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Academic Library Consortia in Vietnam: Historical Context, Current State and the Prospect for Development

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DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously publishedby any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

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Date

ABSTRACT

The use of library consortia, an enhanced form of library cooperation, has become a strategic choice made by many academic libraries internationally in order to improve access to a wide range of content and services. By adopting the use of consortia academic libraries have utilised their combined purchasing and operational capacity to optimise their contribution to twenty-first century learning and research.

The implementation of consortia has not, however, been consistently applied between countries. Some developing countries in particular have been slow to realise and achieve the benefits offered by consortia, due to a variety of issues including the comparatively poor state of technology and other infrastructure; existing low levels of library cooperation and collaboration; and local social, cultural and political factors.

This research investigated whether Vietnam, as an example of a developing country with limited history of academic library cooperation, is able to adopt and successfully develop consortia as a model to improve access to content and the delivery of services. The research used a mixed methods approach in a two-phase sequential research design consisting of a questionnaire and interviews to collect data relevant to addressing the research question: Are library consortia suited as a means of cooperation by Vietnamese academic libraries, and if so how can they be successfully developed and implemented?

The findings provide a picture of the current and likely future state of cooperation and consortia among Vietnamese academic libraries, and support the view that they have not as yet adopted consortial activities as a standard business practice suited to the contemporary scholarly information environment. As a result the development and implementation of high-quality library content and services are hindered to an extent that impacts upon the nation's teaching and research productivity. Findings also suggest that although Vietnamese libraries are facing a variety of endemic difficulties, the use of consortia is a pragmatic and feasible approach to improve content and services and support academic institutions in their quest to underpin national development by improving teaching, learning and research.

Based on the findings of the research, a set of recommendations is provided with the aim of assisting the future development of academic library consortia in Vietnam.

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ABBREVIATIONS

(Vietnamese associations, societies, consortia and ministries)

CPER: Consortium for Purchasing Electronic Resources. This is a translation of the Vietnamese name of this consortium, the *Liên hợp thư viện về bổ sung nguồn tin điện tử* before the consortium was officially named *Liên hiệp thư viện Việt Nam* and with an English name *Vietnam Library Consortium* on their official website launched since November 2012.

FESAL: Federation of Southern Academic Libraries. Vietnamese name: Liên hiệp Thư viện các trường đại học phía Nam.

MCI: Ministry of Culture and Information. Vietnamese name: Bộ Văn hóa và Thông tin.

MCST: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. Vietnamese name: Bộ Văn hóa, Thể thao và Du lịch. Its former name was the MCI (Bộ Văn hóa và Thông tin).

MOET: Ministry of Education and Training. Vietnamese name: Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo.

MOST: Ministry of Science and Technology. Vietnamese name: Bộ Khoa học và Công nghệ.

NACESTI: National Centre for Science and Technology Information. Vietnamese name: Trung tâm Thông tin Khoa học và Công nghệ quốc gia.

NALA: Northern Academic Library Association. Vietnamese name: Liên hiệp Thư viện đại học khu vực phía Bắc.

NASATI: National Agency for Science and Technology Information. Its former name was NACESTI. Vietnamese name: Cục Thông tin Khoa học và Công nghệ quốc gia.

VILASAL: Vietnamese Library Association of Southern Academic Libraries. Vietnamese name: Liên chi hội Thư viện đại học phía Nam.

VLA: Vietnamese Library Association. Vietnamese name: Hội Thư viện Việt Nam.

VLC: Vietnam Library Consortium. Vietnamese name: Liên hiệp Thư viện Việt Nam.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Context of the research

Libraries have a crucially important and widely-recognised role to play in higher education in the support of teaching, learning and research, to the extent that academic libraries are now commonly considered to be at the heart of their educational settings. In order to provide constantly improving high quality services to their users, academic libraries are continually seeking different approaches to deal with financial shortfalls, budget cuts, or the added costs associated with emerging digital content and services. While libraries have long relied upon forms of cooperation to overcome operational or financial limitations, in more recent years they have turned to deeper and more formal cooperation in the form of consortia. Library consortia have become an effective and widely-used means by which academic libraries worldwide cooperate in order to optimise their resources and enhance the delivery of services and content. Publishers and vendors of digital scholarly content havein turn modified their business model in order to attract the large-scale business opportunities that consortia provide.

In response to an urgent need to reform Vietnam's higher education system (Hoang, 2015) the country's colleges and universities have attempted to improve their teaching and learning performance in many ways. Among these various approaches, colleges and universities have started in recent years to invest in their library services, as they have increasingly recognised that the library is an essential component of the educational mix that can support higher education institutions in fulfilling their missions. In addition, the government-led processes of quality assessment and accreditation now require colleges and universities to pay greater attention to their libraries which are now accounted as one of the 'criteria' in the set of ten standards that are used to assess the quality of a higher education institution.

The criteria applied to college and university libraries for the purposes of quality assessment and accreditation are quite general, requiring only that 'libraries have sufficient books, textbooks and other materials in Vietnamese and foreign languages to serve the needs of staff, lecturers and students. Libraries have electronic resources

serving teaching, learning and doing research effectively' (Vietnam. MOET, 2007). Academic libraries nonetheless find themselves facing many challenges both old and new in serving institutions that are required to demonstrate excellence in both teaching and research in an environment where chronic underfunding remains the norm. Libraries' resources in general remain of a poor standard and constantly struggle to maintain currency, and library services frequently focus on the lending of books rather than the provision of more advanced information services (Vu, 2012) that are the norm in other countries. A small number of Vietnamese academic libraries are receiving improved investment, but many others remain in a very inadequately developed state. What libraries in both of these categories share is a need to maximise resources and improve services.

Based on the experience of academic libraries internationally, cooperation appears to be one feasible approach to respond to the current situation of shortages faced by academic libraries in Vietnam. Across the globe libraries, irrespective of their financial circumstances, have found that the digital information economy is increasingly relying upon business models that favour a 'massification' of content and customer base. In this context cooperative arrangements in the form of consortia have proved to be widely used and successful in other countries. As Brooks and Dorst (2002) have argued, 'a good academic library must accumulate and deliver information resources within a vastly expanded information universe that is available to every student and faculty member. And only libraries that employ consortial affiliations wisely and well will prosper' (p. 47). To date, however, consortia have been little used in Vietnam. The purpose of the current research therefore is to investigate why it is that consortia have been underutilised by Vietnamese academic libraries, whether they are indeed suited to the Vietnamese context, and if so, how they might be encouraged and supported.

The precursor to my research on this topic arises in part from my workplace interest in establishing a cooperative operating environment between libraries in a multi-disciplinary university consisting of independent institutions. The challenge that was presented was that these libraries were operating independently without any real connections in terms of administration, professional engagement, resources and services. An environmental scan revealed that most other Vietnamese universities and their libraries were working in a similar situation. The lack of cooperation

between Vietnamese academic libraries in most areas of professional practice was apparent, and there was a strong ethos of independence and autonomy that prevented even libraries in the same institution from cooperating.

The absence of a culture of professional cooperation was indicated by Vietnam remaining an 'anomaly' amongst national library and information professions in that the country had no national association of professionals until 2006 (Lam, 1999). This placed Vietnam well in arrears of the profession in other developing countries that had formed their national associations and related forms of cooperation several decades earlier (Fresnido & Yap, 2014; Lam, 1999) . The situation that has prevailed in Vietnam is in stark contrast with a global trend, where even in nominally competitive business contexts cooperation and collaboration have emerged in the form of 'coopetition' as a preferred and necessary means by which service organisations optimise value (Mention, 2011).

This research was therefore underpinned by an interest in emerging forms of library cooperation as a means of enhancing the capacity for Vietnamese academic libraries to meet growing demands for content and services in the context of a developing economy and higher education sector.

1.2.   Statement of the issue

The concept of library cooperation and consortia are not new (Ford, 1995; Maskell, 2006) but they have received extensive renewed focus as contemporary academic libraries adapt to a scholarly communication environment increasingly dominated by digital contentand services. Academic libraries globally are being asked to do more with less, and are keen to leverage any advantage in the drive to retain their place at the heart of the academic information life-cycle at a time when access to content is increasingly de-centred to the users' desktop. In many countries, and for many types of activities, consortia are now the preferred means used by libraries to achieve the economies of scale that are best suited to providing value for money, particularly with regard to the acquisition and licensing of digital content. This phenomenon, which is at the centre of the activities of many contemporary academic library consortia, is described and discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

It is apparent however, that in a developing country such as Vietnam, where the need for library cooperation might be assumed to be the greatest, there is little established

tradition of cooperation and negligible use of consortia in their modern form. This study further investigates the reasons for this identified lack of use of consortia by Vietnamese academic libraries; examines the way in which consortia can be supported in the future, and considers the various impediments that might deter their future successful development and implementation.

1.3. Terms and definitions

It is necessary to define a number of terms that are integral to this research.

Academic library: A library that is an integral part of a college, university, or other institution of postsecondary education, administered to meet the information and research needs of its students, faculty, and staff (Reitz, 2004). In the Vietnamese context these are libraries serving colleges and universities.

Networking: The art of developing contacts within a profession and using them to advance one's work and career. Librarians do this by meeting colleagues at library conferences, participating in colloquia and round tables, volunteering to serve on committees, running for elective office, joining electronic discussion lists, etc. (Reitz, 2004).

Association: A group of individuals, or sometimes organisations, who have joined a formal organisation devoted to pursuing a common interest or purpose, usually by applying for membership and paying an annual membership fee. Associations are often found in the form of a 'professional associations', which are dedicated to promoting the interest of a specific profession and its practitioners.

More specifically, and in line with the use of the term in this thesis, professional associations referred to as library professional associationsinclude organisations such as the Vietnamese Library Association (VLA); The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and the American Library Association (ALA). These are examples of national library professional associations dedicated to promoting the interests of the library and information profession and its practitioners in their respective countries.

Cooperation: is defined as common effort or association of persons for common benefits. Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey (2001) state that *Cooperation*

ischaracterised by informal relationships that exist without any commonly defined mission, structure, or planning effort. Information is shared as needed, and authority is retained by each organisation so there is virtually no risk. Resources are separate as are rewards.

Cooperation is closely aligned with the concepts of coordination and collaboration.

Coordination is characterised by more formal relationships and an understanding of compatible missions. Some planning and division of roles are required, and communication channels are established. Authority still rests with the individual organisations, but there is some increased risk to all participants. Resources are available to participants and rewards are mutually acknowledged (Mattessich, Murray-Close, & Monsey, 2001).

Collaboration connotes a more durable and pervasive relationship. Collaborations bring previously separated organisations into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission. Such relationships require comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operating on many levels. Authority is determined by the collaborative structure. Risk is much greater because each member of the collaboration contributes its own resources and reputation. Resources are pooled or jointly secured, and the products are shared (Mattessich et al., 2001).

As discussed in this thesis, library consortia exist in many different forms involving varying degrees of integration of tasks, roles and functions that in many cases have many elements of coordination and/or collaboration. Rather than having the discussion constantly engaged in differentiating between them, the term 'cooperation' will be used to indicate all of the many forms of cooperation, coordination and collaboration.

Culture of cooperation: The thesis refers in the discussion to the *Culture of Cooperation* prevailing in Vietnam. The word 'culture'in this phrase has a meaning as defined by the *Oxford Dictionary*: 'the attitudes and behaviour characteristic of a particular social group' or by the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*: 'the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterises an institution or organisation'. The term *Culture of Cooperation* as used in the thesis therefore refers to attitudes and associated practices found in Vietnam with regard to cooperation.

Consortia: Many definitions of the term 'consortia' can be found in various sources from very general, informal and easy to access source such as Wikipedia to scholarly, formal and standard language dictionaries, and dictionaries that focus on the terminology of individual professions and disciplines such as library and information science.

Consortia is plural of *consortium,* which is a Latin noun, meaning 'partnership' 'association' or 'society', and derives from *consors* 'partner', itself derived from *con-* 'together' and *sors-*'fate'. *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines a *Consortium* as a group of people or companies that agree to work together. It is an agreement, combination, or group (as of companies) formed to undertake an enterprise beyond the resources of any one member.

In the discipline relevant to this study, the *Dictionary for Library and Information Science* defines a *consortium* as 'an association of independent libraries and/or library systems established by formal agreement, usually for the purpose of resource sharing. Membership may be restricted to a specific geographic region, type of library (public, academic, special), or subjectspecialisation' (Reitz, 2004, p. 172). *Harrod's Librarians' Glossary and Reference Book*, provides a definition that goes some way towards indicating the variety of models of consortial arrangements that exist, by defining *consortia* as 'resource sharing organisations formed by libraries; also termed co-operatives, networks, collectives, alliances, or partnerships' (Prytherch, 2005, p. 165).

A website of an international consortium, Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), provides an explanation of a *consortium* as a collective of libraries designed to accomplish more together than they can individually. Consortium membership can encompass libraries of a single type or of different types and sizes, and the consortium may be local, regional or national in scope. The difference between a library consortium and a library association was also noted, with the membership of a consortium being libraries at the organisational/institutional level, while members of library associations in most country are individuals (Electronic Information for Libraries [EIFL], 2014).

For the purpose of this thesis the term *consortium* is defined as *'an enhanced form of library cooperative that allows member libraries to work together on joint programs*

designed to share resources and/or services, and based on formal agreements between libraries'.

1.4.   The research question:

The main research question driving the focus and design of this research project is: *Are library consortia suited as a means of cooperation by Vietnamese academic libraries, and if so how can they be successfully developed and implemented?*

The sub-questions are:

What does the current state of library cooperation and consortia among academic libraries in Vietnam suggest for an adoption of library consortia within this community?

How can Vietnamese academic libraries overcome potential obstacles for consortia arrangements?

1.5.   Objectives

The research objectives are determined by the central research question and sub-questions. In order to address these questions, this research will:

1. Synthesise and analyse international examples of successful and unsuccessful consortia models in order to:

   - Provide comprehensive information on various models for Vietnamese academic libraries to learn from the experience of their counterparts;

   - Identify the benefits of consortia, especially the meeting between individual library interests and common interests in the Vietnamese context, for sustainable development;

   - Highlight the challenges and benefits thatconsortial arrangements can present to the Vietnamese academic library community.

2. Understand the socio-cultural and professional context in which Vietnamese academic libraries function by:

   - Examining the history and current state of library cooperative arrangements in Vietnam;

- Identifying key social and cultural norms that shape attitudes to cooperation in Vietnam;

- Obtaining opinions and input from Vietnamese academic library managers and senior managers of professional associations regarding the current state and future development of library consortia in the country.

3. Provide recommendations forthe successful future developmentand implementation of academic library consortia by considering:

- Potential issues encountered by Vietnamese academic libraries;

- Positive and negative factors that contribute to success and failure of library consortia; and

- Suitable models of consortia for academic libraries in Vietnam.

1.6. Significance of the research

With a desire to gain and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue of cooperation and consortia in the context of Vietnam, this study comprises the first major research into the adoption of consortia by Vietnamese academic libraries.

According to Do (2014), Vietnamese academic libraries are in need of an effective means of sharing resources and active policies to support this activity. Do argues that the issue has been under discussion for a considerable time but there has not been any intensive research conducted to explore the actual needs for sharing resources among academics other than general papers describing the views of individuals on the issue (Do, 2014).

This research and its presentation supplement the international literature on library cooperation and consortia by undertaking an intensive examination of the use of consortia by a certain type of libraries (academic libraries) in a developing country (Vietnam). It provides an overview picture of the state of library cooperation and consortia among Vietnamese academic libraries and insight into the prospect for library consortia being successfully developed and implemented in Vietnam. It is the first major research study on these issues.

The results of this study can inform Vietnamese academic libraries, their parent institutions and relevant government agencies of the potential issues and approaches

to developing library consortia with the intention of improving academic library resources and services, and the contribution they can make to achieving high quality, teaching, learning and research outcomes. Developing successful consortia will enable Vietnamese academic libraries to provide better services and expanded content, to save money and time through resource and service sharing, and to contribute more positively to higher education outcomes in Vietnam. An associated aim is to foster a culture of cooperation among library communities in Vietnam, which will extend beyond participation in particular consortia.It is hoped that once consortia are accepted as a standard form of cooperation by Vietnamese academic libraries, cooperative practices between libraries will be gradually consolidated and broadened and cooperation will become established as a norm rather than an exception.

The foremost audiences for this research are Vietnamese academic libraries, particularly potential leaders of future library consortia, and decision makers and policy makers at institutional and governmental levels. While the research is heavily contextualised by the circumstances in Vietnam, it is believed that the outcomes and recommendations will also have relevance to other developing countries and higher education systems of south-east Asia.

1.7. Research design

In order to address the research question and sub-questions, this study employed a mixed method approach, including an extensive literature/document review, survey and interviews. A two phase explanatory sequential research design was employed as a primary approach to this research in order to assess the results of both the surveys and the interviews. Through use of these selected research methods and data collection techniques, all of which are commonly used in the field of library and information science, this study was able to accomplish the objectives of determining whether library consortia can be successfully established by Vietnamese academic libraries and making recommendations regarding their development and implementation.

Cooperation in the form of consortia has proven to be an effective choice made by academic libraries in various countries whereas there has been a perceived lack of this type of cooperative arrangement among libraries in Vietnam. In order to identify

whether consortia can be an appropriate means of cooperation for academic libraries in Vietnam and to understand how they can be developed and implemented successfully, this study sought the opinions from stakeholders throughout the countrythrough their responses to the survey and to interviews. The findings of this study draw upon the data regarding the current state of cooperative arrangements; the prerequisites of consortia establishment; the difficulties libraries are facing including the major obstacles for consortial arrangements, and the possibilities for future development of academic library consortia.

1.8. Presentation of chapters

Chapter 1 provides an introduction to this research including the context of the research, major objectives set to achieve the answers for the research question, the research design and the contribution of the research to the field of study.

Chapter 2 provides a background for this research with a focus on the relevant social, cultural, economic and educational aspects of Vietnam. This chapter particularly describes the development of Vietnamese libraries including their previous record of cooperation, and demonstrates how closely this has reflected other aspects of Vietnamese social, cultural and economic history.

Chapter 3 presents the results of a literature review, drawing from the corpus of literature regarding library cooperation and consortia. It focuses on numerous issues including the widespread use of consortia in their various forms; the reasons for libraries to form or to participate in consortia; the impacts and benefits that consortia bring to libraries; and the potential barriers to the establishment and sustainability of consortia, including the relevant success factors.

Chapter 4 provides a detailed description and justification of the research design of this study, the methods of data collection and the basis for the data analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 5 analyses data from the survey questionnaire provided to academic librarians in Vietnam. It presents data describing the current state of, and attitudes towards, library cooperation and consortia among academic libraries in Vietnam.

Chapter 6 presents findings from the interviews with senior managers of library associations and consortia and library managers of selected academic libraries.Data

analys is focused on opinions regarding the possibilities for successful development and implementation of consortia serving Vietnamese academic libraries.

Chapter 7 discusses major findings of the study and sets out recommendations intended to establish a sound basis for the development of future academic library consortia in Vietnam.

Chapter 8 draws some major conclusions of this research project.

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH BACKGROUND

2.1. Introduction

Libraries have a crucially important role in the support of higher education and research, and academic libraries are now commonly considered to be at the heart of their educational settings. In order to provide constantly improving high quality services to their users, libraries continue to take different approaches to deal with financial shortages, budget cuts, or the added costs associated with emerging digital content and services. Enhanced library cooperation in the form of consortia has become an effective and widely-used way for many libraries worldwide to collaborate in such a way that they are able to optimise their financial and human resources. Vendors and publishers of digital scholarly content have in turn modified their business model (marketing; subscription services; database aggregation, and licensing practices) in order to attract the large-scale business opportunities that consortia provide.

