

University Library Director: Job Tasks, Competency Requirements, and Development Mechanisms

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Abstract

As the strategic leader of a university library, the director determines its prosperity or decline. The primary responsibilities of a university library director encompass strategic planning formulation, strategic organizational implementation, and strategic control. To this end, based on individual endowments, the director must develop back-end, concrete, and applied capabilities in strategic foresight, strategic planning, strategic coordination, strategic communication, and strategic control through cultivating front-end meta-capabilities, information capabilities, cognitive capabilities, logical thinking capabilities, imagination, and other avenues, thereby fulfilling the corresponding strategic management responsibilities.

Full Text

University Library Leaders: Job Responsibilities, Capability Requirements, and Development Mechanisms

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Abstract: As the strategic leader of a university library, the director determines its success or failure. The primary responsibilities of a university library director are strategic planning, strategic organization and implementation, and strategic control. To fulfill these duties, based on individual endowments, it is necessary to cultivate front-end meta-capabilities, information capabilities, cognitive abilities, logical thinking abilities, and imagination, thereby developing back-end, concrete, and applicable strategic foresight, strategic planning ability, strategic coordination ability, strategic communication skills, and strategic

control capabilities to competently perform the corresponding strategic management work.

Keywords: University Library Leaders; Job Responsibilities; Capability Requirements; Development Mechanisms

1 Introduction

In the late Eastern Han Dynasty, with rampant interference by imperial in-laws, eunuch dominance, and political corruption, the central imperial system collapsed, warlords rose everywhere, and the empire fell into chaos. Liu Bei, who made a living selling straw sandals, possessed exceptional foresight, cognitive abilities (particularly self-awareness and understanding of others), organizational coordination skills, and cohesion, enabling him to identify new entrepreneurial opportunities amidst the turmoil. However, troubled by his lack of literary and military prowess, he claimed descent from Prince Jing of Zhongshan, took it as his mission to restore the Han Dynasty, and formed a sworn brotherhood with Guan Yu (a jujube vendor) and Zhang Fei (a butcher) in the Peach Garden Oath. He subsequently visited Zhuge Liang three times to forge a partnership, constructed a grand blueprint for the Shu Kingdom, moved people with sincerity and righteousness, rallied supporters, and fully trusted and empowered Zhuge Liang. By coupling strategic talent, intellectual talent, and tactical talent, he ultimately achieved a competitive position of holding one-third of the empire.

Without leadership, there is no organization. In any organization, the most important element is the leader, followed by various organizational mechanisms—including governance mechanisms, management mechanisms, value creation mechanisms, benefit-sharing mechanisms, and conflict resolution mechanisms—then the quality structure of personnel, and finally specific value activities. University libraries are no exception. As the leader of the library, the director possesses full administrative authority and, naturally, bears full administrative responsibility. In other words, the director's power derives from responsibility, responsibility derives from capability or leadership, and capability serves the organization's goals, forming an integrated whole of responsibility, authority, benefits, capability, and objectives. So what responsibilities must a library director undertake, and what capabilities are required?

2 Literature Review

Frederick Taylor, the “father of scientific management,” proposed the “exception principle” in his scientific management principles, which states that managers handle exceptions while routine matters are programmed, standardized, and handled by specific staff [?]. Strategy represents the greatest exception for an organization and should naturally be the responsibility of the leader. Accordingly, according to process management theorists like Fayol and strategic management scholars like Ansoff, strategic management comprises four basic

functions: strategic planning, strategic organization and implementation, strategic control, and strategic leadership. Among these, strategic leadership reflects the social attributes of strategic management and constitutes its core function, while strategic planning, strategic organization and implementation, and strategic control—which reflect the natural attributes of strategic management—are all conducted under the leader’s strategic guidance. Strategic leadership permeates the entire process of strategic planning, implementation, and control. In this sense, strategic management capability is essentially strategic leadership capability. Mary Parker Follett, a pioneering management theorist, believed that leadership’s essence lies in the process of sharing power, working together, and sharing responsibility between leaders and followers. The best leaders do not make subordinates obey their views or make decisions for them, but rather teach subordinates how to make decisions and solve problems themselves [?].

