

Reports\\Node number of reference

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Name	Number Of Sources Coded	Number Of Coding References
Operational identity	0	0
Performance	1	1
Personalisation	4	5
practitioner	1	1
proactive	2	2
Professional	2	8
publisher	2	3
Questioning and scrutinising	4	15
RDM	5	6
reactive	1	2
reading list	5	9
REF	5	6
reputation	8	20
Research	12	23
Sarcastic	1	2
scholarly communication	1	1
Space	3	5
Staff	2	5
standard expectation	10	36
strategic interaction	5	20
Strategic role	2	4

Student experience	5	13
support department	2	3
Surveys	3	4
Teaching	4	7
Technology	4	6
tick box	2	2
University environment	8	22
University identity	1	1
Using the library	1	1
VLE	1	1

Reports\\Node number of reference

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**RESEARCH COMMITTEE**

**UNIVERSITY MANDATE: OPEN ACCESS POST REF2014**

The university has agreed the following mandate\*:

That deposition in the institutional repository (OpenAIR) is required where this is allowable by publishers. This represents a commitment to “green” OA (archiving within an institutional or discipline repository), rather than “gold” OA (where additional payment is required by the author or authors institution to the publisher to publish in a journal and make the article openly accessible). This approach ensures wide dissemination and cost effective compliance with future REF requirements.

All research papers (including journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters and similar material) should be made available in an open access form.

All staff are required to make their research outputs open access wherever possible through the university repository.

All research papers (including journal articles, conference proceedings, book chapters and similar material) should be made available in the university repository either in the form of the author’s final manuscript or the formally published version (where copyright allows). These should be made available in OpenAIR, the RGU Institutional Repository, upon acceptance of publication but no more than 3 months later\*\*. Where it is not possible to deposit an open access version of the full-text paper a record of publication should be created in OpenAIR with a link to an externally held version. Details of items

which are not accessible on Open Access (either on publication or after an embargo period) will not be included in OpenAIR.

Staff will use the phrase “Robert Gordon University” within the research output when stating the address of the originating university. Using this address convention will simplify searches that may be carried out for assessment of research quality, compiling league tables or other purposes.

Where external funding is available to meet the costs of open access article processing charges researchers should include relevant costs in their grant applications, taking advantage of opportunities to publish their work with immediate open access upon publication. Where funding is available but not sought this may lead to additional embargo periods being applied by the publisher.

Where appropriate, staff should negotiate with publishers and assign a licence to publish as opposed to assigning copyright to journals.

If a researcher wishes to publish via “gold open access” and wants university financial support, this will be considered if the paper is likely to be returned for REF (and is of at least 3\* quality). However, this would need to be in tandem with a fund being set up by the university and agreement on where the researcher is to direct a bid for such funding.

Research Committee, October 2014

1 \*Please see our [Open Access Guide](#) or the accompanying *Guidelines on the publication of research: written publications* for information about the Post-REF 2014 requirements that informed the implementation of this mandate.

\*\*Since acceptance of this mandate by the Research Committee in October 2014, HEFCE have [issued updated guidance](#) about the timescales for making papers open access. Please see our [Open Access Guide](#) or the accompanying *Guidelines on the publication of research: written publications* for details of the extended time frame that is applicable until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.

## Appendix 5-3

### Open House at RGU: Cultural animateur role brings new audience to Garthdee

*Monday, 13 April, 2015*

Cultural animateur-in-residence is not the most common of job titles, and on first glance Natalie Kerr (24) thought she had seen an advert for an animator.

It was only on taking a closer look that she realised what the job involved and that it presented a great opportunity for a young arts practitioner starting out in her career.

A [Gray's School of Art](#) sculpture graduate who had already built up experience in participatory arts, including a residency with the Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Lumsden, Natalie secured the new role based at Robert Gordon University (RGU) and has spent the past nine months planning and running a programme of cultural events on campus.

The residency has been supported by [Aberdeen City Council's](#) Vibrant Aberdeen fund.

"An animateur is described as a person who enlivens or encourages something," she explained. "The role is deliberately different to that of a curator and is designed to break new ground and build new connections as well as build on our established links.

"I think people perhaps expect my role to be about putting on exhibitions but that is already done really well across the university so I see my job as being complementary to that and broadening RGU's cultural offering.