Vietnamese libraries in general, and academic libraries in particular, are currently facing many critical issues around the implementation of best-practice suited to twenty-first century library content and services, and are in need of a suitable approach that will entrench their role in a rapidly changing information environment. The expanded use of consortia potentially provides Vietnamese academic libraries with the means to upgrade their content and services by drawing upon a business practice that has become an established practice in the digital information economy.

The research question of this study was designed to pinpoint major issues concerning the establishment and implementation of consortia for academic libraries in Vietnam, and therefore it is important to understand the context that forms the background of the research. As an important and established cultural institution in Vietnam, libraries have been influenced by the various cultural and social-economic factors that have prevailed throughout the country's recent history. This influence has shaped the key characteristics of Vietnamese libraries, including their overall level of development; focus in developing services; relationships with the government, parent institutions

and users; the form of their professional associations, and preferred methods of doing business.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the social, cultural and economic aspects of Vietnam as well as a general account of Vietnamese libraries and their current cooperative arrangements. There is a focus on those aspects of the past and current environments that influence the Vietnamese response to large-scale, cooperative ventures, and that may affect future cooperative arrangements for the country's academic libraries.

2.2. General views of Vietnam

Vietnam is located in the south-eastern part of the Indochinese peninsula with an area of 330,972 square kilometres and a population of 89.71 million (Tổng cục Thống kê [General Statistics Office], 2014) and is conventionally divided into regions as displayed in Figure 2.1. According to the World Bank's data by country, in 2013 Vietnam produced a gross domestic product (GDP) of 171.4 billion US dollars and was ranked as a lower middle income country (World Bank, 2014b). This status as an emerging economy (or 'developing country') underpins many of the challenges facing the higher education sector and the libraries that support it.
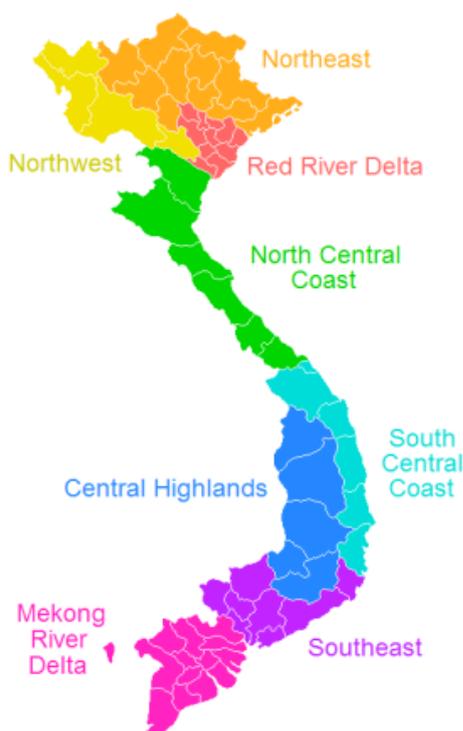
Figure 2.1: *Maps of regions in Vietnam*

2.2.1. Administration system

Vietnam is formally divided into three levels of administration that consists of provinces, districts and communes. The state administrative system of Vietnam consists of 59 provinces and 5 municipalities, 600 districts and 10,400 communes (Tổng cục Thống kê [General Statistics Office], 2014). At each administrative level of the system, the People's Council serves as a representative body and the People's Committee acts as an executive body to carry out major administrative functions. The structure of this system itself is similar to those in many other countries, however, the Vietnamese administrative practices brought their own problems which were pointed out clearly in a country profile of Vietnam prepared by the Division for Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM) and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations. It was noted that 'unclear laws' became weak spots resulting in problems in the coordination of relationships between the central and the local governments, and compounded the problems arising from a tradition of local autonomy (United Nations, 2004). Despite the introduction in 1996 of an Ordinance on the Specific Tasks and Powers of the People's Councils and People's Committees, and other laws and decisions stipulating the roles and the responsibilities for each level of authority in the administrative system, problems have continued in delivering integrated and coordinated public services (United Nations, 2004). These problems resulted in the ineffective implementation of various decisions made by the central government, thereby affecting many other aspects of the civic and social life of Vietnam.

The number of civil servants who hold permanent jobs in state agencies and receive a salary from the state budget was 2.8 million people in 2013 (Voice of Vietnam [VOV], 2013), working in all sectors of government employment. The administrative sectors and service organisations have a separate salary table based on their positions, titles and qualifications (United Nations, 2004). Despite significant changes after salary system reform in 1993, civil servants working in state administration sectors have the lowest level of salary. This situation has led to various problems regarding attitude, behaviour and the sense of responsibility of many civil servants in state agencies in general and state administration sectors in particular. These circumstances were described by the United Nations (2004) as follows.

Salary is insufficient for civil servants to maintain an average living standard. The gap between nominal salary and actual income has widened. Therefore the current salary levels fail to motivate civil servants to perform better and to attract and retain talented staff for public sector. This is one of the main reasons causing corruption, low performance and low quality of services.(United Nations, 2004, p. 12)

2.2.2. Economy

The economy of Vietnam is based on agriculture and small-scale manufacturing. From feudal ages until the present time, Vietnam has functioned as an agricultural civilisation and economy that has relied heavily on irrigated or wet rice cultivation. Despite occasional waves of migration from rural to urban areas, a majority of the population has continued to live in rural areas, although according to a profile of Vietnam conducted by the Federal Research Division of the Library of Congress the percentage of the rural population decreased from 85% in 1980 to 75% in 2004 after the economic reform, which was known as *Innovation* (*Đổi mới*) policy was implemented (Library of Congress – Federal Research Division, 2005). This Library of Congress report also reveals that in 2005 the ratio of the workforce employed in agriculture and its related industries was 60%. Most of the rural population rely on production from individually owned farms, although overwhelmingly farms in Vietnam are very small with an average area of less than one hectare (Marsh & MacAulay, 2002). People living in rural areas traditionally dwell in small villages or communes undertaking farming based on small family-holdings, with the family unit being a favoured approach to doing business for the Vietnamese people.

The period from 1975 after the country was unified until prior to the economic reform campaign in 1986 was a long period of stagnation for Vietnam's economy that emerged badly damaged from years of war. This period witnessed the ineffective application, and then the failure, of the so-called 'industrial/agricultural cooperatives or collectives' (*hợp tác xã*), an economic model imposed by the government, which was popular at one time in several countries in the region, especially those with experience of socialist systems. Vietnamese farmers both in the North and the South, especially in the Mekong Delta area, made successful objections to the collectivisation of agriculture (Howie, 2011). The consequence of this resistance brought about important change in the government policy which had previously been viewed as intransigent. With the new economic reform policy, Vietnamese government 'stopped promoting agricultural and industrial cooperatives. Farmers

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were permitted to till private plots alongside state-owned land, and in 1990 the Government passed a law encouraging the establishment of private businesses' (Library of Congress – Federal Research Division, 2005, p. 3). In the resulting period of economic renewal, the Vietnamese economy improved significantly, and it has continued to rely heavily on small, often family based enterprises. It has recently been recorded that in Vietnam, 'small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employ 77 percent of the workforce and produce over 40 percent of the nation's GDP … Vietnam's SMEs are key drivers of the nation's economy' (Bantug-Herrera & Taylor). As McMillan and Woodruff (2002) concluded over a decade ago, 'Vietnam offers an example of robust growth of private firms even with an almost total absence of formal institutions to facilitate business' (p. 156). The characteristics of small and medium sized enterprises in Vietnam were described by Freeman (1996) as 'small scale, individual or family operation, lack of standardised production, failure to conform with government labour, licensing, and taxation laws, strongly competitive nature, and impermanence' (pp. 180-181). It can be said that small enterprises have made an important contribution to the development of the Vietnamese economy and to a considerable extent they define its essential character and the manner of business-government relationships.

2.2.3. History

The history of Vietnam consists of a long struggle to both establish the nation and resist foreign invasion. The Hung Kings are widely credited with founding the country of Vietnam and establishing the very first dynasties between 2769 BC and 200 BC (Nguyen & Vo, 2005). In the latter years of this historical period Vietnam experienced the first invasion by the Chinese and learnt the first lessons in resisting invasion.

As a result of that first invasion Vietnam was dominated and ruled as a Chinese colony for over a thousand years (200 BC until 938 AD) during which many Chinese people migrated and settled in the Northern areas of Vietnam. Because of this long period under Chinese domination, the culture, language, writing system and national identity of the Vietnamese were heavily influenced by their northern neighbour (Jandl, 2013). During the period of Chinese colonisation, Vietnamese people staged

numerous unsuccessful rebellions, until a successful rebellion was eventually led by Ngo Quyen, restoring independence from China in 939 AD.

The Ngo Quyen rebellion instigated nearly a millennium of independence that lasted until 1858 under successive dynasties of Ngo, Dinh, Anterior Le, Ly, Tran and Later Le, with significant ongoing development in the economy, culture and education, especially during the Ly Dynasty. However, the independence of the nation was continually threatened by attacks of invaders such as Songs, Mongol Yuans, Chams, Mings, Dutch and Manchus. Vietnam was dealing with various civil wars during the dynasties of Ngo, Dinh, and the Anterior Le, and some major internal power struggles under the Tran Dynasty and the Posterior Le Dynasty (Dao, 2002). One of the biggest and longest civil wars was a power struggle between Trinh Lords in the North and Nguyen Lords in the South which endured from 1627 until 1802 when the Nguyen Dynasty was founded by Nguyen Anh.

A hundred years of French colonisation of Vietnam started with the attack from French ships in Danang in 1858. This transformative event came in the wake of the arrival of French and European traders and missionaries in the 16th century. During this time the Nguyen Dynasty still reigned but witnessed the change of nine emperors within a period of 40 years. A range of resistance movements against French rule was organised by Vietnamese patriots including peasants, feudal intellectuals, former or current court officers, several Kings of the Nguyen Dynasty and communist-led parties. The French colonial government eventually collapsed and the war ended in 1954 after the Battle of Dien Bien Phu. The advent of European trade and commerce followed by a hundred years of colonial rule left substantial influences on many areas of Vietnamese society including culture, law, education, religion, language, architecture, and the transport system. One of the positive influences was the development of 'a transliteration for the Vietnamese language' (Corfield, 2008, p. 15) which was contributed by French missionary Alexander de Rhodes. This Romanised alphabet became an official alphabet of the Vietnamese language replacing the Chinese scripts and *Nôm* (Chinese rooted scripts) used previously.

After the Battle of Dien Bien Phu and the signing of the Geneva Agreement in 1954, Vietnam was temporarily divided into the two geographic regions of north and south with the intention that they be reunited after two years (Nguyen, 2006). However,

this reunification was not achieved until 1975 in the wake of the American War (referred to in Australia and the US as the Vietnam War).

2.2.4. Culture

Ancient Vietnam was believed to be one of the world's earliest civilisations and societies. The Vietnamese were one of the earliest people to have practiced agriculture, and the basis of Vietnamese cultural life was built on the rural village and a wet rice civilisation (Nguyen, 2004). Throughout a history of several thousand years, the Vietnamese people lived mainly by subsidence farming and other related agricultural activities.

The village-based agricultural life and an ethos that valued independence and family connections determined many of the key characteristics of the Vietnamese people. Community and autonomy are the two essential characteristics of the Vietnamese rural areas to the extent that it has been said that they 'coexisted as the two sides of a matter' (Tran, 2001, p. 192; translated from Vietnamese by the researcher). The heavy reliance on local community resulted in closed villages that existed independently and often in isolation. Every village was an autonomous realm with little or no external connection or communication with others. The resulting reliance on the immediate village community and the resulting sense of autonomy are the traits that created a range of strengths and weaknesses in the characteristics of the Vietnamese people. On the one hand, the Vietnamese people possess the spirit of solidarity, mutual assistance and collective action that were promoted by the strong village community, and as a result they have been able to retain their autonomy and remain self-sustaining in the face of many challenges. On the other hand, the over-riding sense of local community diminishes the significance of individuals and forms habits of dependence, relying fully upon the action of the collective. When relying upon the collective, individuals are often seen to lose concern about, or responsibility for, the many things that are held in common (Tran, 2001). Another weakness is that individuals may become envious and in favour of eradicating individual achievement so that others cannot rise above or apart from the crowd. The habits derived from this traditional sense of community have resulted in 'the fact that in Vietnam the concept of 'value' is quite relative and reflects a subjective approach resulting from an agricultural way/mode of thinking' (Tran, 2001, p. 196; translated from Vietnamese

by the researcher). According to this mode of thinking, the 'good' if embodied in an individual can be perceived as undesirable or perverse, and inversely, the 'bad' if collectively recognised can be accepted. The influence of the autonomous village nourishes a sense of individual ownership, selfishness, sectarian spirit and local interest (Tran, 2001).

The values, habits and forms of social and commercial interaction learnt from rural economies have deeply influenced the forms of post-agrarian societies that have emerged in Vietnam. The Vietnamese people retain a belief in independence and small-scale enterprise and a propensity to be suspicious of broadly-based networks or cooperatives, whether it be sponsored by government or major industrial or commercial enterprises. As a result cooperation and collaboration have not yet evolved as a 'normal' way of doing business, and this has impacted in turn upon the education and library sectors where institutional autonomy remains highly valued.

2.2.5. Education

The national educational system of Vietnam consists of formal education and continuing education. Conventional levels of the educational system range from early childhood to higher education. The legal framework for Vietnam's education system depends on the Law of Education supported by numerous regulations and administrative ordinances of many types at state and other levels. The higher education institutions include colleges that provide college education and universities that provide undergraduate level education with Bachelor, Masters and Doctoral qualifications (Vietnam. National Assembly, 2005). According to the most current statistics provided by the MOET in 2013, there were 214 universities and 207 colleges in Vietnam, and in the same year, the enrolment in higher education was 2,177,299 students enrolled in Vietnamese tertiary education institutions, catered for by 87,682 faculty staff (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MOET], 2015). The Law of Higher Education, which was approved and promulgated by the Vietnam National Assembly and validated in 2013, provides further legislative support to Vietnamese colleges and universities (Vietnam. National Assembly, 2012).

Colleges and universities in Vietnam are categorised mainly in two types: public institutions and private institutions. Based on the statistics of colleges and universities provided by MOET, it can be seen that the respective proportion of

public and private institutions was 67% and 33% in 2009, but had changed rapidly to 80% and 20% by 2012. All current regional universities and national universities are public institutions. The essential difference between public institutions and private institutions is that the public institutions are funded by the government (Vietnam. Prime Minister, 2010) and the private institutions operate on the principle of financial autonomy, self-balancing of revenue and expenditure, and payments made to government of funds derived from tuition fees (Vietnam. National Assembly, 2005, p. 25). Public universities have an advantage over private universities in terms of their financial circumstances due to the reliable receipt and level of financing provided by the government. The annual budget allocation of public universities is sufficient to ensure they sustain a basic level of operation and services, and this in turn impacts upon the level of operation of their library services and collections.

At present, there are three regional universities and two national universities that were recently categorised as regional universities that made the number of this type five institutions (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MOET], 2012). The three regional universities include Thai Nguyen University, Hue University and Da Nang University, and the two national universities are Vietnam National University-Hanoi and Vietnam National University - Ho Chi Minh City. National universities and regional universities are large institutions that function as the foremost universities in the respective regions.

Colleges and universities in Vietnam had not formed an official association until recently, when MOET issued an official call for participation in an upcoming conference to establish the Association of Universities and Colleges (Vietnam. MOET, 2014). The establishment of this association may herald a more favourable climate for cooperation between academic institutions and their libraries.

As stipulated in Vietnam's Law of Education, education has been established as a national priority in terms of investment, with an acknowledgement that budget allocations 'must hold the key role in the total resources invested in education' (Vietnam. National Assembly, 2005, p. 4). The Law of Higher Education has stipulated that increasing investment in higher education is a government priority (Vietnam. National Assembly, 2012). In practice, the expenditure on education in 2011 was 12.62% of the total expenditure from the national government budget (Tổng cục Thống kê [General Statistics Office], 2014). However, it is difficult to

locate government-sourced statistical data regarding the level of investment in higher education, and most sources of data come from international agencies. The World Bank's data reported that public spending on education in 2010 occupied 6.3% of the gross domestic product (GDP), and it was 20.9% of the total government expenditure for all sectors (World Bank, 2014a). The expenditure on tertiary education therefore occupied a considerable proportion in the national GDP; however, because Vietnam is considered a 'lower middle income country' it is difficult for national investment in higher education to make significant and rapid improvements.

Despite education receiving a significant proportion in the total government expenditure, it should be noted that this investment came from an extremely low base. Education at all levels still requires significant investment from non-government sources, and therefore foreign aid has been an important component of the resourcing strategy required for continued development of the higher education sector. From 2006 to 2010 Vietnam received foreign aid of US$11 billion as official development assistance (ODA) across all social and economic sectors, and international assistance remains an important component of the funding mix for higher education (McCarty, Julian, & Banerjee, 2009).

Higher Education Reform

Higher education in Vietnam has been undergoing a comprehensive reform which is widely recognised to be vital to the development of the country. This reform has received increasing attention from the national government since 2005, as reflected by the adoption of the reforming Resolution no. 14/2005/NQ-CP, dated 2 November 2005 (Hayden & Lam, 2010).

Strategic objectives set by the Higher Education Reform Agenda focus on increasing the participation rate in higher education; improving the quality and efficiency of the sector; developing research-oriented institutions; and improving the system of governance at institutional, regional and national levels. The key area that needs urgent reform is that of governance, with an emphasis on strengthening institutional autonomy and improving merit-based selection mechanisms (Vallely & Wilkinson, 2008). One of strategies of the reform is the designation of 14 key universities including the two national universities, three regional universities and nine other large universities which take on the role of core institutions in the higher education sector (Hayden & Lam, 2010).

It is apparent that the ongoing process of higher education reform impacts directly on academic libraries that are essential components supporting institutions in their drive for improvement.

2.3. Overview of Vietnamese libraries

2.3.1. Libraries and librarians

In Vietnam, libraries are theoretically considered to play a significant role as a cultural and educational institution despite the fact that their actual roles and influence have not been widely recognised or appreciated by society in general. Toan Anh (1971), an influential researcher and commentator on Vietnamese cultural development in the 1970s, described how libraries provide evidence of the cultural practices of every era because they play a significant role in building up the culture of a nation bycreating a treasure of documents including books and other materials in order to support research in all fields (Toan Anh, 1971).

Libraries in Vietnam at the current time are categorised into two main types and their several sub-types as described in the *Library Ordinance* (Vietnam. National Assembly, 2000). The public library network includes a national library and libraries established by the People's Committee at all levels; and the specialised and multidisciplinary libraries consist of libraries of higher education institutions such as universities or colleges, which are commonly called academic libraries (*thư viện đại học*), and also includes school libraries including those at schools of all levels of general education and other pre-tertiary educational institutions; libraries serving state agencies, army agencies and other political, economic, social, and professional organisations (Vietnam. National Assembly, 2000). According to a report prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Information in 2012 there were 80 libraries in research institutes or centres for scientific and technological information; 300 academic libraries and 24,746 school libraries (Bộ Văn hóa Thể thao và Du lịch [MCST], 2012).

The most recent Regulations of Universities require universities to have a library to support teaching, learning and research needs of their institution's community (Vietnam. Prime Minister, 2010). However, not all universities and colleges do have their own libraries and many of these libraries would have been considerably below

the required standards for staff numbers and qualifications, service levels, scale and scope of content, and commitments to ongoing resourcing.