Joseph Schumpeter, the progenitor of innovation theory, argued that leadership functions involve knowing what to do and what not to do, and that success often relies on intuition rather than complete rationality [?]. Management guru Peter Drucker believed that managers are an organization’s most expensive resource and only managers can build an organization; managers must balance the present and the future [?].

All management problems are ultimately problems of managers. Against a backdrop of multi-dimensional high uncertainty in the external environment and reader needs, university library directors must possess corresponding management capabilities to meet leadership demands due to their positions and responsibilities. Fang Taiqiang (1992) argued that university library directors should be familiar with library operations and possess rich library work experience, with dedication and management capability being crucial [?]. Miao Jiadong (1994) and Jing Jing (2020) successively compared the selection of university library directors between China and the United States: Chinese directors are often transferred from university professors or associate professors without library science backgrounds, while American directors typically require library science backgrounds and practical library work experience with proven results. Both emphasize management capability, but American university library directors particularly stress strategic planning ability [?][?]. Ke Ping (2011) analyzed requirements and expectations for directors from five perspectives: responsibility and spirit, management and decision-making, leadership art, strategic thinking, and global vision, expressing particular appreciation for professional and highly educated directors [?]. Cheng Huanwen and Zhang Qi (2024) believe that a director’s basic duties are securing funding, personnel, and collections, and that only directors who understand the history of books and libraries can become qualified and eventually excellent directors [?]. Jiang Yongfu (2025) argues that directors should focus on major and important matters, strive to secure various human, financial, and material resources, and achieve sustainable, high-quality development of the library, while questioning the arbitrary appointment of directors and the so-called “alienation” problem of directors from non-library science backgrounds [?]. In summary, scholars fully affirm the importance of university

library directors and their management capabilities and activities for libraries, but have not reached consensus on what specific key management capabilities are needed, and rarely discuss how to develop these capabilities.

3 Job Responsibilities

After the Industrial Revolution, division of labor became increasingly refined, evolving from Smith's labor division to Fayol's management division and Hayek's knowledge division, to achieve various specializations. Subsequently, based on "small barrel or large barrel" theory, overall capabilities are systematically enhanced to reduce costs, improve efficiency and quality, or solve various innovation challenges. For university libraries, management work has also been deconstructed: the director primarily handles direction/strategy, using a telescope to identify trends, opportunities, and the future; deputy directors and department heads primarily handle methods/tactics, using a magnifying glass to fully comprehend the director's intentions and translate strategic plans into concrete, feasible programs; librarians use a microscope to focus on approaches/strategies, combining specific contexts through standardization, programming, and regulation to solidly implement service work.

3.1 Strategic Planning Formulation

When a general is on a urgent march, he does not chase small rabbits. University library leaders engaged in strategic management must focus on important matters, abandon unimportant ones, and avoid allowing urgent but unimportant matters to become important. Strategic planning is a long-term, comprehensive plan representing the library's enduring strategy. As the chief architect of the university library, the director's strategic planning work mainly includes: (1) Designing vision, mission, and core values. Vision represents the ultimate goal—what kind of library it will become in the future—and is the ideal image shared by all internal and external stakeholders, as the library is co-created by all stakeholders. Currently, it seems that smart libraries are regarded as the vision goal (though what exactly are the connotations and extensions of smart libraries? "Smart" originally does not mean "wisdom," and after debating with many wise men, Socrates concluded that "humans have no wisdom; humanity's greatest wisdom is knowing its own ignorance" —so where does the library's wisdom come from?). Mission represents the library's value, significance, or historical responsibility, with the core mission being to create value for readers, opportunities for librarians, and responsibilities for the university. Core values are the kernel of the entire value system, the spiritual core and specific guide for library value actions, and the DNA of library culture—for example, Toyota's core values are "higher quality, lower price." (2) Designing and transforming organizational functions. The functional system is the "production relations" within the organization, directly determining the library's service productivity and creativity: structurally, it should establish corresponding departments and positions based on the university's development plan, the library's situation, and