"As the title is unfamiliar to a lot of people, I've found that it sparks conversations straight away."

Natalie said: "It is the first year of the residency and means that there has been a lot of flexibility in how we started building the programme of events.

"It is called Open House as the aim is to bring a new audience to Garthdee from local communities and get them to engage with the campus in a way they may not have done previously."

Among the events run so far as part of Open House has been a dance residency as part of the Dance Live festival, which saw a site specific piece performed in the university's Riverside East building; a celebration of the Doric dialect called Nae Futrets Here held in Garthdee House; a cultural networking event with local organisation AB+; and the first training day to be held in the north-east for the Scottish Prison Arts Network (SPAN), at Aberdeen Business School.

Natalie said: "I've been really pleased with the range and quality of the events that we've held so far. It has been a conscious decision to hold the events in different places around the campus as a way of really trying to open up the spaces to the public and the great thing has been that we seem to be attracting different audiences to each event."

Natalie's focus for the immediate future is two events related to [Look Again](#), a visual art and design festival



being held in Aberdeen between April 8 and 12.

A partnership between SMART, RGU and Aberdeen City Council, the festival will see a range of workshops and exhibitions being held at Garthdee and across the city centre.

Natalie is currently working with a local community youth group and videographer Fraser Denholm to document and capture footage of the festival as it happens.

She said: "Gray's School of Art has helped provide some of the equipment for this project and Fraser is teaching the youngsters involved how to operate the cameras to produce footage of the festival, with the aim of encouraging them to participate in the arts."

The other Look Again event has seen Natalie set a live brief for undergraduates at the art school inspired by a mural that was once painted in Garthdee House by local artist and former Gray's student, George Kelly.

"It will be exciting to see what they come up with," she said. "We are looking for them to submit digital designs, with a winner being commissioned to produce a large scale piece of visual art to be installed in the site of the original mural at Garthdee House.

"The brief came about through conversations with a retired member of staff, Jim Fiddes, about local colloquial stories and characters in different sites within the university's buildings. Through further engagement with RGU's Arts and Heritage Collection, as well as George Kelly's remaining family, we started to build up a picture of George's art practice which has informed the brief."

Natalie added: "I haven't really had time to reflect yet on what we've achieved over the past months, but I know that I will look back on this in a few years and realise how influential it has been on my career.

"There are not a lot of opportunities like this and I feel very lucky to have secured this role. I feel quite strongly that it is through residencies and opportunities like this that will allow Aberdeen to retain its creative talent."

**More information on the Look Again festival, including a full programme of events is available online**

**Release**

**by**

**Jenny Rush** Communications Officer | Design and Technology



**Creative Cultures Scotland**  
craft | design | education | enterprise | media | music | performing art | visual art | written word

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## Nae futrets in Aiberdeen... celebration of Doric dialect in city – Press and Journal

December 5, 2014

A rare necht celebrating the north east's "mither tongue" will be held in Aberdeen next wik.

Nae Futrets Here – an evening of Doric poetry, performance art, folk music and stand-up comedy – will take place at Robert Gordon University's Garthdee House on Friday, December 5.

The event – styled as a celebration of the region's unique dialect – was thought up by local musician, Charley Buchan.

Mr Buchan, who runs local independent music label, Fitlike Records, and performs under the name CS Buchan said he hoped the event would allow Doric to be "taken seriously".

He said that the name of the event, meaning "no ferrets here" was a reference to Doric comedy trio "Scotland the What?"

Mr Buchan said the name had "intended to suggest that Doric is not something to be ridiculed but can be taken seriously as well".

He said: "I basically thought I could use a label as a platform for this network of musicians and artists to be recognised.

"Most of the folk involved have a fondness for the north-east dialect and putting on an event like this just seemed a natural thing to do."

There will also be performances and readings from Scott Ironside, Barry Snow, Chemical Callum, Kitchen Cynics, Death Let Her and Jon Reid.

Head of RGU's Open House cultural programme, Michelle Anderson, said: "RGU is delighted to be working with Charley in organising and hosting Nae Futrets Here. It is a brilliant idea for an event which both illustrates the fact that Doric is very much alive and kicking in the north-east and the great affection people have for it."

Tickets are £7.00 and are available at <http://www.wegotickets.com>

via Nae futrets in Aiberdeen... celebration of Doric dialect in city – Press and Journal.