Librarian is a title given to most staff working in all types of libraries in Vietnam. It is difficult to obtain updated statistics on libraries as they are not available from formal and online sources such as those provided by the General Statistics Office of Vietnam.

In the most recent figures available from the mid-2000s, the number of librarians working in centres for science and technology information in Vietnam was approximately 5000, of whom 65% held a Bachelor's degree in library studies and 4% had obtained a Master's degree, with the remaining 31% having no formal qualification. The number of qualified librarians working in public libraries including the National Library of Vietnam, 64 provincial libraries and 600 district libraries was 2,000, and the number working in school libraries was 9,171 (Tran, 2006). Another figure provided by a another source in 2008 indicates that the proportion of librarians working in academic libraries who held professional degrees in librarianship was less than 30% (Nguyen, 2008) . It is also the case that many 'librarians' working in non-academic libraries, especially in school libraries where librarian is often taken as a concurrent position, have no formal library education or training. Therefore the percentage of librarians who hold a professional qualification is likely to be lower in non-academic than academic libraries. It is worth noting thatthe number of academic libraries is much smaller than the number of libraries of all other types; with 230 academic libraries compared to more than 6,000 public libraries, 17,000 school libraries and 2,700 military libraries (Thuvientre, 2011). A majority of library managers hold a Bachelor degree or higher in library science, as this is a necessary qualification for their position.

Library jobs are nonetheless considered a low paid job in the Vietnamese administration sectors. Those civil servants who hold a Bachelor or higher degree of librarianship should receive a salary at an initial point of 2.10 as assigned in the current salary scales applied to the state administration sectors. Whereas, an initial point of salary in the same table assigned for civil servants holding the same degree working in other agencies under the same sectors is at the higher rate of 2.34. As a result it has become 'difficult to attract quality personnel to libraries because salaries are relative low compared to other professions' (Welch & Murray, 2010, p. 530).

Because of this comparatively low salary library staff must often engage in other part-time jobs in order to cover their living expenses or to improve their financial position. The regular salary of librarians is low to the extent that supplementary sources such as additional income from their home institution and part-time jobs are important or necessary to provide additional income.

2.3.2. Legal framework and legal documents

There is an acknowledged lack of a proper legal and regulatory framework for Vietnamese libraries, especially for academic libraries. According to Nguyen and Le (2014) academic libraries have received very little support in terms of the legal documentation or infrastructure in the recent decades apart from the *Regulations onOrganisation and Operation of Academic Libraries* (Quy định về tổ chức và hoạt động của thư viện trường đại học) issued in 1986, and *The Sample By-laws of Organisation and Operation of Academic Libraries* (Quy chế mẫu về tổ chức và hoạt động thư viện trường Đại học) issued in 2008.

At a governmental level, the Library Ordinance currently serves as an overarching statute regulating all libraries. A new library law, replacing the existing Ordinance, has been under consideration for some time and is expected to be approved in the near future. At ministry level, there are a number of legal documents issued by ministries to regulate libraries under their control. The MCST has issued various legal documents that principally focus on the public library system but there are few equivalent documents specifically for academic libraries. In 2008 the MCST promulgated *The Sample By-laws of Organisation and Operation of Academic Libraries*, which was one of few documents specifically aimed at regulating aspects of the operation of academic libraries. The legal documents issued by MOET have been mostly directed to the tertiary education institutions and there has been little attention given to libraries serving those institutions. Another document, the *Master Plan for Library Development until 2010 and Vision towards 2020*, was prepared and issued by the Ministry of Culture and Information, the former name of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (Vietnam. MCI, 2007). This document gives some attention to academic libraries and confirms the significant position of academic libraries in colleges and universities. In a broader context, academic libraries were included in the Regulations on Universities issued by the Prime Minister of Vietnam

as one of the facilities supporting a university's learning and teaching missions (Vietnam. Prime Minister, 2010).

2.3.3. Library education and training

Library education is considered a significant factor for future library development in Vietnam. At the early stages of professional librarianship in Vietnam, the Dong Duong Central Library in Hanoi was the only training agency, having organised 13 six-month training courses for 220 archivists and librarians of governmental agencies within a period from 1931 to 1945 (Toan Anh, 1971). Due to upheaval of the country, library training and education was ceased from 1945 to 1954 (T. Q. Tran, 2006). From 1954 to 1960 training was resumed and the first intermediate level training courses were open with the support of experts from the former Soviet Union. In 1961, the first faculty of Librarianship was open by the Cultural Theoretics and Professional College - Hanoi (now the Hanoi University of Culture) (Tran & Gorman, 1999; Tran, 2006). According to Tran (2006), currently there are three institutions that offer Master's qualifications in Library Studies, and eight institutions that conduct Bachelor-level programs. In addition there are a number of professional and non-professional institutions that offer programs for lower levels of education. In 1960, 78 librarians were trained with intermediate level of librarianship, a number of whom later became influential figures in Vietnamese librarianship. There was also approximately a further hundred individuals who were trained in the Soviet Union or Eastern European countries. As this generation of Vietnamese librarians and library educators in the North acquired their knowledge and skills mainly from the Soviet Union (Tran, 2006), librarianship and library education in Vietnam at this time was therefore strongly influenced by the theory and practice of Soviet librarianship (Tran & Gorman, 1999). The preferred Vietnamese system of education in this period was generally considered 'one of memorisation and recitation, with little focus on analytical thinking' (Baudoin & O'Connor, 2008, p. 84). Vietnamese libraries and the library profession were improved as a result of receiving a professional education, however in most cases libraries remained underdeveloped and inadequately resourced with low collection numbers resulting in closed-stack operations with limited lending and borrowing.

The period of *Innovation* (*Đổi mới*) opened up opportunities for Vietnamese librarians to receive their education in Western countries. In 1993, with funding support from the Harvard-Yenching Institute, the first group of 18 Vietnamese librarians from the North, the South, the Centre and the Mekong Delta was sent to the United States to study for Master's degree in library studies at the Simmons College Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences (Simmons GSLIS). The Vietnamese Scholar-Librarian Program ended in 1996 after reaching the goal of 'creating a national network of highly trained librarians' (Baudoin & O'Connor, 2008, p. 85) for Vietnam. The outcome of this program did not immediately influence library education in Vietnam; however, the professional education acquired by these librarians influenced their approach to organising libraries in line with more modern practices based around more open and accessible collections that eventually required necessary improvement for the current LIS education. With the support of government funding, especially foreign aid projects, a number of libraries successfully applied the 'practices and theories of the U.S. librarianship' (Baudoin & O'Connor, 2008, p. 86), resulting in significant development of Vietnamese libraries in terms of organisation, services and automation. In 2005, with the aid of a substantial grant from the Atlantic Philanthropies, another group of 25 Vietnamese librarians from the four learning resource centres was sent to the Simmons GSLIS for Master's programs. Along with formal professional programs, the Simmons GSLIS also encouraged and supported the Vietnamese graduates to participate in other networking activities such as conferences and workshops in order to update their knowledge. In addition to those who graduated from Simmons GSLIS, there were also a number of librarians and faculty staff trained in the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. These graduates have in turn made a significant contribution to libraries, and to a certain extent library education, in Vietnam.

2.3.4. Organisation of academic libraries

Academic libraries are managed under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, while their parent institutions fall mostly under the purview of the Ministry of Education and Training in terms of their curriculum and scholarly orientation. At the same time, in terms of administrative management, a number of institutions are under other ministries, including the Ministry of Transport, the

Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Construction, the Ministry of Finance and Planning, and the Ministry of Defence.

In Vietnam, the capacity of academic libraries to satisfy users' needs is considered inadequate (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo. Vụ Đại học [MOET. Department of Higher Education], 2008). Serving a large community of students and staff, 2,177,299 students enrolled in 2013 and 87,682 faculty staff (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MOET], 2015), academic libraries should place considerable emphasis on cooperative ventures, as progressive modes of cooperation have been widely recognised as the key to maximising service levels and user satisfaction for academic libraries (Gorman & Cullen, 2000).

As noted most colleges and universities in Vietnam are under the Ministry of Education and Training but all types of libraries are under the governance of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism. There are advantages and disadvantages for academic libraries provided by this administrative framework. The Ministry of Education and Training has not assigned any departmental units or staff to have oversight of academic libraries, and hence there has been a perceived lack of direct support from the parent ministry to the academic library sector.

In a majority of higher education institutions the library is placed directly under the direction of the Board of Rectors, however, the level of independence and the right to make decisions on behalf of libraries varies from institution to institution. Apart from libraries from the two national universities and three regional universities, which are granted full independence in terms of administration, finance, staff recruitment and other operational functions, most libraries are independent in making decisions on purely professional issues, but not on many administrative issues associated with finance, facilities or equipment, all of which need to be referred to other departments Only a few academic libraries enjoy full independence and autonomous decision making. For these libraries, the concept of 'library annual budget' was understood as merely the funding amount for purchasing library materials that can only be committed under the supervision of the finance department or the like. Libraries do not recruit staff or directly agree on working contract with employees, but an institutional Personnel Office handles key negotiations and agreements. Many libraries are even placed under the management of another department of the institution, which in turn reports to the institutional Board of Rector on the library's

behalf. Libraries under this type of administrative structure appear to encounter more difficulties in their operation (Bộ Văn hóa Thể thao và Du lịch. Vụ Thư viện [MCST. Department of Library], 2008). In a broader context, limited coordination and cooperation between ministries that are responsible for financing higher education institutions disadvantages colleges and universities in their need to access the invariably limited government funding (Sheridan, 2010). This situation in turn exacerbates financial shortages suffered by academic libraries.

2.3.5. Academic libraries, quality assurance and accreditation

The quest to improve the quality of higher education institutions is at the heart of the higher education reform that currently receives significant attention from the government, the relevant ministries and the respective academic institutions. Quality assurance and accreditation has been established as one of the four key areas of the reform to ensure national and international recognition of Vietnamese higher education institutions. This process consequently has great impact on academic libraries.

Academic libraries are involved closely with the higher education quality assurance and accreditation process because of their critical role in providing scholarly content to meet the needs of teaching, learning and research. Libraries were designated as one of the 61 criteria in the set of 10 assessment standards promulgated together with the Decision no. 65 /2007/QĐ-BGDĐT dated 1 November 2007 by the Minister of MOET. This set of standards includes coverage of the following key activities:

1) Mission and objectives of the university (two criteria);

2) Organisation and management (seven criteria);

3) Curriculum (six criteria);

4) Training activities (seven criteria);

5) Managerial staff, lecturers and staff (8 criteria);

6) Learners (nine criteria);

7) Scientific research and technology application, development and transfer (seven criteria);

8) International cooperation (three criteria);

9) Library, learning equipment and other facilities (nine criteria); and

10) Finance and financial management (three criteria)(Vietnam. MOET, 2007).

A few researchers, both local and international, have devoted attention to this topic. One of the significant contributions to the success of Vietnamese academic libraries with regard to accreditation has been based on research undertaken in order to develop a framework for qualityassurance and performance measurement (Ninh, Tanner, Johanson, & Denison, 2010).

2.4.   Brief history of library development under major historical periods

Vietnamese libraries have a long but not striking history of development and innovation. The modest developmental state of Vietnamese libraries in general and academic libraries in particular has not resulted in a lengthy literature or highly developed professional discourse. Nevertheless, the development of various types of libraries across different historical periods has reflected the substantial efforts of several generations to establish and operate libraries under difficult conditions.

The first library was recorded to be established in the 11th century under the Ly Dynasty during the Vietnamese independence period (Le, 2009; Toan Anh, 1971). During the period of French colonisation from mid-19th century there was a certain positive influence on library development. According to Toan Anh (1971), the French fundamentally reorganised libraries and their functions and introduced a new type of library to Vietnam, the public library. Before the French War commenced in 1946, some French Generals had been interested in establishing libraries as part of the cultural resources of Vietnam and as a contribution to their legacy as a colonial power. This included the initiation of a Colony Library in Saigon, and they also established an official position in charge of the General's Palace Library. The Department of Library (*Nha Thư Viện*) and the Indochina Library in Hanoi were established in 1917. A head of the Southern Library was subsequently sent to Hanoi to undertake a course of librarianship and to assist the Head of the Department of Library and the Indochina Library in order to set up the Central Library. This person then returned to the South to reorganise the Southern Library in Saigon (Toan Anh, 1971), which is now known as the General Sciences Library, the largest public library in the South. In the North the Central Library in Hanoi was established, which was later transformed into the National Library of Vietnam. In addition, the French

colonial government was responsible for renovating various public libraries throughout the Indochina area, plus the creation of public reading rooms in the major cities, and a number of librarians were sent to the Ecole Nationale des Chartres in Paris for professional training in information science (Toan Anh, 1971).

In the North of Vietnam, in addition to the Central Library in Hanoi, there were two academic libraries established in the form of the Central Library of the University of Indochina in Hanoi and the Library of the School of Medicine which was a part of the University of Indochina, also based in Hanoi. There were two specialised libraries available in the North at this time, one was the Library of the General Civil Work Inspector Office and the other was the Library of the French School of the Far East (Trường/Viện Viễn Đông bác cổ), which was a substantial library boasting considerable Asian studies collections. This library is now the Library of the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences. In Central Vietnam, there were the Library of French Resident Superior, and the Library of the Hue High School for the Gifted, which was formed by a merger with four other libraries of the Nguyen court (Library of Duy Tan King; Library of the Domestic Affairs; Library of Security Council; Library of Bao Dai Emperor) and the Library of the Club of French Military Officers. In 1945, all of these libraries were combined to form the Library of the Institute of Culture in Hue where there were already established libraries for priests and the Quang Tri Society. Nha Trang, a province of the Central regions, boasted the presenceof the Library of the Institute of Oceanography (Toan Anh, 1971).

Despite these many promising developments under French colonial governance, the French war and associated political upheavals in the period from 1946 to 1954 brought about many changes for libraries and other cultural institutions. While some libraries were moved or transferred and changed name to help ensure their protection, a number of others were merged, dissolved or even destroyed (Toan Anh, 1971).

During the period of U.S. intervention and the American War from 1955 to 1975 libraries in the South received little attention from the government of the Republic of Vietnam and as a result, their development was very much of 'an ad hoc nature'(Macmillen, 1990, pp. 89-90). Where libraries were ableto make a little progress it was due to the work of devoted individuals rather than the government. The poor state of libraries in the South during this period was described in a report

prepared by the Department of Archives and Libraries, which noted their shortcomings in terms of both quantity and quality (Toan Anh, 1971). In Southern Vietnam, there was one national library (serving Southern Vietnam only), one general public library and two reading rooms, making four 'public libraries' in all. In addition there were approximately 16 specialised libraries, eight university libraries and several school libraries (Toan Anh, 1971). Although there were a number of libraries formed during this period in the North of the country, and from the view of a local researcher libraries received special attention from the Vietnamese communist party and the government (Bộ Văn hóa Thể thao và Du lịch [MCST], 2012), their development was severely limited in terms of both collections and services (Macmillen, 1990).

In 1975, after nearly 20 years of the American War, the North and the South were politically reunified. In the wake of the reconstruction of the nation there was a considerable increase in the number of libraries and the size and scope of their collections, but a new direction for library development only began in 1985, with the intention of developing library and information services to a point where they could contribute to national development (Tran, 1999). However, despite the best intentions Vietnamese libraries still faced numerous constraints in essential requirements such as financial support, staff skills and qualifications, and the unavailability of technologies taken for granted in more developed economies (Tran, 1999). While the higher education sector made slow improvement during this time, their libraries continued to lag behind those of other nations in terms of their contribution to learning, research and national development.

Recently, with increased awareness of the important role libraries need to play in Vietnam's higher education, more attention has been paid to the assessment of quality. This practice of quality assessment driven in part bythe adoption of the Regulations on standards of quality evaluation of higher educationinstitutions issued together with Decision No. 65 /2007/QĐ-BGDĐT by the Minister of the Ministry of Education and Training (Vietnam. MOET, 2007) has pushed universities and colleges to begin investingmore heavily in library development and innovation with funding drawn from state budgets, foreign sponsored projects, and other sources including borrowed capital. Some grants from government and international sponsored projects have been dedicated to the construction of library buildings

supported by modern facilities (Le & Vo, 2007), and annual institutional budget allocation for libraries have also relied upon supplementation from aid projects. As a result a number of modern and substantial academic libraries have been established, built and brought into operation since the mid-1990s. The Library and Information Centre was formed based on the merging of libraries of member universities of the Vietnam National University – Hanoi, and a seven floor building from which to provide its service was completed in 1997 (Nguyen, 1998). The first in the group of four Learning Resource Centres, the Hue Learning Resource Centre, which were sponsored by Atlantic Philanthropies was opened in June 2004 and another three were subsequently established in the provinces of Can Tho in July 2005, Da Nang in April 2006 and Thai Nguyen in November 2007 (Pham, 2007; Robinson, 2007). Three of these four learning centres were created to support regional universities: Hue University, Da Nang University and Thai Nguyen University. The fourth was built for Can Tho University – a leading university in the Mekong Delta region but not categorised as a regional university by the Ministry of Education and Training (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MOET], 2012). In addition the Central Library of Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City was established and commenced services in May 2005 (QC, 2005), and the Ta Quang Buu Library of the University of Polytechnic in Hanoi was totally renovated and re-opened in October 2006 (Trường Đại học Bách khoa Hà Nội [Hanoi University of Science and Technology], 2006).

Other than a small number of libraries that have benefited from substantial investment, the majority of college and university libraries remain underdeveloped in terms of infrastructure, facilities, equipment and the organisation of services. Many libraries operate without automation, and suffer a severe lack of funding for resources and facilities (Bộ Văn hóa Thể thao và Du lịch. Vụ Thư viện [MCST. Department of Library], 2008). At present many libraries are still relying on card catalogues because they have not been automated. Figure 2.2 gives an example of a contemporary card catalogue.

Figure 2.2: *Card catalogues as a searching facility*

This growth in academic libraries has been matched by an improvement in the standards of qualifications expected of library staff, and once again this has been assisted by international aid and development funding. With the recent injection of foreign funds into Vietnam, a number of librarians have had the opportunity to obtain updated knowledge and skills through access to both overseas degree programs and shorter training courses (Denison & Robinson, 2004; Wilmoth, 2002). With an ever increasing number of professionally trained and skilled staff, setting up new libraries with modern infrastructure and facilities has been made easier (Baudoin & O'Connor, 2008).

Despite these important improvements in facilities and staff, there remain a number of key challenges if ongoing improvements to library services, collections and activities are to be achieved and thereby enhance the roles and capabilities of libraries in the service of higher education and research. In order to fulfil such objectives academic libraries will need more than buildings, facilities and technology (Vu, 2012). In particular they need to organise and provide library services to a higher standard than has been achieved thus far. Given the condition of a developing country where budget constraints are a constantly inhibiting factor, recent rates of investment supported by funding from various sources such as city-sponsored projects and funds borrowed from the World Bank Projects, which mostly require debt payment by the next generations (Dang, 2009; Vallely & Wilkinson, 2008), might be useful but are likely to be unsustainable sources for academic libraries to ensure their operation in long term. Therefore, seeking ways to ensure the ongoing

development and improvement of Vietnamese academic libraries that reduces the need for both capital and recurrent expenditure is of the utmost importance. Enhanced cooperation in the form of consortia, as has been successfully implemented elsewhere, could be a possible approach for Vietnamese academic libraries in their search for improved but sustainable models of operation and service delivery.