business planning, place librarians in suitable positions, and match them with corresponding responsibilities, authority, and benefits; institutionally, it should establish regulations and use mandatory norms to promote management standardization and construct artificial order; mechanistically, it should establish reasonable reward and punishment mechanisms following integration principles to encourage excellence, spur laggards, and stimulate librarians' work enthusiasm; culturally, it should design suitable core values around the three fundamentals of librarians, readers, and service innovation, and shape corresponding library culture through internalization and externalization of core values to foster spontaneous order. (3) Business development strategic planning. The first two tasks are foundational architecture planning, while what is commonly referred to as strategic planning means library business development strategic planning. Due to multi-dimensional high environmental uncertainty, cognitive limitations, and the fact that what exists is becoming obsolete rather than more valuable, there must be planned, systematic elimination of old, declining, and outdated elements, never spending time, money, energy, and opportunities defending the past (or past successes). University library leaders should, based on attention to and foresight of the future and combined with the university's overall development plan, lead the formulation of reasonable library business development strategic plans, such as the 13th Five-Year Plan, 14th Five-Year Plan, and 15th Five-Year Plan. Here, they can refer to McKinsey's business planning recommendations to construct a three-level business system: current business accounting for 70% of resources, replacement business accounting for 20%, and future business accounting for 10%.

3.2 Strategic Organization and Implementation

Following strategic planning formulation comes strategic organization and implementation. As the chief coordinator inside and outside the library, the director must be able to distinguish between work that is important and urgent, important but not urgent, unimportant but urgent, and neither important nor urgent, never "grabbing everything at once" and ending up grasping nothing. On this basis, the director should lead the design of phase milestones and final objectives for important work, lead the formulation of corresponding action plans, and simultaneously, through effective communication, secure and organize key personnel, resources, and technologies. The specific implementation of important work is the responsibility of deputy directors, department heads, and librarians. For unimportant work, deputy directors, department heads, or librarians can take full responsibility, focusing on details, 发扬工匠精神 (promoting craftsmanship spirit), emphasizing service efficiency, cost, and quality, and seeking optimal resource allocation and effective utilization under given technical and organizational conditions. In this increasingly specialized division of labor context, no one is absolutely important or irreplaceable. Leaders must learn to and be adept at cultivating subordinates into leaders who can self-manage, creating spontaneous order. An excellent leader ensures that every librarian can fulfill their duties and that the library's daily operations continue in an orderly fashion

whether the leader is present or not.

3.3 Strategic Control

Strategic control and strategic organization and implementation are parallel activities, both being immediate subsequent processes to strategic planning formulation. Moreover, strategic control governs the organization and implementation process to ensure effective implementation and successful achievement of strategic planning objectives. As the library leader, while advancing (through strategic planning and organization/implementation), the director must supervise the strategic implementation process and correct important deviations: (1) Control direction to ensure implementation does not deviate from strategic planning requirements: deviating from higher education development direction, deviating from library business development tracks, or deviating from reader needs; (2) Control phase milestones to ensure important objectives in the service or service innovation process are well achieved, thereby realizing final strategic goals; (3) Particularly, must first be adept at self-control, clearly understanding the limitations of one's own cognition and capabilities, possessing good boundary awareness, knowing the boundaries of one's own power and responsibility, and being able to act within those boundaries without overstepping.

4 Capability Requirements

University library directors engaged in strategic management work require corresponding strategic management capabilities or strategic leadership. Before strategic planning formulation, they must be able to foresee library development trends and future opportunities, thus generating the requirement for strategic foresight capability (or strategic environmental analysis capability). During strategic organization and implementation, strategic coordination and communication are crucial, while the strategic implementation process also requires strategic control. Consequently, university library directors need at least five capabilities: strategic foresight, strategic planning, strategic control, strategic coordination, and strategic communication. Among these, strategic coordination and strategic communication belong to foundational management capabilities or leadership of strategic leaders (in management, leadership is a very complex topic that also includes communication and coordination as sub-activities), while strategic foresight, strategic planning, and strategic control are strategic management capabilities or strategic leadership under uncertain conditions.