2.5. Library cooperative arrangements in Vietnam

The history of library development in Vietnam has recorded no major cooperative arrangements among Vietnamese libraries other than the existence of some professional associations that have existed in certain periods. Cooperative arrangements in the form of consortia specifically arranged for academic libraries have been totally absent.

In order to establish a general picture of the current state of library cooperation in Vietnam, it is helpful to briefly review the development of some cooperative arrangements from the earliest efforts to the present.

In the North, the first cooperative effort was made in 1970 when the Vietnamese Government Council issued Decision No. 178/CP dated 19/09/1970 in regard of library tasks (Pham & Le, 2006) . Prior to the issuing of this Decision, there was almost no cooperation in any library activities. In 1972, a Library Council was established under the Ministry of Culture with members drawn from large libraries in Hanoi. The Council drew on the services of three subcommittees with responsibility for drafting cataloguing rules; creating a general bibliography of ethnic documents; and coordinating the purchase of foreign materials (Pham & Le, 2006). The formation of this Library Council was seen as considerable progress in library cooperation, however, for many reasons, the subcommittees did not achieve any significant outcomes and their work was eventually ceased. As a result, around 1980 'the Library Council ended its historic mission' (Pham & Le, 2006, pp. 1-2).

In the South, a library association was established in December 1958 with the expectation of fostering experience, ideas and expertise sharing among librarians (Toan Anh, 1971). This association was successful in the very early years of its operation, before entering a period of fallow years induced by the hardship and financial shortages associated with the American War. Recovery commenced in 1968

due to the substantial efforts made by a new executive committee, and the revitalised association fostered experience and expertise sharing activities between libraries and librarians; organised book exhibitions; published newsletters; translated a library glossary book; and edited and republished a Classification Manual. The association also initiated engagement with other international library federations. This association ceased to exist in 1975 with the reunification of the country (Lam, 2001).

Vietnamese libraries in general, including academic libraries, took further steps towards cooperation by participating in professional organisations created to support all types of libraries. This has been a very recent development when compared to most other countries, with most such organisations only being formed in the last years of the twentieth century. There were, however, prior to this, some informal library organisations that can in retrospect be seen as precursors to the more formal organisations and associations that have since followed. For example a Library Club was formed in 1998 as a form of informal networking for librarians. It served as a focus for librarians, mainly academic libraries, in Ho Chi Minh City and in the South more widely to gather and share their common interest in improving professional services. Members expected that the Club's activities would promote other forms of library cooperation (Thư viện Cao học [Graduate Library], 2014).

The Northern Academic Library Association (NALA) was established in 2000 (Trường Đại học Bách khoa Hà Nội [Hanoi University of Science and Technology], 2012). This organisation in 2012 had 54 members from academic libraries in the North, and membership has increased threefold since the association's foundation.

Figure 2.3: *A meeting of NALA in 2003*

In 2001 the Federation of Southern Academic Libraries (FESAL) was established (Ban Biên tập [Editorial Board], 2007). As its name suggests this association was primarily established to facilitate university and college libraries; however, it has also welcomed membership by public, school and special libraries. The number of FESAL members had grown to 57 by the time FESAL transferred its membership to the Vietnamese Library Association of Southern Academic Libraries (VILASAL) in 2007. Although these two associations are identified as professional organisations for academic libraries, their membership is open to institutes, schools and even some information resource centres of respective organisations.

Figure 2.4: *Establishment of FESAL, 2001*

In 2006 the Vietnamese Library Association, the first formal library association at a national level, was established after considerable effort and advocacy from local and overseas individuals who were concerned about the development of the library sector in Vietnam (Lam, 2001; Welch & Murray, 2010) . The arduous process required to establish the VLA is also reviewed by Lam (1999). Figure 2.6 records this event on the day of its establishment, and Figure 2.7 reflects a recent major training activity provided by the VLA.

Figure 2.5: *Establishment of the Vietnamese Library Association in October 2006*

Figure 2.6: *A training course organised by VLA in 2012*

One year later, in 2007 the Vietnamese Library Association of Southern Academic Libraries (VILASAL) - a branch of VLA - was formed and undertook to provide services on behalf of academic libraries in the South. As noted, when VILASAL was formed, FESAL transferred its 57 members to this organisation and ceased its role. The number of members of VILASAL was 79 in 2015.

Figure 2.7: *A meeting of VILASAL in 2013*

Another organisation providing a source of professional engagement for Vietnamese librarians is the Vietnam Scientific and Technological Information Society, and in addition several provinces have their own regional library associations.

A number of libraries in Vietnam also started to broaden the basis of their cooperation by participating in the activities of major international professional associations. Several libraries were represented for the first time at the International Federation of Library Associations Conference held in Bangkok in 1999, with sponsorship provided by support of the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences or from library suppliers. Libraries were also increasingly represented at conferences and meetings of other regionally-based professional organisations such as the Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL) or ASEAN University Network Inter-Library Online (AUNILO).

Some individual libraries such as the Central Library of Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City and the Learning Centre of Da Nang University expressed concern about the need for greater professional cooperation and have made some attempts to unify member libraries in their own university. The Central Library conducted relevant research at the ministry level and organised a workshop on 'Solutions to the Organisation and Development of the Vietnam National University Library System' in 2007 (Huynh, Hoang, Pham, & Le, 2007), and the Learning Resource Centre of Da Nang University organised a workshop titled 'Da Nang University Library Network: Standardisation, Integration and Development' in 2010. Both of these workshops were aimed at achieving better cooperation and integration of services across the member libraries serving the respective universities.

Welch and Murray (2010) have noted some other forms of cooperation between Vietnamese libraries and librarians undertaken in order to enhance professional infrastructure. These include the development of a Vietnamese periodicals database; the translation of an abridged fourteenth Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC); and the Vietnam Journals Online (VJOL) project sponsored by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP).

It should be noted, however, that many cooperative arrangements that are considered both standard and essential in other parts of the world, such as inter library lending and union catalogues, remain almost totally absentfrom Vietnamese library services.

The most significant cooperative arrangement for Vietnamese libraries - and the most relevant with regard to this research project - is the formation of the first library consortium in Vietnam, the *Liên hợp bổ sung nguồn tin điện tử* (Consortium for purchasing electronic resources) named in English as the Vietnam Library Consortium on E-resources (Liên hiệp Thư viện Việt Nam [VLC], 2015; Ta, 2008). VLC was initiated in April 2004 asa consortium for purchasing electronic resources by a group of five large libraries including the National Centre for Science and Technology Information (NACESTI); the General Sciences Library-Ho Chi Minh City; the Library and Information Centre of Vietnam National University – Hanoi; the Central Library of Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City; and the Can Tho University Library. It was then officially and formally established in December 2004 (Liên hiệp Thư viện Việt Nam [VLC], 2015).

Figure 2.8: *The 8th meeting of VLC, in 2010*

Figure 2.9: *A workshop organised by VLC in 2006*

This consortium was formed as a result of an introduction into the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI) by INASP (Robinson, 2007). As reflected by the name of the consortium, the main purpose of the VLC has been to provide collaborative purchasing in order to reduce the cost of electronic resources. The consortium also organises training workshops, conferences, and annual meetings for its members to discuss the needs for particular resources or update members with regard the availability of new products. Non-member librariesare invited to attend these meetings as a way of promoting the consortium's services.

The consortium membership includes all types of libraries including public, academic, school, and special libraries.Libraries from the National Agency for Science and Technology Information (NASATI), which was previously the NACESTI, the Academy of Social Sciences, the two National Universities and the regional universities have been key members of VLCand contribute a major part of funds for the group purchasing of electronic resources. The consortium is also dependent on funding from sponsors and only those member libraries with the capacity to contribute major funding can affect the group purchasing decisions. The number of 26 members at the time of formation in December 2004 had grown to 40 libraries in late 2006, of which many had commenced their membership without paying a shared cost. This was possible in the first few years following establishment as the consortium received sponsorship from the Atlantic Philanthropies, INASP and other organisations (Liên hiệp Thư viện Việt Nam [VLC], 2015). After a number of

years in operation, this consortium has still not experienced any significant growth in terms of services. Since 2009 the consortium has been able to pay for the joint purchased resourcesand the current number of members is 27 libraries, of which 20 are academic libraries (Liên hiệp Thư viện Việt Nam [Vietnam Library Consortium], 2014). There is no standard framework for cost sharing among member libraries and this varies from 1,000 to 50,000 USD, and is determined by negotiations between NASATI and consortium members at annual meetings.

The NASATI plays the role of the lead member of VLC. NASATI and the other key members contribute the major part of the funds required for the purchasing of the contents on behalf of the consortium. In this way VLChas relied upon a small number of members who incur the major cost of keeping the consortium in operation. This may be one of the reasons why this consortium has had limited operation, acquiring just one or two electronic databases per year.

The operation and activities of the VLC has, however, improved recently with an increasing number of members and a greater stability of the annual contribution made by the consortium's members. In November 2012, VLC launched its own website and changed its name to the Vietnam Library Consortium (*Liên hợp Thư viện Việt Nam*). In order to maintain group purchasing NASATI - the core member of VLC, applied some new business methods to the consortium including marketing, lobbying, and assigning a special cost sharing scheme for the purchase of electronic resources.

At the time of conducting the data collection (survey and interview) for this research, there was no consortium other than the VLC that is officially in operation in Vietnam. It should, however, be noted that an announcement was made concerning the establishment of a consortium of economics libraries (Central Institute for Economic Management, 2010) but no further activities have been evident.

Pham and Le (2006) described a number of barriers to collaboration for Vietnamese libraries. These included legal and administrative barriers; physical and geographical barrier; psychological barriers (the fear of losing autonomy, ignorance and lack of interest in cooperative programs); and traditional and historical barriers. Based on suggestions by some libraries and information centres in response to the official letter of the National Library of Vietnam, Pham and Le have suggested a number of activities that are needed to support collaboration. They conceded that the process of

cooperation was just restarting and that collaborative acquisitions should be focused on a small number of urgent tasks such as purchasing foreign materials; building a full text database of Vietnamese documents including dissertations; supporting Vietnamese studies; and acquiring scientific and technological documents and textbooks. Pham and Le also recommend several practices to implement these plans, such as appointing a coordinating board and subcommittees with their regulations and by-laws, using the same standard tools and software including a Machine Readable Cataloguing (MARC) software and a set of authorised keywords or national subject headings, and developing a policy and plan for interlibrary loans. They concluded that 'the need of collaboration and cooperation among libraries does exist and increasingly become imperative. The matter is what we should do so that such a vital desire can come true soon' (Pham & Le, 2006, p. 2).

2.6. Chapter summary

It can be said that the need for enhanced cooperationamong Vietnamese libraries is already apparent, but there appears to be a lack of motivation and the necessary conditions to initiate and operate library consortia. In general, Vietnamese libraries still lack this kind of leadership and expertise. The state of functioning in a society that retains low levels of awareness and appreciation of the benefits of libraries, compounded by entrenched budget constraints, affects the quantity and quality of information resources, service provision, staff engagement and devotion. In this national context, academic libraries in Vietnam have discussed cooperation since the 1980s (Macmillen, 1990) but there have been very few cooperative arrangements for academic libraries in Vietnam implemented as successfully as desired. Although aware of the benefits of cooperation, the universities for the most part have been more or less isolated in the investment and use of their own libraries, and this has proven to be a costly practice. Based on the experience of other countries, there is ample evidence to explore the use of library consortia as a means of cooperation that will potentially play an important role in helping libraries in Vietnam to achieve the synergies for enhanced service capabilities; a more rapid transition to the use of digital content; cost savings, and a response to the particular information requirements of a nation with great ambition in terms of its national learning, teaching and research.

CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1.   Introduction

With the advent of the digital storage and transfer of content in recent decades, even larger and better resourced libraries have struggled to be self-sufficient in meeting their users' needs. In order to sustain and expand services and provide users with required content libraries have increasingly found it necessary to rely upon forms of cooperation and collaboration. Successful library cooperation became, as Gorman and Cullen (2000) stated, 'part of what constitutes the professionalism of librarianship' (p. 373). Libraries in many countries have realised the significant role that cooperation in the form of consortia can play in sustaining and even expanding access to content as they struggle to afford access to increasingly large-scale databases of content.

Libraries have increasingly relied upon consortia as a formalised means of collaboration aimed at maximising their access to digital content, and thereby meeting the needs of their users. As Simpson (1990) has affirmed: 'One means libraries have employed to cope with the more versus less tension, or financial pressure, is to cooperate formally through library consortia, cooperatives or networks' (p. 83).

The practice of the development and implementation of library cooperation including consortia has been discussed in a substantial body of scholarly and professional literature. A review of that literature is necessary in order to establish a context for the study of the present state and future prospects for consortia in Vietnam where this type of cooperation has not been specifically established for academic libraries.

This Chapter provides an overview of the literature on library cooperation in the form of consortia, focusing on the issues that could potentially inform Vietnamese academic libraries of the practical solutions to the formation and implementionof consortia. The literature review begins by examining the widespread use of consortia in their various forms, the reasons for libraries to form or to participate in consortia and the impacts and benefits that consortia bring to libraries. Potential issues or barriers to the establishment and sustainability of consortia are presented. Relevant

literature on successful models for consortia and consortia-based services that have been used in other countries are also discussed.

Although a major corpus of literature on library cooperation and consortia was dated around the two periods of rapid growth for consortia and there has been less recent or current literature on the issue, a number of principal issues covered in these earlier publications are still relevant to the situation of Vietnamese academic libraries if they wish to make consortia a part of their future operations

3.2. Consortia as a phenomenon

Librarians in the late nineteenth century implemented a number of important and influential forms of cooperation in order to enhance their services, with E. A. Mac and Melvil Dewey both noting the advent of library 'cooperation' in their respective publications between 1885 and 1886. It is therefore possible to agree with a conclusion such as that of Alexander (1999) that, 'the history of library cooperation is as long as the history of "professional" librarianship in America' (p. 20).

The word 'consortium' initially emerged in the library literature during the 1950s and the 1960s, and Kopp (1998) has noted that it appeared to be 'a good word for libraries' (p. 7) as the phenomenon of deep cooperation had been apparent in many important milestones in the evolution of library services.

The term 'library consortium' has only been widely used to describe a form of library cooperation since the 1980s (Nfila & Darko-Ampem, 2002), after a large number of closely cooperating networks or 'systems' of libraries were formed in the U.S. during the period of ten years from 1961 to 1971. As Simpson (1990) noted, the closely-related term 'network', borrowed from the emerging discipline of information technology, has at times been used interchangeably with consortia as a means of describing forms of library cooperation.

Since that time there has been a variety of definitions of 'consortia', many of which originated with the literature of business or management. As Simpson has also noted, however, 'A profession such as librarianship tends to define its terminology to suit its own needs', and continues with a definition of consortium: 'The term consortium, which means an association or partnership, generally has been supplanted by the term cooperative, which implies… a kinder, gentler form of working together with, perhaps, less of a self-serving focus' (Simpson, 1990, p. 85).

Alberico (2002) described consortia in terms of the library profession's long established traditions of cooperation: 'Consortia, which involve groups of libraries cooperating for mutual benefit, are a natural outgrowth of a spirit of sharing that lies at the foundation of all libraries' (p. 63).

As noted in the Introduction, for the purpose of this thesis the term *consortia* refers to an enhanced form of library cooperative that allows member libraries to work together on joint programs designed to share resources and/or services, and based on formal agreements between libraries.

3.3.   Development of library cooperation and consortia

Cooperation between academic libraries has a long history. Cooperative cataloguing arrangements between academic libraries began as early as 1876 with the formation of a Committee on Cooperation in Indexing and Cataloguing College Libraries; the initiation of a shared indexing and cataloguing program managed by the American Library Association in January 1898; and the introduction of interlibrary lending of books from the University of California library, also in 1898 (Alexander, 1999).

From this beginning, libraries continued to develop various forms of cooperation for the development and delivery of both services and collections to the point where consortia have become widely-used with a focus on sharing the cost and work involved in acquiring and licensing digital content.

In many countries, especially developed countries with established traditions of professionalism in library services, cooperative ventures that we would now retrospectively recognise as consortia, have a very long history of playing important roles in national library activities. For example, one of the earliest, most longstanding and successful academic library consortia, the Triangle Research Libraries Network, was established in the early 1930s by the University of North Carolina and Duke University (Bostick, 2001).

The number of library consortia in the world is increasing rapidly and marked by two major 'waves' of development that reflected libraries' primary needs at the time (Wade, 1999). The first period of significant growth in the number of library consortia occurred during 1960s and 1970s, with the consortia established during this time mainly created with the intention of sharing resources and expertise during the early development of library automation. The second identifiable period of consortia

development was in the 1990s and 2000s, focusing on the provision of cost-effective access to the rapidly expanding range of what might then have been referred to as electronic resources, and might now be known as digital content (Horton, 2013).

Cooperative arrangements in the form of consortia are therefore a trend that has been ongoing for a number of decades for academic libraries. This phenomenon has become a standard and widely accepted means of operating for academic libraries in many parts of the world, taking the traditions of library cooperation into a period of ever closer financial, administrative, service and management partnerships (Allen & Hirshon, 1998; Gorman & Cullen, 2000; Potter, 1997).

The momentous development of consortia in the United States provided an example to the rest of the world, to the point that the country was described as the 'home of library consortia' in a 1990's review of the existing consortia models conducted by Wade (1999), the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of UNILINC Limited, Australia. Cooperative arrangements in the US at the time of Wade's report offered various examples and models of library consortia. These included major state-wide consortia playing important roles in cooperative activities such as the Georgia Library Learning Online (GALILEO); Louisiana Library Network; OhioLINK, TexShare in Texas, and the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA) (Nfila & Darko-Ampem, 2002). Wade also described a number of academic library consortia, such as the Arizona University Libraries Consortium (AULC); The Council of Connecticut Academic Library Directors (CCALD); Illinois Library Computer Systems Organisation (ILCSO); Missouri Research Consortium of Libraries (MIRACL); Pennsylvania Academic Library Connection Initiative (PALCI); and the Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC) (Wade, 1999). Wade also reported that OCLC was established in 1967 and 'brokered its shared cataloguing services through regional groups such as NELINET, ILLINET, PALINET and SOLINET etc.' (p. 6). Library consortia were also noted to have been developed in Canada, with examples given of the Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries (Wade, 1999); the TriUniversity Group of Libraries; the Scholars Portal of the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL); and the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (Ridley, 2012). It has been reported that there are approximately 20 Canadian consortia participating in the International Coalition of Library Consortia (International Coalition of Library Consortia [ICOLC], 2014).

In Australia, the foremost academic library consortium, the CAUL Electronic Information Resources Consortium (CEIRC), established in 1998, acts as a committee of the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL), the peak body serving Australian university libraries. CEIRC significantly influences and enacts policies and practices of Australian academic libraries in support of the national higher education agenda and provides support to enhance the value of Australian university libraries (Council of Australian University Librarians [CAUL], 2014). Other significant Australian consortia include UNILINC Limited (UNILINC) an education library network established in 1978 (UNILINC, 2014), and the National and State Libraries Australasia E-Resources Consortium (formerly the NSLA Consortium, and before that the CASL Consortium) which was established in 2002 (National & State Libraries Australasia [NSLA] E-Resources Consortium, 2014), and manages the digital content delivered to users of the national and state libraries through Electronic Resources Australia (ERA). New Zealand has initiated Electronic Purchasing in Collaboration (EPIC), a consortium selecting and providing digital content on behalf all types of libraries, including academic libraries. Australia and New Zealand libraries have also cooperated in establishing other significant consortia, including the Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association (ANZTLA), an association-wide consortium established with 20 member libraries in 2003, expanding to 46 libraries in 2010. These member libraries are also able to restructure into various other consortia for purchasing individual databases (Millard, 2010).

Libraries in European countries are also forming and joining national, regional and global consortia. International cooperation was considered a significant factor for the development of library consortia in Europe (Hormia-Poutanen et al., 2006), including the Consortium of Academic Libraries in Manchester in the UK, and other related consortia. As is discussed later in Section 3.7, these numerous consortia represent a number of different types and styles of organisation, created with different goals, funding models, and various ways of managing the relationships between member libraries. What they do have in common, however, is the attempt to create deep forms of cooperation that rely upon integrated, consortia-wide decision making aimed at delivering local benefits to the staff and users of member libraries.

A number of academic library consortia have also been formed in Africa including Cape Library Cooperative; Eastern Seaboard Association; Free State Libraries and Information Consortium; Gauteng and Environs Library Consortium, and South Eastern Academic Libraries' System (Darch, Rapp, & Underwood, 1999). Another consortium providing services associated with bibliographic utility is the Southern African Bibliographic Information Network (Alemna & Antwi, 2002).

Although library consortia in Asian countries have not developed as widely as in western countries, Asian libraries have nonetheless undertaken cooperation using various forms of consortia including national, regional, and local groupings of libraries, cooperating both informally and formally. The formation of library consortia in developing countries generally started later than in developed countries, except for a few early academic library consortia in the Philippines that started in 1970s. These included the Academic Libraries Book Acquisition Services Association; the Inter-Institutional Consortium (now South Manila Inter-Institutional Consortium), and the Mendiola Consortium (Mendiola Consortium 2015). The number of established consortia in the Philippines has increased in recent years with a number of smaller, informal consortia, and one government sponsored consortium (Fresnido & Yap, 2014). In China, the China Academic Library and Information System, a nationwide academic library consortium, was established in 2000. During the same period there were four consortia at a national level developed in India (Moghaddam & Talawar, 2009); eight consortia and networks in Bangladesh, including the National Agricultural Information System; the Social Science Research Network; the Heath Literature, Library and Information Science Network; the Development Information Network on South Asia; the National Science and Technology Information Policy; the Bangladesh University Libraries Network; the Bangladesh National Scientific and Library Information Network, and the Population Information Network (Islam, 2013). Many library consortia were initiated in India such as the Indian National Digital Library of Engineering, Sciences, and Technology; Council of Scientific and Industrial Research; a consortium of e-journals subscribers, the UGC-INFONET, launched by University Grants Commission; the Forum for Resource Sharing in Astronomy, and others.

Consortia therefore are now unquestionably well established as a widely used form of cooperation serving developing economies and higher education sectors in a number of Asian countries.

3.4. The roles and functions of library consortia

Library consortia have performed many important roles in supporting academic libraries' activities. Hirshon (1999), writing on change management as one of the most challenging issues for contemporary libraries, describes the significant role played by consortia in helping libraries manage change more successfully through various cooperative programs. Hirshon described how consortia can develop standards for service programs so that libraries can benchmark their own programs with others; can help libraries improving their operational process; provide consultancy in facility construction and management, or actively serve as a negotiator for procurement of electronic resources. Library consortia can also foster resource sharing; facilitate digital libraries, or provide training and consultancy in emerging areas (Hirshon, 1999). Because of their important roles in assisting member libraries to improve their services, many consortia have been enormously successful in helping members make the transition to a digital future, and many have significantly improved the availability of information to library users within the member institutions (Allen & Hirshon, 1998). Electronic resources have grown rapidly to become the popular content choice of academic library users, therefore the role of consortia in negotiating better pricing or licensing models drove the formation of numerous consortia. As early as the late 1990s Allen and Hirshon suggested that 'consortia take on a role as facilitator for a national dialog on how to reduce the growth of electronic resources costs… Library consortia hold great promise for positively affecting the way in which universities conduct scholarly research and for improving the ability of libraries to control the cost of scholarly communication.' (p. 41). They also suggested that academic library consortia must take strategic steps to gain perpetual licenses for access to digital content they have acquired.

According to Alberico (2002), apart from their primary role in fostering resource sharing and access to electronic resources, library consortia now 'have become engaged, to a greater extent than in the past, in developing standards, policies, and business practices that underpin the foundation of academic libraries. Within higher education at the international level, library consortia have become players in a high-

stakes game with profound programmatic and financial implications for most campuses' (p. 63). In other words consortia have positioned academic libraries not only as passive recipients of traditionally published scholarly information, but as highly active and influential players in the rapidly evolving landscape of scholarly communication.

3.5.   Reasons for the formation of, and participation in, library consortia

Sharing the ultimate purpose of satisfying users' demand, libraries in different countries underpinned by different cultural and business norms, and different levels of development, seem to share common motivations regarding their participation in, and in some cases the formation of, library consortia.

Simpson (1990) explained in detail the reasons for libraries to participate in cooperatives or consortia at a time when most resources were still purchased in printed form, citing the expectation from resource sharing as being to reduce operating costs, as 'cooperatives do have a potential to reduce costs through the economy of scale phenomenon, through resource sharing, and through astute management of the cooperative organization' (p. 87). Other influencing factors noted by Simpson included the desire to enhance the quality of library services; to contribute to the library profession through leadership; and problem solving strategies that could be gained from cooperative practice. In addition Simpson noted participation in a particular cooperative may confer professional prestige upon libraries and their staff (Simpson, 1990).

In accordance with the broad trends in valuing cooperation, the specific reasons for libraries to join consortia vary from a desire to gain access to a pool of resources that single libraries could not afford on their own, to the practical need to resolve technical issues in automation or the application of information technology that may be beyond the capacity or expertise of a smaller library. Potter (1997) noted as early as the late 1990s that it was digital technology that was becoming an important new driver for the formation of consortia.

> While the chief reason for academic libraries to form consortia has been to share existing physical resources, a new trend is becoming evident or at least more pronounced. Libraries are forming alliances for the purpose of identifying and addressing common needs arising from developments in information

technology, especially the growing importance of the Internet and the World Wide Web (p. 417).

The motivation for the formation of library consortia could also originate from a strong interest of institutional leaders. As Potter noted with regard to the case of one of the largest statewide consortia in the U.S., GALILEO, which was formed as an outcome of the personal attraction of the University System of Georgia leaders to the cooperative projects that they believed would bring benefits to their universities (Potter, 1997).

As the 1990s progressed there was a mounting impetus for libraries to form and participate in consortia, and a range of literature emerged that focused on persuading libraries of the benefits of consortia. Allen and Hirshon (1998) believed that some external factors and 'key organisational imperatives' that boosted cooperation among libraries and library consortia during the 1990s were not only the rapid growth in information technology, but also the impact of economic competition and local politics; the broader (digital) changes in information access and delivery, and the emerging emphasis on service quality. The authors described three primary drivers for consortia development in the 1990s as being the desire to leverage resources through cooperation; to reduce costs for each member library through collective purchasing; and to extend influence through consortia-based pressure on the way information was to be created, marketed and purchased in the future (Allen & Hirshon, 1998).

According to Wade (1999), the sharing of library automated systems encouraged by governments through the provision of state funding and project grants became a further impetus for libraries to form consortia in the USA in the 1980s, since many states provided support to the development of state-based networks or cooperative projects. Many regional networks were established as a mechanism for distributing state funds to libraries and in many cases these proved to be the precursor to more focused consortia created in order to negotiate 'electronic database licensing' plus expediting collection sharing through interlibrary lending, which had been made more efficient by the development of union catalogues (Wade, 1999).

Gorman and Cullen (2000) concluded that the primary motivators for libraries to cooperate were the mounting cost of acquiring content and the growing volume of library materials, as libraries strove to provide users with greater access to more

information at lower cost. Gorman and Cullen argued a principle reason for library cooperation was to enhance services in order to satisfy user demand to the highest level possible. In accordance with these motivators Gorman and Cullen also noted a set of more specific goals, which could be seen as highly relevant to the current circumstances faced by developing Asian libraries. These are: to fill the gaps and reduce duplicates in libraries' collection coverage; to understand the practice of collection development and management as well as to co-ordinate the management of collections including future planning; and, to acquire joint site licences for shared databases (Gorman & Cullen, 2000, p. 374).

It has also been suggested that libraries may form or join in a consortium to obtain funds from Government or other agencies that offer financial incentives for cooperation in the building of infrastructure. This was the case with the Canadian National Site Licensing Project (CNSLP), which was formed to apply and carry out specific goals in response to targeted project funding offered by the Canadian Federal Government (Fox & Lam, 2003).

Wright (2005) has agreed with other research and commentary that 'cost saving' was a principal reason for libraries to initially participate in consortia, and also points out the particular benefit of the larger quantity of electronic resources made available to library users through the use of consortia formed to support joint licensing of digital content.

Therefore it can be concluded that while the reasons for the formation of library consortia are numerous and in some cases driven by local factors, that the broader momentum for consortia is underpinned by the needs to reduce costs while expanding access to the rapidly growing range of digital content that is provided through access to licensed databases. This is an outcome best achieved by collaborative action that leverages the buying, negotiating and technical capacities of libraries, working in consortia.

3.6. Benefits of library consortia

It is a common observation that every library participating in a consortium expects practical benefits from thearrangement. This appears to be true in any cooperative or consortial relationship; as Horgan (2003) asserted: 'Regardless of individual status or

available resources, each member institution expects to receive something of value in turn for belonging to a consortium and will contribute time, money, and energy to the collaborative work of the consortium in direct proportion to an expected return' (pp. 68-69). The concepts of 'benefits' and 'value' have loomed large in the appraisal of library consortia, because the equation is certainly not straightforward. There are both benefits and costs associated with belonging to consortia (or indeed cooperation more generally) and libraries need to weigh these carefully in order to make decisions relating to membership or participation. The value of membership is assessed by the benefits that consortia deliver after consideration of all the costs incurred. Barnes, Blake, and Pinder (2009) defined the value of library consortia with the simple equation 'Value = Benefits minus Cost'; and Bostick (2001) indicated more specifically that the value delivered by a consortium needed to be greater than the costs. In a comprehensive study of academic libraries' participation in a consortium sharing an integrated library system, Krieb (2011) stated that 'the degree of benefit is often related to the consortium type' (p. 2). Libraries may choose to participate in or to form the consortia that can bring the most benefits to them.In an Asian academic library context, Ching, Poon and Huang (2003) argued that the alignment between the core values of consortia and those of their members' organisations should be established as one of the key organisational principles in order to o improve the effectiveness of a consortium.

Academic library consortia have brought significant benefits to their members that have justified their continued participation. Libraries invest considerably in establishing consortia and handling all the various issues of their operation in order to obtain practical benefits in return for their investment (Wiser, 2012, p. 46). Therefore, it is necessary to clearly identify the particular benefits consortia deliver to their member libraries.

Evans (2002a) described five major benefits of cooperation, and each of these can be easily applied to consortia:

- A capacity of improving access to a greater range of materials and better depth in a subject area;
- Limited resources may be 'stretched' through cooperation that divides the work and shares the results among libraries;

- Greater staff specialisation that results in improved staff performance, and in turn, greater customer satisfaction;

- Better directing clients to an appropriate source of information through networked OPACs;

- Staff professional development through the working relationships created among the co-operating libraries. (p. 215)

The major benefits reported by the 2012 survey undertaken by OCLC over 101 library consortia in the U.S. include professional networking; costs savings; e-content purchases; shared integrated library systems; training; technology solutions, and professional development (Online Computer Library Center Inc. [OCLC], 2013).

For consortia members, 'cost saving' was identified to be one of the major benefits of membership, although it is necessary to note that 'cost saving' does not mean libraries will always be able to spend less once they are involved in cooperatives and consortia, as the saved finances may be used to acquire additional resources for the benefit of users. Libraries need to contribute or invest more in consortial services and programmes so as to gain the most benefits since, 'shared poverty does not improve service, and network strength depends on members that continue to develop their areas of strength. Libraries must have something to share if they are to be of value to one another' (Williams, 2000, p. 14). Williams also asserted that his library participated in OhioLINK in order to make better use of library resources rather than with the aim of saving money. Evans (2002a) believed that cooperation is usually seen as a money-saving device, however, he argues that the reality is that it does not save money for a library. When libraries combine their efforts, they will not necessarily spend less money because 'an effective co-operative programme simply divides the work and shares the results' (p. 215).

The Electronic Information for Libraries, an international consortium focusing on the needs of developing and transitional countries, summarises the benefits of a consortium as reduction in the costs of e-resources; ability to negotiate favourable terms and conditions of use; expansion of services and resources; sharing of staff skills and expertise to strengthen library leadership; increased effectiveness of advocacy for policy change; and the promotion of cost effective, customer driven services (Electronic Information for Libraries [EIFL], 2014).

The findings of research on consortia activity in academic libraries conducted by Maskell (2006) indicated that besides benefits to academic libraries such as 'skill development for library staff' and 'access to more content for users' (p. 152) consortia activity produced positive effects on relationships between libraries and their parent institutions; enhanced libraries' position in relation with their governing bodies, and consolidated relationships among libraries. Maskellalso concluded that one of the critical effects of consortia was fostering the professional values of librarianship.

3.7. Types and models of consortia

One of the complexities that need to be dealt with in understanding the possibilities and prospects of library consortia is that there exist numerous models for their structure, funding, management and operation. Each 'type' of consortia will reflect not only the purpose for which it was formed, but also elements of the local economic, professional, political and socio-legal systems in which it is established. An understanding of the broad options that are available is important in establishing the prospects for consortia within a particular country.

As noted previously, in the 1960s and 1970s a significant number of library consortia were established to facilitate the needs of academic libraries. There was a monumental and comprehensive study on this development of academic library consortia in the United States conducted by the System Development Corporation (SDC) with sponsorship from the U.S. Office of Education (Kopp, 1998). In the *Guidelines for Library Cooperation: Development of Academic Library Consortia*, one of the two reports produced by this nationwide study, Ruth Patrick indicated that the four major types of consortia were as follows:

- Large consortia concerned primarily with computerised large-scale technical processing;

- Small consortia concerned with user services and every- day problems;

- Limited-purpose consortia cooperating with respect to limited special subject areas; and

- Limited-purpose consortia concerned primarily with interlibrary loan or reference network operations (Patrick, 1972).

Simpson (1990) later categorised types of consortia by their function:participant type; organisational structure; coverage of material types; or legal structure. Types by function include, for example, cooperative collection development; shared cataloguing; interlibrary loan; preservation or some similar functional category. Participant types can be academic and research libraries; public libraries; special libraries, or may consist of a mixture of different types of libraries. Organisational structure refers to the geographic basis of a consortium, which may be intrastate; interstate; regional; national, or international. Types defined by their coverage of certain categories of discipline-based material may include, for example, medical, legal, areas of studies, or they may cover multiple subject areas. Consortia categorised according to their legal structure may be structured to consist of, for example, government libraries and agencies; non-profit organisations; or public corporations (p. 86).

Allen and Hirshon (1998) suggested that consortia can also evolve from one model to another depending on their membership, and also grouped models of consortia into four types based primarily on their governing structure and member relationship:

- *Loosely knit federations* are local or regional consortia formed at the grass roots with no central staff; little or no central funding; and with limited or no group purchasing power.

- *Multi-type/multi-state networks* are voluntary, with central staff but low level of cooperation due to having little common interest; poor database discounting; fragmented agenda; and lack of a consortium virtual union catalogue.

    OCLC and other bibliographic services were given as examples of multi-type networks. The Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) was a multiple states and inter-institutional consortium to which each university contributed an annual amount to cover administrative costs of running the CIC central office. There was a central CIC staff of nine full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, with two FTE devoted to library activities. All activities were developed through consensus and funded by those institutions or participating libraries in any given initiatives, with no central budget.

- *Tightly knit federations* may have a sponsoring agency, focused membership profile or heterogeneous profile; some dedicated staff coordinating program development but not tightly controlling that program; may share a virtual or an online union catalogue; greater publisher discounts; and a defined and beneficial programmatic agenda.

  Pennsylvania Academic Library Connection Initiative was given as an example of this model with a virtual union catalogue based upon disparate systems and linked by a Z39.50 based interface that enabled direct user-initiated circulation transactions; works to secure for its membership discounts on electronic information products; no central authority; no central pool of funds; and the agreement to purchase was purely voluntary.

- *Centrally funded state-wide consortia* have a sponsoring agency and usually a separate source of funds. Central administration may have a role in formulating or mandating the agenda and policy; virtual union catalogues are available or under development; a central source of dedicated funds creates additional incentive for member libraries to collaborate than was the case with other models.

  OhioLINK was used as an example of such a consortium, with participating library directors, staff and chief academic officers collaboratively setting its agenda. The consortium can 'generate tremendous leveraging of local resources'; a central pool of funding; and can negotiate to purchase electronic information at a cost far lower than if each institution were purchasing separately. It provided a centralised online union catalogue on a common platform that permitted user-initiated transactions.

Gorman and Cullen (2000) recommended Sinclair's four models of cooperation (1973) to Asian libraries as they set about creating consortia, as these models had proven to be useful and relevant to libraries elsewhere. The authors summarised these models as follows:

- Bi-nodal partnership (Bilateral Exchange model): cooperative arrangements made between two libraries;

- Multi-nodal partnership (Multilateral Pooling model): this model commonly worked well in various countries as the simplest type of consortium arrangement;

- Service partnership (Dual Service Common Output model): a higher level of cooperation with a common output created by individual libraries pooling their resources or facilities;

- Outsourcing partnership (Service-centre or Facilitating Participant model): a cooperative arrangement involving a third party agency. OCLC was given as an example of bibliographic utility operating according to this model (pp. 378-379).

In describing the differing levels of commitment required of consortia, Evans (2002b) distinguished between the three levels of interaction and activity that can exist as follows:

- *Co-operation* is the level with the least interaction between participating organisations. Essentially there is no formal common mission, structure, or planning. Participants share information as needed and retain all authority over their own operations, with virtually no risk. Co-operative programs tend to be of short duration and prone to alteration and change of focus as partners may pursue other options.

- *Co-ordination* is the middle level of activity. There are discussions and one or more generally agreed mission(s) or goals. There may be written documents that outline a common structure and planning/operation process but not an official/legal document that binds the parties. While authority remains with the participating institution there are increased risks for all participants because of the more formal structure.

- *Collaboration* is the highest level of activity in which there is a very formal, often legal, structure created by the participants. The structure includes the assignment of some authority, planning and operational activities to the newly created entity based on a set of common missions and goals. A collaborative effort also involves participants contributing some of their

resources (money, people, time, physical space, etc.) to the program. The expectation is that the rewards of activities will be jointly shared (p. 275).

Bedi and Sharma (2008) noted the types of consortia models adopted in India depended upon the participants' affiliation and funding sources.

- Open Consortia**:** very flexible, allowing members of consortia to join and leave at any time they wish.

- Closed Group Consortia: members including group defined either by affiliation or collaboration. The formation and operation of the consortia guidelines and its administration are usually simple and straightforward.

- Centrally Funded Model: solely depend on the funding and initiative provided by a parent body.

- Shared-budget Model: participating libraries take the lead and form the consortium.

- Publisher Initiatives: a consortium where a publisher takes responsibility for bringing libraries together into a purchasing network. In this case consortium members receive deep discounts on the 'standard' price.

- National Consortium: the goal of this model is to initiate national level licensing of digital content. (pp. 2-3).