4.1 Strategic Foresight Capability

Without foresight, individuals face immediate worries; so do organizations. As the “dream maker” of the university library, the director must understand library operations, pay attention to development directions and service innovation trends, reject various short-term utilitarianisms while adhering to long-termism, look to the distant and panoramic view, believe in distant and invisible things,

and skillfully link different imaginations of the future to 描绘大学图书馆的未来蓝图 (paint a future blueprint for the university library).

Strategic foresight capability is a strategic environmental analysis capability that comprehensively utilizes information, cognition, logical thinking, and imagination—a kind of trend sensitivity and future-predicting ability. It helps library leaders navigate through various “small cycle” fogs, “clear the clouds to see the sun,” discern and lock onto “big cycle” trends, discover “some certainty” amidst ubiquitous multi-dimensional high uncertainty, and foresee the “vaguely right” : foreseeing development trends in higher education and the university; foreseeing future directions of library business; foreseeing changes in reader needs. This enables focus on major future service demands and solving key service innovation challenges while avoiding risks, reducing mistakes, and increasing the probability of success. Bill Gates once commented on Steve Jobs: “He didn’ t really know much about technology, but he had an amazing instinct for what works” [?].

4.2 Strategic Planning Capability

Strategic planning capability is an integrative or transformative capability based on value analysis of the external strategic environment (economic or feasibility analysis) and factual analysis of the internal strategic environment (technical feasibility analysis). In other words, it is the ability to transform environmental opportunities into library action based on strategic environmental analysis. As previously discussed, strategic planning capability is the ability to look far ahead and accomplish the following: (1) Build a foundational architecture by designing a reasonable organizational vision, mission, and core values for the library; (2) Reasonably design or reform the library’ s organizational structure, institutions, mechanisms, and culture to establish good internal “production relations” that facilitate continuous improvement in service and innovation capabilities; (3) Particularly, organically combine environmental opportunities with library strengths to formulate reasonable service strategies and service innovation strategies based on foreseeing the “vaguely right.”

4.3 Strategic Coordination Capability

Strategic coordination capability is a comprehensive ability to obtain, integrate, and utilize resources, specifically including coordinating personnel, resources, and work. Good strategic coordination capability requires the director to: (1) Possess certain authority or influence to convince others through virtue and competence; (2) Be able to attract professional talent; (3) Skillfully use influence to secure various needed important resources; (4) Have clear thinking to distinguish between important and urgent work and assign tasks reasonably; (5) Conduct comprehensive optimization and integration of important people, materials, and matters; (6) Be broad-minded, skilled at coexisting with librarians of different opinions and working styles, and treat everyone equally.

4.4 Strategic Communication Capability

Without relationship, there is no communication. Communication is the pipeline connecting people, the bond building trust, and the bridge spanning chasms, aiming to transmit information, resolve interface friction, establish connections, improve relationships, and coordinate actions. Especially in the context of Chinese social culture, communication is an important task for university library directors that indeed consumes too much energy: external exchanges, inter-library cooperation, requesting resources from superiors, cross-departmental coordination within the university, and internal library coordination—all these tasks are built upon sufficient and effective communication. Otherwise, almost all subsequent work cannot proceed, and all “processes” cannot occur, unfold, or flow. Strategic communication capability is the ability to express, connect, and solve important problems—a strategic-level management capability rather than a professional technical one. If a director has strong strategic communication capability, it becomes easier (though not inevitable) to establish good cooperative relationships with external partners, secure human, financial, and material resources from the university, and create a harmonious and congenial atmosphere within the library. Thus, strategic communication capability is a director’s “soft” power, which sometimes can be harder than other “hard” powers.