The Canadian Health Libraries Association viewed types of consortia as large or small; formal, with by-laws executed by paid professional staff and centralised services, or informalwith no staff or offices and largely run by volunteers; multi-type consortia, with members from different types of library; or homogeneous consortia, with member libraries holding the same or similar collections and services (Scott, 2004).

In terms of geographic proximity, libraries may form regional consortia in order to 'pool their resources to contain costs and maximise access for their constituencies' (Eaton, 1995, p. 27). In an article describing the history and development of academic library consortia in the United States, Bostick (2001) noted that regional consortia were usually established for specific purposes (for example Triangle

Research Library Network); and statewide consortia, which are sometimes called networks, for example the Washington Research Library Network and OhioLINK.

Bostick also found that consortia could be voluntary or mandatory in the case of consortia that are established by government. Although Blackwood's study (1977) was not exclusively devoted to the library field, it discussed the nature of inter-institutional cooperation reflected in two types of consortia: voluntary and statutory, and explained that the motivation for institutions to cooperate in voluntary consortia was their recognition of necessity, and the reason for cooperating in statutory consortia was usually economic benefits (Blackwood, 1977). According to Allen and Hirshon (1998) consortia operating on a voluntary basis would be more concerned about funding issues as they are not underwritten by government subsidy or support.

Shachaf (2003) is another who has described consortia according to those based on a type of library (such as academic, medical, or public), or according to geographic proximity. They may also be based on whether the funding for the library's parent institutions is derived from the public (government) or private sectors (Shachaf, 2003). The OCLC and OhioLINK are given as examples of national consortia for academic libraries in the U.S. It is also noted that OhioLINK was an example of a state-wide consortium that had evolved into a national consortium.

The findings of the 2007 National Survey conducted with 214 U.S. library networks under the auspices of the American Library Association (ALA) found that most networks, cooperatives and consortia are regional; with 61% described as regional; 26% as local, and 12% as state-wide organisations (Davis, 2007).

In an article on new opportunities for consortia, Wiser (2012) describes various types of consortia that have evolved to better address the practical needs of their members as the rapidly developing digital technologies enabled them to overcome geographic separation or isolation. Wiser concluded that, 'geographic proximity between institutions seemed to fade as the dominant organizational dynamic in most library consortia, and instead institutional similarity began taking its place' (p. 44).

As noted above there are consortia that spread beyond national boundaries to form international consortia. The International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC), a consortium of consortia at international level was formed in 1997 and experienced an

increase in membership of 56% within less than 10 years, with the number of members reaching 211 in 2009 (Millard, 2010). The number of members of this organisation remains approximately 200 library consortia up until the present (International Coalition of Library Consortia [ICOLC], 2014).

The Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) is another international consortium. It was initially established in 1999 to advocate for affordable access to commercial e-journals for academic and research libraries in Central and Eastern Europe, with a global network of partners including libraries and library consortia in more than 60 developing and transition countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. This consortium works with libraries to enable access to digital information in developing and transition countries and designs other programmes to enable access to knowledge for education, learning, research and sustainable community development (Electronic Information for Libraries [EIFL], 2014).

In the late 1990s, while library consortia for sharing print resources were still developing, Potter pointed to a new trend whereby academic libraries formed consortia to help resolve issues arising from the application of information technology and the use of the Internet to enable academic libraries to offer electronic resources including abstracting and indexing databases; the full-text of journals; the full-text of reference works and other digitised content. It was noted that these libraries were increasingly working cooperatively to leverage their collective power and exploiting their common funding sources (Potter, 1997). Consortia designed to share an integrated library system are another type that can bring high cost benefits to participating libraries, because a centralised automation system is much less expensive than that required by individual libraries to acquire a stand-alone system (Krieb, 2011).

Consortia for sharing resources were a common type of consortia formed in the U.S. between 1931 and 1971 primarily to facilitate the needs of academic libraries (Alexander, 1999), to the extent that the model was described as 'a hallmark of U.S academic libraries' (Alexander, 2002, p. 1). The resource-based consortia became a feature of the substantial growth of consortia in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s. In recent years the most common type of consortia successfully implemented in both the U.S. and many other countries has been those that have focused their activity on

shared purchasing and licensing of electronic resources. This type of consortia developed rapidly during the 1990s and 2000s and has been described as a 'second wave' of consortia development (Horton, 2013).

3.8.   Common services provided by library consortia

All library consortia need to determine what services and activities member libraries require and value the most so that their arrangements can be focused accordingly. A large-scale study undertaken by Patrick in the 1970s revealed that a large percentage of academic library consortia at the time organised activities focused on interlibrary loan services, union catalogues, and reference services (Kopp, 1998).

The findings of the 2006-07 study conducted by the ALA found that communication with member libraries (89.3%); resource sharing (89.3%); professional development (86%); general consulting or technical assistance (76.7%); and cooperative purchasing or group discounts (81.9%) were the most common services and activities organised by library networks, cooperatives and consortia. The then current and planned priorities of consortia focused on automation, networking and other technology services; resource sharing; document delivery services; and professional development (Davis, 2007).

In 2009, Perry, together with the associate university librarian at Yale University and the organiser of the Northeast Research Libraries Consortium, distributed a survey to members of the International Coalition of Library Consortia through the ICOLC listserv to determine the leading priorities of current and future library consortia. There were 42 out of 200 consortia that completed and returned the questionnaires. The results of this international survey described the most highly prioritised services provided by consortia as the following (in ranked order).

1. Licensing – renegotiations
2. Budget management
3. Licensing – new acquisitions
4. Interlibrary loan
5. Catalog – NextGen. Open access/scholarly communication
6. Training
7. Catalog – union Digital initiatives
8. Print – shared storage

9. Print – cooperative collection management

10. Research projects (p. 125)

The survey also revealed that the future priorities for consortial services were broadly similar (Perry, 2009). These results indicate the emphasis consortia were placing on the management of licenses for the acquisition of digital content, evidence of the extent to which this function has emerged as the cornerstone activity for many consortia and their member libraries.

In 2012, OCLC conducted a survey of USA consortia. More than half of the 101 responding consortia have more than 40 members, serve multiple types of libraries and have operated for more than 30 years. According to the findings of this survey, the most used services offered by consortia were as follows:

1. Resource sharing/ILL/document delivery (45%);

2. Shared online catalog/union catalogues (41%);

3. Cooperative purchasing (38%);

4. E-content licensing (33%);

5. Training (31%);

6. Technology management (28%);

7. Professional or leadership development (24%) (Online Computer Library Center, 2013, p. 3).

Interlibrary loan

Resource sharing in the form of interlibrary loanservices has been a feature of library cooperation since the late nineteenth century (Alexander, 1999) and remains an essential service for many consortia today. Catalogue record sharing and/or the establishment of union catalogues also became an important feature of consortial arrangements, serving as an important means of support for interlibrary loan services, enabling libraries to import cataloguing records from other members' systems rather than creating original cataloguing records and thereby saving considerable staff labour (Krieb, 2011). A technological enhancement for interlibrary loan was that libraries can either purchase software (an interlibrary loan 'module') to use with the existing local systems, or share software on a consortial or cooperative basis (Wade, 1999).

Cooperative cataloguing / union catalogues

OhioLINK was established in 1992 as a consortium of Ohio State public colleges and universities, and has since grown to include the libraries of seventy-four institutions: seventeen university libraries, twenty-three community or technical colleges, thirty-three independent colleges, and the State Library of Ohio. As Williams (2000) has reported at the turn of the century the OhioLINK consortium had a substantial collection with a union catalogue of over 20 million bibliographic records providing access to sixty-seven indexing and abstracting databases, reference collections, full-text databases, and 1,500 journals.

For the library user, a consortium's union catalogue can represent an exponential gain in terms of access and delivery of library material. Many of these catalogues link to interlibrary loans systems that allow patrons to generate requests for books held by other libraries. This capability to initiate unmediated requests is commonly referred to as 'patron-initiated borrowing'. Patrons are also able to manage their library accounts online, checking the status of requested items, and renewing those already checked-out without physically being in a library.

Many consortia have linked their catalogues or holdings/loans data among non-compliant and compliant systems through Z39.50. Consortia services might include the cooperative provision of database services from servers owned by the consortium, or use a server hosted at one of the member institutions with other members sharing the cost of purchasing the server and the cost of developing client-initiated ILL software (Wade, 1999).

Collaborative collection development

The rapid growth in quantity combined with the increasing cost of scholarly information created challenges for academic libraries in meeting the needs of their user community within budget constraints. As a result cooperative collection development became one of the important arrangements that library consortia could undertake in order to bring more growth opportunity for library collections (Alexander, 1999). Cooperative collection development helped increase the number of titles and reduce unnecessary duplication among consortia members' collections. However, there have been ongoing difficulties in the practice of cooperatively managing collection development of print materials, as it is difficult to equitably

meet the needs of all consortia members (Williams, 2000). In discussing library cooperation and print-based collection development within the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries, Thornton (2000) noted that 'cooperative collection development efforts have been the least successful' of the consortium's activities (p. 849).

Reference Services

It is possible for academic libraries to collaboratively provide reference services to their users. This has been particularly the case since the emergence of 'chat' reference services, which have become established as a reference model usually provided by libraries located in different time meridians to provide prompt answers to user's queries across 24 hours. However, there has been a lack of evaluative literature regarding cooperative reference and virtual reference services. In a study on chat reference and consortia, Lee (2004) pointed out that 'academic libraries have gone into cyberspace and maybe the librarian has to meet the student there' (p. 96). Lee was convinced that chat reference was an effective means for library staff to provide services across barriers of distance and time, and this was a very useful way to assist library users, although developments in this regard have remained inconclusive, with several services being developed and subsequently abandoned. Meert and Given (2009) indicated the strengths of chat reference, a digital service supported by a 'co-browsing' software, that can instantly assist library users to locate remote online resources.

Virtual reference service can also be a useful service for distance education programmes. A study conducted by Guillot and Stahr (2004) investigated the case of the Southeastern Louisiana Collaborative Digital Reference Service that offered a collaborative chat reference service as an alternative means of providing library instruction for their consortium members' users as well as serving their institutions' distance education programmes and students. In addition to technological considerations of Internet access capacity, software problems and server operating time, the authors indicated other potential issues in running this type of service included the costs of running the service and personnel issues such as staff labour, capacity and skills, as the service requires multi-tasking; an ability to use multiple browsers, and handling constant chat sessions with library users.

Shared digital repositories

Library consortia can be agents to manage a wide range of content that is made available through their member libraries. *Shared digital repositories* organised by consortia can help reduce a library's effort required to manage a stand-alone platform (Machovec, 2013). Many libraries now use open source software packages such as Greenstone, Fedora or DSpace to manage their library's digital content, and libraries in developing countries can find in these open source solutions a means of improving services within the limits imposed by their inevitable budgetary constraints.

In a recent paper on the role played by library consortia in effectively developing learning resources for universities in Vietnam, Tran (2014) argued that there are three main services provided by consortia. These included: cooperation in acquisitions to share resources; building union catalogues; and interlibrary loan. Tran acknowledged that cooperation in acquisitions would help reduce cost, expand content, and help in satisfying the needs of library users. According to Tran, cooperation in acquisitions could be achieved by assigning each consortia member the task of purchasing databases in line with their own planning and budget circumstances, and then share these resources among members. Tran discussed the specific operation of consortia with a focus on the factors necessary for sharing resources, such as election of an executive board and the required qualifications and attributes of these personnel; the application of technical standards including 'ISBD, AACR2; MARC 21 Dublin Core, Z39.50, ISO 2709' and the use of 'key word list, classification scheme and subject headings' as necessary tools that libraries need to ensure the creation of a consortium and the ongoing viability of operations (p. 10). Tran also made five recommendations aimed at developing consortia among academic libraries. These recommendations and solutions include: 1) the largest library should be an initiator to lead the other members and start with sharing a part of their existing databases or other content; 2) conducting a survey on the capacity of consortium members, including human resources, information resources, budgets, information technology infrastructure, technical standards, users and level of automation; 3) developing and synchronising policies to enable the sharing of resources; 4) unifying technical standards; 5) and creating a suitable information technology infrastructure (Tran, 2014).

3.9. Issues of library cooperation and consortia

A range of issues associated with the formation and arrangements of library consortia has been discussed by expert authors in the field.

Allen and Hirshon (1998) indicated five major issues that affected consortia and their member libraries including: 1) pricing models for electronic information and license negotiations; 2) technology and infrastructure enhancement; 3) coordination and leadership for resource sharing projects; 4) improving the information infrastructure; and 5) funding and governance.

Several years later, Evans (2002a) suggested six broader categories of issues to be considered in any cooperative effort that include 1) institutional; 2) legal, political and administrative; 3) technological; 4) physical; 5) people; and 6) knowledge-based issues (p. 216).

3.9.1. Membership

Every consortium needs to clearly define its membership base so that its participants can be well informed about their privileges and responsibilities. Previous research and commentary (Bostick, 2001; Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois, 2014; Guzzy, 2010; Potter, 1997) has described some major types of consortial membership and the associated eligibility, obligations, fees and charges.

Membership in most consortia is voluntary, while in some it is mandatory. The Massachusetts Conference of Chief Librarians of Public Higher Education Institutions is an example of a mandatory consortia that provided membership to all state-supported (public) academic libraries in the state of Massachusetts and levies its members a minimal membership fee.

Participation in the CAUL Electronic Information Resources Consortium (CEIRC) is open to all Australian university libraries by virtue of their membership in CAUL, the Council of Australian University Librarians. Membership of the CEIRC management committee consists of:

- Three CAUL members, two nominated from the CAUL membership and one appointed as chair by the CAUL Executive.

- Two representatives of the Datasets Coordinators (practitioner members), nominated by their library director, to serve for a single term of two years, with nominations called in alternate years for the two positions.

- One CONZUL (Council of New Zealand University Librarians) representative, nominatedby CONZULCAUL Executive Officer ex officio. (CAUL, 2014)

Some consortia can be free but most charge membership fees or charge for particular services depending on types or levels of membership. Guzzy's research conducted in 2009 with interviews involving over 15 academic library consortia in the U.S. presented a comprehensive range of consortial membership, fees and governance structures then in place. Guzzy found that membership levels and privileges may be determined by annual membership fees. There are various types and levels of membership applied to different consortia. For example, the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) granted three types of membership as follows.

Governing Membership includes a vote in the consortium's governance.

Associate Membership allows a college to participate in the governance as part of a group of libraries.

Basic Membership allows eligibility for specific services but no participation in governance.

Membership fees for CARLI as currently listed on the CARLI website continue to determine the levels of services received. *Governing Members* are eligible to participate in all CARLI products, services, and programs, and may participate in all CARLI committees, task forces, and user groups. Governing members pay an annual fee calculated by student enrolments and institution type. *Affiliate Members* are eligible to participate in CARLI email discussion lists and may attend CARLI workshops, training events and forums. Affiliate Members pay a $551 annual membership fee (as at 2014).

Similarly, Guzzy reported that other consortia such as the Orbis Cascade Alliance and the Westchester Academic Library Directors Organization provided various levels of membership, each of which entailed differing fees; varying levels of

services; and different levels of participation in the management and decision making of the consortium.

There were, however, nine consortia reported in Guzzy's study that defined no membership levels. Seven out of these groups received state funding. The other two organisations, the Carolina Consortium and The TBR Library Deans and Directors Group charge no fees for membership. Members of MOBIUS pay an annual base membership fee and also pay an assessment fee that is 'calculated using a number of factors such as items owned and loaning and borrowing statistics in order to address equity of payment issues' (Guzzy, 2010, p. 168). Guzzy described the following variations as examples of the range of funding arrangements used by U.S. based consortia.

- Community College Library Consortium (CCLC): participants of this consortium are given permission to purchase electronic resources offered by the consortium and pay a flat annual fee for membership in the Council of Chief Librarians.

- The Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS): members pay membership fees in accordance with their institution's student FTE and the services they receive to recover one-third of the consortium's annual budget. The State's Board of Regents funds the remainder.

- Iowa Community College Online Consortium (ICCOC): members pay no membership fees but fund the consortium with a portion of tuition fees.This consortium also receives funds from a Title III Grant, which is a program run by the U.S. Department of Education to strengthen institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2014)

- SUNYConnect (State University of New York): charges fees for core or optional services associated with automation system and databases that cover 65% of the consortium's costs. State funding covers the remainder.

- Vale: Members were charged only a service fee with a small percentage of their database purchase of the previous year.

- Wyoming Community College Consortium: funded by the state and charges no fees for membership.

Membership of large libraries plays an important role in consortial arrangements not only because they have larger collections and resources and can therefore contribute accordingly to consortia, but also because they provide consortia with a stronger voice and additional lobbying power. Potter's study of the formation, membership, funding, core programmes, governance and participation of large libraries in five state-wide academic library consortia in the U.S. confirmed the importance of the larger libraries' membership for the sustainable development of consortia. Potter also pointed out, however, the danger in a situation whereby larger libraries might limit or even withdraw their participation if they found that they 'contribute the most' and gain the least in consortial or cooperative resource sharing (Potter, 1997).

3.9.2. Governance

Library consortia have diverse governance structures that oversee and reflect the ways they operate. As summarised by Shachaf (2003), a consortium could be a project run by a foreign agency or a provincial body of the ministry of education. It could also be a unit of a national academic computer centre or operate under the supervision of the national library or a part of larger consortia. Several descriptions have been given to the governance structures for consortia (Bostick, 2001; Guzzy, 2010; Potter, 1997). The literature has also described various management structures that can be used by consortia. The exact form will be decided in response to numerous issues depending on factors such as the nature and type of institutions involved as members, and the scale and size of library operations that determine the resources available to support different structures. Some of the models that have been suggested include the following:

- A governing board of up to twelve Chief Academic Officers from member institutions, an administrative body of an Executive Director and staff, a Library Advisory Council and several working groups with a Technical Advisory Council.
- A higher education coordinating board, a management body of two or more libraries that provides services by contracts to the higher education coordinating board.
- A Steering Committee under which were a number of subcommittees such as the Collections Committee, the Interlibrary Loan Enhancements Committee,

the Special Collections Committee, the Technical Issues Committee and the User Services Committee. This structure might include several liaisons from a State Council on Higher Education and a paid part-time Coordinator (Potter, 1997).

- A Council of voted full members and particular memberships responsible and eligible for certain activities or programmes. The Orbis Cascade Alliance that began as a system-based consortium for shared catalogue was an example of this structure.

A consortium governance structure frequently deployed in an academic library context might consist of a steering committee comprised of library directors from member institutions; representatives from a user's council including all participating libraries; and a liaison officer from a Vice Chancellor's office in charge. At an initial stage of formation, a consortium steering committee might include Presidents and Library Directors of some or all member institutions and a Vice Chancellor. In addition to the committee there are likely to be working groups consisting of librarians and technical staff appointed or volunteered to handle particular responsibilities or issues. There may also be an advisory committee, consisting of Presidents or Chief Academic Officers, Library Directors, Vice Chancellors and external consultants. The advisory committee typically functions as an oversight board and provides strategic direction. CAUL Electronic Information Resources Advisory Committee (CEIRAC) is a good example of this structure. This is an advisory of the CAUL Electronic Information Resources Consortium (CEIRC) that has the following roles:

- Advise CAUL on issues which may affect the delivery of electronic information services.
- Promote the role of CAUL as an initiator and coordinator of collaboration between university libraries to facilitate access to electronic information resources.
- Oversee the cost-effective acquisition of e-resources and services through Consortium negotiations on behalf of CAUL.
- Provide information to CEIRC participants on consortium purchasing proposals.

- Advise CAUL on appropriate mechanisms, policies and procedures for sharing consortial costs among participants.

- Support the development of standards in areas such as licensing, authentication and statistical reporting as these affect e-resources and services, and bring them to the attention of publishers, policy-makers, CAUL and Datasets Coordinators.

- Advise publishers and vendors on acceptable terms and conditions for the supply of products and services.

- Initiate, maintain and develop productive relationships with other consortia, both nationally and internationally. (CAUL, 2014)

The Georgia Library Learning Online, a consortium of thirty-four institutions is another example of this type of governance structure.

A governing body of a consortium could be a Commission that includes several Library Directors and staff from the Board of Regents under which is placed an administrative office consisting of a Director and staff from one of the member institutions. The Commission reports directly to the Board of Regents. An example of this structure is the Louisiana Library Network.

Some consortia have no formal management structures and rely on the membership to provide all services; while others may have an office, an Executive Director and perhaps a very small number of staff (Bostick, 2001). Most consortia have at least a part-time staff member who is responsible for routine operational tasks and coordinating closely with representatives of member libraries. There are also examples of small consortia that have no paid staff, management board or governing body, and that rely entirely upon members to provide support and decision making as required (Guzzy, 2010).

A strong governance structure strengthens the voice of a consortium's members. It has been argued that governance by a central authority tends to gain more benefits thanks to a better degree of coordination and can be more advantageous for consortia to assure their funding (Potter, 1997). Discussing the types and models of library consortia, Allen and Hirshon (1998) also believed that a highly centralised authority allows consortia to have a stronger voice and therefore greater influence on vendors and publishers in the licensing of digital content.

Williams (2000) described in detail the governance of OhioLINK as having a hierarchy of three levels, consisting of 1) the Board of Directors, 2) the Library Advisory Committee, and 3) the Executive Director and staff. The Board of Directors consisted of representatives of the Library Directors of the state, Chief Academic Officers of member institutions, and representatives of the Ohio Board of Regents. The board supervised the Executive Director, provided policy guidance and highest level of advocacy for OhioLINK. The Library Advisory Committee comprised of the Library Directors from the major state universities, the State Librarian, representatives from independent, community, and technical colleges and the Chairs of standing committees. The Committee was responsible for planning, purchase recommendation and generally advising the Executive Director. The standing committees were responsible for developing specific policies and guidelines, while subcommittees and task forces acted upon specific needs and were disbanded upon completion of specified tasks. The Executive Director and staff were responsible for carrying out the day-to-day administrative work (Williams, 2000).

Staffing of library consortia will vary depending on consortia size and service coverage. Davis' study indicated 96.7% of library consortia had paid staff, with only a very few consortia relying on member libraries to provide voluntary staff (Davis, 2007).

3.9.3. Leadership

Like any other organisations, library consortia rely upon effective leadership, and it can be said that leadership is one of the most essential factors if consortia are to develop successfully. Wiser (2012) affirmed that 'strong leadership is also needed for a successful library consortium to grow. . . . Very few collaborative efforts succeed unless there is someone suitably qualified, being compensated appropriately to ensure that the collaboration succeeds. . . . Many collaborative endeavours fail because well-meaning but miscast people have been placed in leadership roles' (p. 46-47). Consortia leaders need to know and understand their library community so that they can establish a successful cooperative relationship among participating libraries (Wiser, 2012).

Discussing leadership models for collaboration, Roberts and Esson (2012) presented a 'five star' collaborative leadership model that included:

1) Start with self: authenticity and credibility;

2) Ongoing learning, reflection and development of collaborative approach;

3) Understanding and compassion: context, people, difference;

4) Connection: across boundaries, disregard for territory, focus on vision and impact; and

5) Competencies: skills, behaviours and attributes (p. 97).

3.9.4. Budget and funding

Adequate funding is critical for library consortia to operate and maintain their services. Issues around funding and budgets have been discussed in a wide range of literature on consortia. In 2007, Davis' U.S.-based national survey reported that 100% of library networks, cooperatives and consortia have their own budget (Davis, 2007). Perry's 2009 survey examined the scale of funding, and found that nearly 30% of library consortia had a budget less than $500,000 and nearly 15% reported budgets of over $15 million. Budgets between $500,000 and $4.9 million represented the largest percentage at 38% (Perry, 2009).

According to an OCLC survey, U.S. consortia receive their funding from a variety of sources including state funding, consortia membership fees, participation in service fees, and federal funding (Horton, 2013). The most common source of funding for consortia, however, is obtained from the annual fees levied on members; coupled with specific fees or surcharges levied for specific services, in particular the licensing of electronic resources (Wiser, 2012).

Government funding is frequently an important source of library consortia operating revenue, especially at their commencement stages, as most consortia require start-up capital (Evans, 2002a). Davis' 2007 survey revealed that the amount of funding library consortia received from the government at all levels was significant, with state government sources providing five times more than the amount they obtained from local governments, and ten times greater than the federal appropriation (Davis, 2007). Government funding has underwritten library cooperation and consortia to the extent that state legislatures have in some cases passed legislation to mandate cooperation. This is the case with the Minnesota State Legislature that passed a bill

providing libraries in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) System with an additional annual fund of three million US dollars to develop library collections. In order to assist this implementation, the Legislature 'issued a mandate that the money be spent cooperatively' (Richards, 2001, p. 93).

In developing countries funding issues are always of paramount importance for library consortia. Libraries and their consortia are often dependent on financial support from international aid, and this is frequently essential if consortia are to be viable with regard to meeting both start-up and ongoing running costs. Consortia in developing countries may also have their costs underwritten by publishers providing discounts, or non-profit organisations such as the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) enabling access to a range of resources at discounted rates. Organisations such as INASP can also assist consortia in developing countries to obtain funding from philanthropic foundations or other granting agencies.

3.9.5. Cost sharing models and formulas

Every consortia operation incurs some costs and the most significant cost in many cases will be the purchase of digital content for which all members are required to pay a share. As has been noted, one of the primary reasons for libraries to get involved in consortial arrangements is to save costs associated with acquiring and licensing digital content, but they understand that they will still need to contribute finances to maintain consortial operation and services; or as Williams believed:

> Good results require resources and effort, and if I want cooperation to work, I must invest in the effort, submit to the common will, and be determined to do what I must to make the network succeed. Networks can leverage our investments, but they cannot succeed without something to leverage(Williams, 2000, p. 15).

There are different types of costs consortia members need to pay in order to maintain operations and services, and the range of models and formulae employed by consortia in establishing member charges is diverse. A basic cost will include the membership fees which vary considerably between consortia in terms of the amount paid, the varieties of memberships available, and the services that are provided. The fees may be calculated based on various factors including the size of government subsidy or contribution; library budget; reciprocal loans; institutional operating

budgets; number of students; size of collection; central administrative costs, and actual usage of particular services. In addition to membership fees, some consortia may set a base fee, which often provides a small but necessary proportion of the total revenue required if a consortium is to guarantee necessary centralised services. A fee of this type also helps to ensure some equality between libraries regardless of their individual size and budgets (Wade, 1999). For example Guzzy's study reported that a consortium membership can be set with all members (colleges in this case) paying the same rate for the first 40% of the budget, and a rate based on full time equivalent (FTE) student enrolments for the remaining 60%. Under this model two-year colleges may receive a reduction of fee within the FTE based fee portion of the calculation (Guzzy, 2010). Wright (2005) stated that some popular pricing models for electronic resources offered by vendors were based on FTE students of each institution while some other databases were offered as packages. The FTE based models were typically applied to consortia in which institutions of all size were 'part of the mix' (p. 54). However, the author further argued that different types or sizes of institutions and their offered programmes might determine demand for resources, so that different categories of libraries might still benefit comparatively (or not) from particular pricing models (Wright, 2005).

Guzzy noted that most consortia set cost sharing with regard to electronic resource purchase cost based on vendors' pricing models which were commonly in favour of the student FTE basis. Pricing models applied in consortia having four-year universities and two year colleges might set a discount rate for two-year colleges regardless of FTE based on a premise that two-year colleges generally have less resources to purchase materials and therefore database vendors often provide discounts to two-year colleges of up to 50%. One of the consortia in Guzzy's study differed from others by not applying discounts for two-year colleges, but instead devised its own pricing model that formulated one-third on usage, one-third on acquisitions budget, and one-third on FTE. However, this model resulted in problems for larger institutions as they would be required to pay more than the amount of payment they could negotiate independently. Consortia might also apply a combination of a flat rate percentage, FTE, and materials budget; for instance, 50% distributed equally, 25% based on FTE, and 25% based on materials budget. Another FTE based formula could be 1.0 for four-year colleges and 0.5 for two-year colleges.

Guzzy (2010) also found that consortia might also apply a surcharge or administrative fees for electronic resources services and overheads that scaled from 3-6% of each purchase value.

While Williams (2000) believed there was no fully satisfactory formula for managing collection development and that an equitable model would be based on the student FTE of each institution, Wiser (2012) found that paying for actual activities was a 'rational formula' that most successful consortia applied as a means of ensuring a more accurate assessment of the efficiency of specific consortial services.

In order to facilitate pricing discount and payment, many consortia designate a 'fiscal agent' to gain the best discounts for electronic resources purchased from vendors. A fiscal agent could be a specific institution drawn from consortia members; a consortium itself acting as an agent, or the role may be undertaken by an independent management or accounting unit operating independently within a member institution. If consortia do not utilise fiscal agents, member institutions must pay the share by individual invoices (Guzzy, 2010).

It is apparent that cost sharing models and formulae applied by library consortia in developed countries are diverse; however, the most common models seemed to be the ones based on student FTE and paying for the use of particular services.

In developing countries library consortia have employed several cost sharing models that were modified to meet their local conditions. Based on case studies conducted by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) in the five countries of Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya, Pakistan, and Tanzania, Farrow (2011), a Programme Officer at INASP, noted the main features of the models applied to consortia in these countries. An *Equal share* model is intended to ensure equity among member institutions, whereby smaller institutions can have an equal voice with their larger partners. With this model, however, purchasing costs of electronic resources are also divided equally among member institutions. While simplifying administration this can be thought to introduce an inequity with regard to small and large libraries (that are presumably funded accordingly) being asked to pay the same amount. The Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Ghana applied this model based on an assumption that the size of institutions might not reflect the numbers of users or the volume of usage. In this case, however, the model

was sufficiently flexible that it still retained a discounted rate for consortium affiliate members including small and single subject institutions. The Governing Board can consider and approve the reduced rate based on annual usage of databases (Dzandza & Alemna, 2011).

Farrow (2011) described a number of models of cost sharing as follows:

The *Type of institution* model, wherethe share of costs is determined according to the sector from which members are drawn; their source of funding, and whether they are single or multi-disciplinary in scope. The Kenya Libraries and Information Services Consortium employed this model and differentiated two rates according to which non-university members pay 10% of the total costs and universities pay 90%. The university contribution is in turn divided by sector, with public universities paying 80% and private universities 10%.

The *Size of institution* model, which allows consortia serving the educational sector to share costs based on a Full-time Equivalent scale. This model is commonly used by library consortia in developed countries, and is the model usually preferred by publishers or database suppliers. For example the Consortium of Tanzania University Libraries uses this model, with three tiers consisting of: Rate A (1 - 2000 FTE); Rate B (2001 - 4000 FTE), and Rate C (4001 - and above FTE).

The *Ability to pay* model, which facilitates levels of contribution based on the size of member libraries' budgets. The wealthiest pay the most, and the poorest pay the least. The Bangladesh INASP-PERI Consortium (BIPC) has applied this model in particular cases for institutions 'with a very limited periodicals budget' in order to encourage these libraries to participate in the consortium. However, this special rate is only valid for two years and the libraries will thereafter need to seek additional funds from their home institutions to cover their ongoing share. For longer term membership BIPC uses a fixed payment structure based on size and type of institution.

The *Actual usage* model, which allows institutions to pay for what they actually use, and would be based on annual usage data. While this might be considered a fair scheme the study did not provide any cases that applied this model.

Pakistan's National Digital Library Programme is an example of the *Centralised funding* model in which the consortium receives funding directly from the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) to purchase electronic resources (Farrow, 2011). This model can be applied for government initiated and funded consortia which are ideal for libraries having budgetary difficulties as the consortia are not reliant on funding contributions from member libraries.

Because of the general difficulties libraries in developing countries face in having sufficient funds to meet users' demand for services and content, it is to be anticipated that libraries will be keen to devise workable and equitable models and formulae for consortia cost sharing. It is difficult in these countries for any library to carry a disproportionate share of the cost simply in order to sustain the consortia and the wider benefits of cooperation as might be the case in more developed countries. The evidence suggests that developed countries are innovative in supporting the establishment and ongoing support of library consortia.

3.9.6. Sustainability

Sustainability is a matter of great concern for any library consortium. In an article discussing the 'discontents' of consortia, Peters (2003) listed sustainability as one of the major challenges facing consortia and concluded that:

> Sustaining any consortial initiative is difficult. Enduring resource commitments to consortial programs are rare. When it comes to consortial license agreements for e-resources - one of the consortial success stories of the last 10 years - renewals are the ashes that eventually may choke the consortial fire. (Peters, 2003, p. 112)

In a study on consortia life cycles, Shachaf (2003) noted that sustainability was an issue faced by consortia after the first developmental stages, and that in order to be viable consortia need to ensure longer term membership commitment and funding for their ongoing operation as well as working to increase membership and expand services. Shachaf's study indicated that the formation, development and disbandment of consortia could be influenced by the broader legal, political, social and cultural environment as well as the interaction between consortia and their information industry partners including publishers, vendors and patrons. The study recommended that consortia must integrate effectively with their wider operating environment and

asserted that 'too little integration will result in isolation, reducing consortia effectiveness and perhaps leading to eventual dissolution' (Shachaf, 2003, p. 95).

While the evidence indicates that library consortia can be successfully sustained in the long term there are also cases of failure, as indicated by the collapse of some multi-type networks in Bangladesh that could not be sustained due to a 'lack of appropriate communication system' (Islam, 2013).

3.9.7. Technology support

Contemporary consortia and collaborative programs will need extensive support from information and communication technologies. It is obvious that not only consortia but libraries generally now rely massively on technologies to provide access to resources and services, and to communicate with users. As Alexander (1999) concluded, 'library consortia have a long and successful history of applying information technology in a collaborative way to provide more services while sharing the cost' (p.12). Advantages from the use of information technology is always a critical support for libraries in general and consortia in particular if they are to improve and advance their programs and services (Allen & Hirshon, 1998). The application of information technology has allowed consortia to provide various services or cooperative programs successfully that were not possible before the widespread availability of digital networking. These include numerous digital library projects; shared reference services; cooperative cataloguing; patron-initiated, web-based interlibrary loan; and most critically, shared access to large-scale databases of full-text content (Alexander, 2002).

3.10. Obstacles and disadvantages

In the process of formation and development library consortia (and library cooperation more generally) have encountered a number of obstacles or barriers. It is necessary for future consortia to appreciate the nature and extent of these barriers so that they may avoid or be prepared to address them.

Orin Nolting's late 1960s research undertook an in-depth study based on American librarians, library trustees, and school administrators, and identified no less than

forty-six barriers to library cooperation. Nolting compiled these barriers into five main groups as follows:

- *Psychological barriers* refer to the custodial mentality of librarians; fear of loss of autonomy; clash of personalities; jealousy and stubbornness; complacency and self-satisfaction; mistrust between librarians; inertia and indifference; unwillingness to experiment, and assumption that each library has unique rather than common needs.

- *Lack of information and experience* included in this category are: the lack of knowledge of users' needs; lack of information about the true functions of different types of libraries; unpredictability of demands on the library by its legitimate users; lack of public interest and concern for total library services; failure to inform the public regarding library collections and services; lack of knowledge by librarians of interlibrary loan codes; failure of small libraries to realise the value of resources of larger libraries, and unawareness of successful cooperative efforts in other states.

- *Traditional and historical barriers* refer to lack of adequate funds; fear by large libraries of being overused and undercompensated; lack of understanding by laymen of library needs; institutional competition; thinking of only one type of cooperation; reluctance of independent libraries to relinquish any responsibilities.

- *Physical and geographical barriers* consist of distance between libraries; distance of users from libraries; difference in size of library collections; lack of a good public transport system.

- *Legal and administrative barriers* include too many local government taxing units; lack of appropriate state enabling legislation; lack of creative administrative leadership; cumbersome fiscal practices of local governments; lack of communication across jurisdictional lines at the policy level; lack of contacts with voluntary and governmental agencies engaged in area-wide cooperation; lack of bibliographic tools and controls; failure to utilise technological equipment; incompatibility of equipment, procedures and rules between libraries; lack of properly trained staff (Nolting, 1969).

Most of these barriers might still hold true for the practice of consortia today, not only in the United States but in many other countries. Discussing management issues of cooperative ventures and consortia in the USA, Evans listed six groups of barriers to cooperation that generally coalesced with those of Nolting, and were described as: 1) institutional; 2) legal, political, and administrative;3) technological; 4) physical; 5) people; and 6) knowledge-based issues (Evans, 2002a, p. 216).

Examining closely the issues Evans explored, considerations on the *institutional issues* were given to the *self-sufficiency* that posed a number of problems. In something of a paradox, tight budget conditions push libraries to surrender their self-sufficiency and to become involved in cooperative collection development; while at the same time requiring libraries to be self-sufficient as there is inadequate finance available to enable them to contribute adequately to cooperative purchasing and shared collecting responsibility. On the other hand, pressure from library users requires libraries to satisfy their needs for locally-held materials while they might need resources that are not included in the local library's holdings. It could be a challenge for library consortia to reconcile these matters.

Several *historical and traditional barriers* to library cooperation and consortia were pointed out including institutional competition; special access rules, and library operating practices. For example when cooperating on collection development activities, some libraries choose to use the Research Libraries Group (RLG) conspectus to underpin selection priorities. The conspectus was developed by the RLG for use with the Library of Congress Classification Scheme, so it could be difficult for libraries using other classification schemes to participate, as the cost of converting data was quite expensive. The practice of controlling library operating costs by applying restricted access rules or securing additional funding could also be an obstacle to cooperative efforts. Competition between libraries for additional funding from local government led to competition in satisfying the needs of customers and could result in undesirable duplication between libraries' collections (Evans, 2002a). The consequence of this practice would therefore be contrary to forms of cooperation in collection development that are intended to reduce unnecessary duplication.

Evans also found that problems associated with the *legal, political, and administrative* barriers came from a multi-jurisdictional system as the cooperative arrangements or consortia included institutions of many types. Evans suggested that the development of a multi-type library system might start at a local level in order to ensure a functioning legislative framework, or start at a national level to ensure better funding. A number of disadvantages including suspicion, possessiveness, regional jealousies, or political desire contributed to the legal, political and administrative barriers. Unequal sharing of administrative and policy decision making between particular groups of members can also be a problem that may lead to a situation that members with less decision making power may choose not to participate in the consortia. Evans further noted the significant role of accrediting agencies that might have both positive and negative influences upon consortial arrangements, particularly with regard to cooperative collection development.

While *physical issues* related to geographic and transportation disadvantages and *technological issues* regarding the ways libraries provided resources and services to users and their related costs might be minor barriers for cooperative and consortial arrangements, Evans (2002a) considered the psychological barriers faced by staff (*people*) as the greatest impediment to cooperative efforts. These psychological barriers include fear of losing autonomy, which often results in passive resistance, inertia and indifference, and could be a significant problem at both the planning and implementation stages. The author suggested that in looking to overcome these problems, mutual agreements that grant greater decision making power to less dominant individuals and groups can work as a means of reconciling them to the lack of autonomy. It is also important to identify and demonstrate the practical and material benefits that will result from a consortial arrangement, as well as consulting and obtaining comments and approval from institutional leaders and library users so that there would not be unexpected resistance when projects are implemented.