4.5 Strategic Control Capability

University library strategic management is a long-term, systematic, and complex task that must establish corresponding long-term negative feedback mechanisms for timely reflection and correction of important deviations. As the library leader, the director must: (1) Control business development direction—what readers need, what “we” can do, what has prospects, and what represents a “window of opportunity”; (2) Dynamically monitor whether phase milestones are achieved, analyze main problems and their root causes, and systematically propose corrective measures from the source; (3) Possess good self-control capability: first, have appropriate self-awareness—knowing what you don’t know is more important than knowing what you know, and knowing what you shouldn’t manage is more important than knowing what you should manage; second, avoid reckless reforms—never reform what predecessors left behind upon taking office, then reform today’s work when inspiration strikes tomorrow, as if not reforming means not innovating and not making waves means inaction or incompetence, with reform and disruption becoming proof of one’s capability and achievements, easily negating others or one’s own past while busily pursuing “transformation and upgrading” driven by various technological capitals without bearing the costs of misguided reforms; third, avoid blind command—directors must control their desire to express, command, and control, focusing on important matters rather than unimportant ones, doing the right things rather than doing things right. If a director does all the subordinates’ work, are subordinates still necessary? If the director must personally solve everything, it

only demonstrates poor leadership—failing to select and use the right people, establish reasonable processes, norms, and standards, and cultivate subordinates into self-managing leaders.

In summary, foresight is a discovery that depends on the director's strategic foresight capability. Strategic planning formulation, strategic organization and implementation, and strategic control are “transformation” works between discovery and realization. Strategic planning depends on strategic planning capability, strategic organization and implementation depend on strategic communication and coordination capabilities, and strategic control depends on strategic control capability. Specific implementation is realization—the work of deputy directors, department heads, and librarians that does not require the director's personal involvement, only requiring proper construction of structure, institutions, mechanisms, culture, and selection and use of the right people.

5 Capability Development Mechanisms

Capability is the integration and utilization of specific elements such as concepts, thinking modes, knowledge, technology, and experience. Therefore, to cultivate and develop back-end, concrete, problem-solving strategic foresight, strategic planning, strategic coordination, strategic communication, and strategic control capabilities, accumulation, integration, and application of front-end elements are needed, requiring first the enhancement of various front-end foundational capabilities.

5.1 Cultivating Meta-Capabilities

Meta-capability is the ability to achieve self-awareness, self-control, active environmental adaptation, self-growth, and iterative upgrading. It is the starting point of all capabilities—the capability to cultivate capabilities. (1) Learning ability. Learning is about making progress, learning from others, doing addition, and can update concepts, enrich knowledge, and upgrade skills; reflection is verification, correction, and eliminating the false to retain the true, doing subtraction—the deeper the reflection, the clearer the truth. Library leaders must not only learn library science knowledge but also understand background knowledge related to library science, especially management knowledge, experience, and skills. Learning ability is a dynamic capability for acquiring, understanding, and internalizing knowledge, experience, skills, and techniques, and is the foundation for the existence and continuity of other capabilities. Cultivating learning ability requires strong learning awareness, good learning thinking, methods, skills, and pathways, and being adept at reflection, combining learning with thinking, and learning with doing. (2) Meta-cognitive capability. The object of cognition is external, concrete objective existence, while the object of meta-cognition is internal, abstract subjective cognitive activities. Cognition is the premise of meta-cognition—there must be cognition before meta-cognition—and meta-cognition is the reflection, critique, and enhancement of cognition, with the two mutually reinforcing each other to ultimately achieve cognitive

goals. Meta-cognitive capability is a super-cognitive ability for self-awareness, evaluation, and reflection on cognition. Cultivating meta-cognitive capability requires maintaining diversified information channels, an open mind and thinking mode, a spirit of self-criticism, respecting objective existence such as human nature, facts, logic, science, and laws, advocating rationality, continuous learning, constant reflection, and promoting consistency between subjective and objective cognition. (3) Meta-thinking capability. Meta-thinking is thinking about thinking, with the object being subjective, abstract thinking—thinking modes and thinking processes. Meta-thinking capability is the ability to reflect on, evaluate, and upgrade one' s own thinking modes and processes. Cultivating meta-thinking capability requires maintaining open and diversified thinking; requires logical learning and training, focusing both on the process of deduction using rules within logical systems and on the logical systems themselves; and requires establishing continuous reflection and autonomous error-correction iteration mechanisms.

5.2 Enhancing Information Capability

In English, information and intelligence share the same meaning—they are the only means to eliminate uncertainty and the premise and basis for decision-making. Without information, rationality cannot function; with insufficient or untrue information, reliable decisions cannot be made. In this era of information explosion/proliferation, with widespread 普及 (popularization) of the internet and digital media technology and world flattening, people' s opportunities and capabilities for information acquisition have significantly improved, while information screening and 甄别 (discrimination) capabilities face tremendous tests in determining what constitutes true and useful information. Directors must possess strong information awareness, enhance information acquisition, screening, and utilization capabilities, skillfully use various information management tools and data analysis processing technologies, obtain information, meta-information, and background information related to decision-making through multiple channels and dimensions, and conduct screening, sorting, and evaluation to provide reliable basis for decision-making.

5.3 Enhancing Cognitive Capability

The inscription on the pillars at the entrance to the Temple of Delphi shines through the ages: “Know thyself.” Everyone' s cognition has limitations; the external world is often a projection or mirror of the inner world, with objective matters becoming subjective—this is human nature for the vast majority. Therefore, accurately knowing oneself and courageously negating oneself often goes against human nature, and especially admitting one' s own greed, selfishness, hypocrisy, ignorance, cowardice, and timidity is something only a tiny minority can achieve. Only by accurately knowing and skillfully negating oneself can one continuously change and improve oneself, thereby reaching higher, farther, and better places. The Sixth Patriarch of Chan Buddhism Huineng' s teaching

that “one should always place oneself in the lowest position” and Steve Jobs’ Stanford speech theme “Stay hungry, stay foolish” both convey this meaning. Cognition includes cognition of cognition (meta-cognition), self-cognition, cognition of others, professional cognition, and cognition of the objective world—it is a manifestation of rationality and the core basis for decision-making. The correctness of decisions depends largely, besides information, on cognitive level or cognitive capability. Cognitive capability is an abstract understanding ability that can see through phenomena to the essence or truth of things, helping to enhance rationality, discover the essence or truth of things, discover “first principles” [?], and make reasonable analytical judgments. Enhancing cognitive capability depends on breaking the “shackles of ignorance” and “shackles of knowledge,” depends on continuous learning and reflection, and depends on good meta-cognitive capability and logical thinking capability.

5.4 Strengthening Logical Thinking Capability

Logic is a powerful thinking tool that makes cognition and decision-making reasonable, while lacking logic is mere self-talk. Thinking is the process of reasoning or logical deduction, which can be deconstructed into two dimensions: breadth and depth. In terms of breadth, one should examine from as many dimensional perspectives as possible, avoiding one-dimensional thinking, especially for library science as an interdisciplinary field. In terms of depth, one should continuously question along logical chains without deviating from the topic, tracing back to the source to explore the truth. Logical thinking requires that every assertion have clear premises, assumptions, or facts, reliable evidence, a prudent reasoning process, and reflection on the correctness of conclusions. It is a definite, not ambiguous, consistent, not self-contradictory, organized, and well-founded thinking form. Logical thinking capability is an abstract connecting ability that ensures the rationality of reasoning processes and the reliability of conclusions, helping to draw correct conclusions through reasoning, thereby enhancing cognitive capability, discovering the essence and evolution laws of things, and clarifying underlying logical relationships between causal matters. Strengthening logical thinking capability requires good critical thinking awareness and logical literacy, requires a series of logical thinking trainings, and requires enhancement of learning ability and meta-thinking capability.

5.5 Enriching Imagination

Within cognitive boundaries, rely on rationality; beyond cognitive boundaries, rely on sensibility. If a problem is completely determined, only rationality is needed to obtain the optimal solution and formulate optimal goals and plans. If a problem is not completely determined, rationality has limitations and requires sensibility 加持 (support), requiring curiosity and imagination. Discovering problems requires curiosity; analyzing and solving problems requires imagination. Whether in strategic planning formulation or strategic organization and implementation, university library directors engage in uncertain exceptional work and

creative work that requires foresight and discovery, necessitating imagination. Imagination is not irrational wild thinking or aimless daydreaming, but rather based on rationality, maintaining professional sensitivity and professional external 钝感力 (insensitivity), diverging thinking based on fuzzy information, exerting intellectual tension, exploring various potential possibilities, seeing or approaching the essence and truth of specific matters, connecting relevant information, and conducting prudent reasoning to transcend rational boundaries and foresee the “vaguely right.”

5.6 Managerial Endowment and Training

As the library’s top manager, the director needs good managerial endowments, such as holistic awareness, altruism, tolerance, rationality, courage, and resilience, especially upright and kind character. Simultaneously, they need to master corresponding management knowledge and possess relevant management experience and skills.

In summary, on the basis of cultivating various meta-capabilities, through integrated application of information, cognition, and logical thinking, 叠加 (superimposed with) sensibility and imagination, strategic foresight and strategic planning capabilities are enhanced. Meanwhile, leveraging “innate” managerial endowments and “acquired” management training improves strategic coordination, strategic communication, and strategic control capabilities. University library strategic leaders fulfill their responsibilities through these specific capabilities: through strategic environmental analysis, they foresee trends, discover opportunities, and identify the right direction; they lead business strategic planning, strategic organization and implementation, and strategic control to successfully transform environmental opportunities, using the right methods and correcting important deviations; while specific implementation work relies on the professional capabilities of deputy directors, department heads, and librarians to execute the right approaches, as shown in Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper].

6 Conclusion

For university library directors engaged in strategic management and serving as library strategic leaders, whether they possess a library science professional background may not be crucial. Liu Bei seemed to have no particular skills yet established the Shu Han regime. Jack Ma did not graduate in computer science, finance, or logistics, yet created Taobao, Alipay, and Cainiao. Steve Jobs knew almost nothing about technology yet founded the great Apple company. Moreover, library science is an interdisciplinary field whose accurate understanding requires much background knowledge; it is an applied discipline where knowing and applying are not the same; it is a contextual discipline where knowledge and capability are not equivalent, and strong professional capability does not necessarily mean strong planning, organizational, or contextual integration capabilities.

Even the cleverest housewife cannot cook without rice. Human, financial, and material resources are the difficult, painful, and blocked points in strategic planning and implementation. However, if the director's main responsibility is defined as merely securing people, funding, and materials, this implies that anyone who can obtain these resources can be a director and a good director, emphasizing process/means while neglecting goals/ends. In short, those with library science backgrounds may not necessarily make good directors, and those without library science backgrounds may not necessarily make poor directors.

Success or failure depends on one person. Excellent university library strategic leaders should undoubtedly possess the clarity to understand human nature, the resolve to bury the past, the perseverance to rebuild cognition, the foresight to 洞察未来 (see into the future), and the solitary courage to press forward. They are skilled at transforming concepts, thinking, knowledge, and experience into higher-order cognition and "wisdom"; can extract important information from specific observations and thinking, 洞悉 (penetrating) the "first principles" and underlying logic of library strategic management and business development; can focus on major future service demands and formulate corresponding strategic plans; and can always take librarians and readers as the two central axes to 统筹性地 (holistically) coordinate various resources and promote continuous advancement in library service innovation and library civilization.

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Figure 1 University Library Director: Job Responsibilities, Capability Requirements and Development Mechanisms

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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