Alexander cited Ernest Colwell's words in describing the psychological resistance to cooperation: 'the obstacles to cooperation are not material… [They] are found in the mind and spirit of man. They are institutional pride and institutional jealousy… They are inertia and complacency… And I would say, finally, that it is an irrational provincialism or an emotional particularism on the part of college faculties which makes cooperation difficult' (Alexander, 1999, p. 7).

Gorman and Cullen's view on the obstacles to cooperation focused on the desire for autonomy; the competitive environment; changing institutional foci, and financial constraints (Gorman & Cullen, 2000, p. 375). While the issues were not completely new as they were raised in Nolting's comprehensive list of barriers compiled a number of years before, the authors placed them in the context of a more competitive and technologically enabled environment. Gorman and Cullen (2000) pointed to some of the barriers to consortial arrangements that might be particularly important in developing countries, such as: ethnic and political divisions that lead to national rivalries; lack of understanding by governments of the critical role of the information infrastructure in the provision of effective information services, leading to lack of investment in information services; severe lack of financial resources in the region's developing economies; lack of an existing culture of open public access to information and information sharing.

Wright (2005) is another who has affirmed that libraries of different types are likely to face different sorts of barriers to cooperative and consortial efforts, noting in particular that financial issues are more likely to be a barrier for small independent institutions, and that licensing was also a potential challenge for these types of libraries (Wright, 2005). It is worth noting, however, that even the most successful consortia continue to face some of the same challenges in licensing electronic content that small consortia or individual libraries face. For example, OhioLINK, a large and successful network may 'demonstrate economies of scale, but many of those economies come with strings attached, such as journal lists with titles the library does not need, service commitments not previously accepted, or long-term commitments that restrict the local library' (Williams, 2000, p. 24). Size alone does not enable consortia to negotiate their way through every challenge.

Besides the major barriers widely described in the literature on library cooperation and consortia, there are also numerous minor barriers faced by consortia themselves as they manage their daily business. For example, participating in too many consortia can be a problem for some libraries as they are required to devote a significant amount of time and resources to managing and administering their participation in their consortia. As Kaufman has noted, as part of a prediction that consortia would become fewer but larger, 'Although some consortia bring our users or our universities significant benefits, the panoply of organizations, and the time and

energy we spend in all of them collectively, is a mini-nightmare' (Kaufman, 2001, p. 13).

The practice of cooperation in some developing countries has highlighted the particular factors that hinder the development of basic cooperative processes that might be taken for granted in developed countries. For instance, the economic challenges reflected in the lack of necessary equipment and communication system for providing interlibrary loan services and networking; the political factors including coherent government support and medium-long term planning; the human and professional issues in circumstances where professional associations are still maturing; and the social and cultural factors associated with the valuing of organised public records (Bouazza, 1986). Relevant research has pinpointed a number of problems in developing countries that reflect the state of societies that are transitioning to new models of working. For example, some of the barriers that obstruct cooperation in the Philippines and Southeast Asian countries have been described as including 'rivalry and competition, mistrust and jealousy, politics and personalities, different institutional priorities and indifferent institutional administrators, unequal development and parochialism' (Verzosa, 2004, p. 7). Similarly, problems encountered in Pakistan include the unwillingness to share resources; unavailability of library catalogues or union catalogues; a lack of a legal basis for sharing activities; difficulties in interlibrary loan services such as high mailing costs, and delays in return and the risk of loss of books (Attaullah, 1993). Library consortia in India have reported problems including lack of shared knowledge and understanding; limited funds, and geographic problems (Maitrayee, Biswas, & Jeevan, 2006); and in Malaysia it has been reported that the formation of the National Consortium of Academic Libraries faced challenges such as poor technology infrastructure, lack of funding and inconsistent models of payment (Mohd, Yusof, & Umar, 2014).

Vietnamese libraries have also encountered barriers to library cooperation that are similar to those described for other developing countries. Discussing disadvantages for cooperative arrangements among libraries in Vietnam, Pham and Le (2006) pointed out that there were too many levels of government authority and lack of reliable legal foundation, resulting in major legal and administrative barriers. As a result the organisational structure of cooperative programs was unstable because

members were able to withdraw at any time they wished due to the voluntary and informal nature of associations, networks or consortia. According to Pham and Le, it has been extremely difficult to operate cooperatively when there has been a lack of legal authority to establish a central, managing authority. As a result all members have an equal say and there is a lack of responsibility for decision making and coordination. The authors also described physical, geographical and professional barriers that prevail in Vietnam, including the distance between libraries; the lack of financial capacity; incompatibility of equipment; lack of qualified staff, and insufficiently creative management. The psychological barriers discussed include a fear of losing autonomy; and a perceived lack of interest in cooperative programs. Some of these barriers were considered to reflect the particular cultural and historical factors prevailing in Vietnam, which often resulted in support for more traditional modes of operation (Pham & Le, 2006) .

While bringing a wide range of benefits and advantages to libraries, consortia also presented a number of disadvantages that need to be fully understood in order for considered decision making by libraries. Peters (2003) identified numerous discontents of consortia, including too many meetings; time delays; bureaucratic inefficiency; ineffectiveness in achieving goals; the pressure of sustainability; scalability issues; too many consortia; disparities between the ideal and the actuality, and the belief that competition outperforms collaboration. Understanding these various discontents could help to identify potential problem areas and thereby take effective action to pre-emptively improve consortial services and arrangements.

A considerable body of literature has described obstacles and disadvantages to library cooperation and consortia, however there is a lack of discussion of solutions to dealing with these obstacles or barriers. The variety of matters raised in the existing literature indicates that challenges can be quite different for future consortia depending upon their types and goals, and that consortia in developing countries are likely to face particular psycho-social barriers born of the sudden transition from very traditional ways of operating in the workplace that have prized independence and autonomy.

3.11. Success factors for library consortia

It has been argued that there are a variety of factors that contribute to the success of library cooperation and consortia. A comprehensive study of collaboration conducted by Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey(2001) based upon a review of eighteen related studies identified twenty factors of successful collaboration. Of those many appeared to be relevant to the practice of library cooperation and consortia that have been discussed in research originating in library and information studies.In their significant article on academic library consortia, Allen and Hirshon (1998) identified several factors that are essential to the success of library-based consortia. Gorman & Cullen (2000) highlighted factors regarding governance structure, leadership, issues of funding, policy frameworks, and staff skills, while Wiser (2012) emphasised leadership, revenue and the importance of a rational formula for cost sharing.

In a pointer to one of the key challenges faced in developing countries, note has been made that a strong history of collaboration or cooperation that provides both relevant experience and a strong foundation of belief in the benefits of cooperation is an important success factor for consortia (Mattessich, Murray-Close & Monsey, 2001; Wright, 2005). Similarly, Allen and Hirshon (1998) identified respect for the value of increased collaboration as a predictor of success for consortia (Allen & Hirshon, 1998).

Other human factors that have been highlighted include the need for strong leadership and adequate staff skills and enthusiasm. In order to enable consortia operation, willingness and commitment of library and consortia managers to take on leadership roles and encourage cooperative action is essential (Allen & Hirshon, 1998; Fresnido & Yap, 2014; Gorman & Cullen, 2000; Mattessich, Murray-Close & Monsey, 2001; Wiser, 2012), and again these requirements can provide a challenge in the context of developing countries where there has been an emphasis on providing for localised services.

At a management level, commentators have also noted the importance of congruent priorities and appreciation of the common good supported by the member's institutional goals (Allen & Hirshon, 1998; Fresnido & Yap, 2014; Mattessich, Murray-Close & Monsey, 2001), factors of which there is little experience for

libraries operating in contexts where cooperation has not featured heavily in previous library operations.

It is also the case that libraries in developing countries such as Vietnam lack experience with some of the other management elements that have been identified in the literature as requirements for successful consortia, such as creating a formal, cooperative governance structure; development of specific policies and guidelines for consortia operation (Gorman & Cullen, 2000; Mattessich, Murray-Close & Monsey, 2001); and a notion of committed, contributive membership (Fresnido & Yap, 2014).

Finally, it is also clear that developing countries face constant shortfalls regarding the availability of funds and reliable revenue sources that are constantly noted as being critical factors for successful consortia (Gorman & Cullen, 2000; Mattessich, Murray-Close & Monsey, 2001; Wiser, 2012; Fresnido & Yap, 2014). It is a paradox of library consortia that they are often created in order to achieve various cost benefits based on the strength that comes from collaboration, but that they depend on the availability of both start-up funding and a reliable income stream for their success. This is clearly a challenge that is felt most keenly in developing economies where there is understandably little appetite for institutional investment in collaborative programs that might even temporarily divert attention from the need to provide the most basic level of service to local users.

3.12. Chapter summary

This review of the existing literature on library cooperation and consortia has provided numerous matters that libraries need to consider when deciding to initiate or join consortia. This is particularly true for libraries in developing countries, many of which have limited experience of the formalised cooperation that underpins consortia. The literature on consortia in developing countries is therefore alsolimited but nonetheless sufficient to indicate that they face particular challenges at the level of both individual libraries and the wider library system.

This brief overview of the history and remarkable development of library consortia confirms their important role in contemporary library activities and should be sufficient to inform Vietnamese library professionals about the adoption of consortia in other countries as a normal part of library business. The roles and the benefits of

library consortia emphasise a range of important functions consortia can perform for their member libraries, which explains and justifies the formation of consortia and the strong motivation for academic libraries to participate in consortial arrangements. The types and models as well as common services of consortia explained in the literature provide useful suggestions for forming consortia that are suited to the specific needs of individual libraries or groups of libraries. Various issues of library cooperation and consortia including membership, governance, leadership, funding, and cost sharing, as well as the importance of sustainability provide vital information and evidence regarding about the organisation and practice of consortia. The literature also describes a variety of obstacles and difficulties libraries and consortia may face and strategies by which they can address these potential obstacles. Libraries and their consortia can learn from the successes and failures of other consortia that have been widely reported in the literature and discussed in this chapter.

The review of the literature not only highlighted the importance of library cooperation and consortia, but has also helped the researcher to inform this research project with the outcomes of previous research and commentary, and thereby provide a critically important context for understanding the future possibilities for academic library consortia in Vietnam.

CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

The research background presented in Chapter 2 provided an overall description of Vietnamese libraries and their history of cooperative activities within the social, economic and educational context of the country. The lack of a strong history or tradition of cooperation, including the use of consortial arrangements was described. The literature review in Chapter 3 covers a wide range of research and publishing related to the development of consortia across the world, including in other developing countries. On the basis of these two chapters it is asserted that there has been a demonstrable lack of cooperation generally, and more specifically consortia, by Vietnamese academic libraries as a means of addressing the need to provide cost-effective, user-centred collections and services. It has also been indicated in the preceding chapters that there is little or no comprehensive research on the current state of cooperation and consortia among academic libraries in Vietnam. It has been very difficult on the basis of the previous literature to gain an overview on possibilities for the future adoption of consortia by Vietnamese academic libraries, and to determine the critical factors for successful development and implementation of this enhanced form of cooperation. This study, therefore, is designed to fill these gaps.

In order to collect comprehensive and meaningful data that can address the research question driving this study, a mixed methods approach has been devised that allows for the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. An explanatory research design is chosen to undertake a two phase data collection process, consisting of questionnaires intended for a large population; and in-depth interviews of selected participants in order to obtain a deeper understanding of specific issues.

This Chapter describes in detail the research design used for this study, with a view to explaining the 'philosophical worldviews, selected strategies of inquiry and research methods' (Creswell, 2009, p. 5) that underpin the data collection, analyses and interpretation used in this research.

4.2.   Philosophical foundations

Selection of research design is commonly determined or influenced by a researcher's 'worldview', which in this context might be described as a researcher's broad approach to the task and challenges presented by the need to collect relevant and informative data. According to Creswell (2009), there are four such general worldviews, that can be grouped and described as *post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory,* and *pragmatism.*

A research paradigm is directly related to the respective worldview that researchers hold and employ in most of their research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Schwandt, 1989; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Guba (1990) has defined a paradigm as 'a basic set of beliefs that guide action' (p. 17), and Morgan (2007) explained the meaning of research paradigms as 'shared belief systems that influence the kinds ofknowledge researchers seek and how they interpret the evidence they collect' (p. 50). Morgan goes on to describe four categories of paradigms, being 'worldviews, epistemological stances, shared beliefs in a research field and model examples' (Morgan, 2007, p. 51). The literature more broadly has also described these and other paradigms that reflect major approaches to research in the social sciences.

According to Hall (2013) 'no research is paradigm free' (p. 3), although he argues that mixed methods research may have problems in locating a suitable paradigm, with Positivism/Post-positivism and Constructivism used in quantitative and qualitative research designs being inappropriate for a mixed methods approach. Hall suggested the use of a single paradigm approach, capable of incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research methods, but questioned the suitability of the existing paradigms, instead supporting the use of what he referred to as a 'realist perspective'. Hall argued that there is a need for 'a version of realism that recognizes the complexity of social phenomena by enabling a role for values and interpretive meaning while at the same time accepting explanation as a legitimate goal of social research' (Hall, 2013, p. 5).

Ford also argues that although many researchers in the field of librarianship and information science have used 'scientific' paradigms, librarianship and information science is basically considered a social scientific discipline and tends to adopt 'humanistic', primarily interpretative, paradigms. Since the 1980's Ford (1987) has

particularly noted the necessity of integration between 'divergent' and 'convergent' modes of thinking and has drawn attention to the 'balance between searching for "universal truths" and pragmatism' (Ford, 1987, p. 43) in library and information science that today we know as a mixed methods approach.

Because mixed methods research has been selected for this study, an appropriate research paradigm that supports a mixed methods design is needed. From the viewpoints of some writers on mixed methods, 'pragmatism' is well suited to mixed methods research addressing issues in the social sciences (Creswell, 2009; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Rossman & Wilson, 1985; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Pragmatism is a philosophical stance emphasising actions, situations, and consequences (Creswell, 2009), and 'using diverse approaches and valuing both objective and subjective knowledge' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Pragmatist research tends to place research in social, historical, political or other particular contexts (Creswell, 2003), and also establishes a strong interactive relationship between researcher and participants, and uses both deductive and inductive or abductive logic for their inquiry (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Pragmatism can be suitable for the selected methods of this study, which is heavily contextualised by the fact that it addresses the research subject (academic library consortia) in a country (Vietnam) with a very particular set of historical and socio-cultural circumstances that distinguish it even from its near neighbours.

4.3.   Research approaches

There are three broad approaches to research commonly used in the social sciences, including library and information science. These are quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed methods research (Creswell, 2009; Williamson, 2013).

Quantitative research: is commonly used to test theories, working with numerical data and statistical analyses within a post positivist/positivist paradigm (Creswell, 2009; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009).

Qualitative research: is applied to explore and understand the 'meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the

researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data' (Creswell, 2009, p. 4). Patton (1990) particularly argued that 'qualitative methods are first and foremost research methods. They are ways of finding out what people do, know, think, and feel by observing, interviewing, and analyzing documents' (p. 94).

Mixed methods research:

This research approach has emerged since 1980s' and become popular as a new approach to research data collection (Bazeley, 2002; Creswell, 2008; Hall, 2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). Onwuegbuzie andLeech pointed to a favourable use of pragmatic mixed methods by researchers who 'usequalitative research to inform the quantitative portion of research studies, and vice versa' (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005, p. 383).

Mixed methods research combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study with a dual purpose of obtaining greater and deeper understanding of issues and experience (Creswell, 2008; Williamson, 2013). The previous literature on the subject has described the advantage of the mixed methods approach as being that a, 'combination of both forms of data provides a better understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data by itself' (Creswell, 2008, p. 62); or, similarly, that it can reap the benefits of both qualitative and quantitative approaches and offer 'greater validity of results' (Bazeley, 2002). Johnson and Onwuegbuzi further specify the advantage of mixed methods research is that it allows researchers to facilitate the advantages and eliminate the weaknesses of each individual method (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). De Lisle (2011) warns that while providing complementary strengths of both methods, mixed methods can be challenging because of the need to implement two or more methodologies (De Lisle, 2011).

Johanson and Williamson (2013) confirm the emergence of mixed methods and assert that researchers in the field of library and information science benefit from utilising methodologies and theories from many other areas. Other research has previously employed mixed methods, including studies such as the current one, to consider issues related to library cooperation or other issues in library business. Torre (1985) conducted survey questionnaires and interviews to determine Costa Rican librarians' perceptions of the barriers to library cooperation in comparison to the

barriers perceived by U.S. librarians; Chaparro (2008) explored digitisation issues of Brazilian academic libraries by undertaking surveys, interviews, and a review of institutional documentation; Taole and Dick (2009) investigated the implementation of a common library system for the Lesotho Library Consortium through three instruments: questionnaires, interviews and document analysis; Maesaroh (2012) employed mixed methods in research on skills and abilities of Indonesian academic library staff and formal and continuing professional development required for their skills and abilities; and Ninh (2013) conducted questionnaires and interviews to explore the development and implementation of quality management in university libraries in Vietnam.

In order to investigate a variety of factors regarding the current situation of Vietnamese academic libraries and their cooperative and consortial arrangements, it is desirable that this study obtains general views and attitudes from a large population. It is very difficult, however, to obtain comprehensive, nuanced thoughts or suggestions (qualitative responses) on specific issues related to the research topic by relying upon a survey alone. Therefore a mixed methods research design was chosen as an appropriate approach for this study because it is believed that the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods will produce complementary data and a more exhaustive examination of the different points of view on the subject at hand.

Mixed methods design

Based on Creswell's classification of mixed methods designs, there are six major designs applied for mixed methods research that include the Convergent Parallel Design, the Explanatory Sequential Design, the Exploratory Design, the Embedded Design, the Transformative Design and the Multiphase Design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The Explanatory sequential design is a two-phase mixed methods designthat allows researchers to collect quantitative data and qualitative data in a sequence in which 'the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture' (Creswell, 2008, p. 560).

This study employed the Participant Selection Model, one of the two variants of the Explanatory Design, as a primary and suitable approach in acquiring and mixing data for the research procedure because, according to Creswell & Plano Clark, this model

'is used when a researcher needs quantitative information to identify and purposefully select participants for a follow-up, in-depth, qualitative study. In this model, the emphasis of the study is usually on the second, qualitative phase' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 74). The design was visualised by Creswell & Plano Clark as redrawn in Figure 4.1 below.

The data for this research were collected in two distinct stages; reported and analysed in separate chapters; and mixed at the interpretation stage in order to reach conclusions that give ample weight to each method. This approach has been described as 'mixing during interpretation' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) with an emphasis on qualitative data obtained from the interviews. Adopting the Participant Selection model, the mixed methods design of this study is described in Figure 4.2 as follows.

Figure 4.1: *The Participant Selection Model, Explanatory Sequential Design (redrawn)*

Explanatory Design: Participant Selection Model (QUAL emphasized)

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┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌────────────────────┐
│  quan    │→  │  quan    │→  │  quan    │→  │  QUAL    │→  │  QUAL    │→  │  QUAL    │→  │  QUAL    │→  │  Interpretation    │
│  data    │   │  data    │   │ results  │   │participant│   │  data    │   │  data    │   │ results  │   │  quan  ──→  QUAL   │
│collection│   │ analysis │   │          │   │          │   │collection│   │ analysis │   │          │   │                    │
└──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └────────────────────┘
```
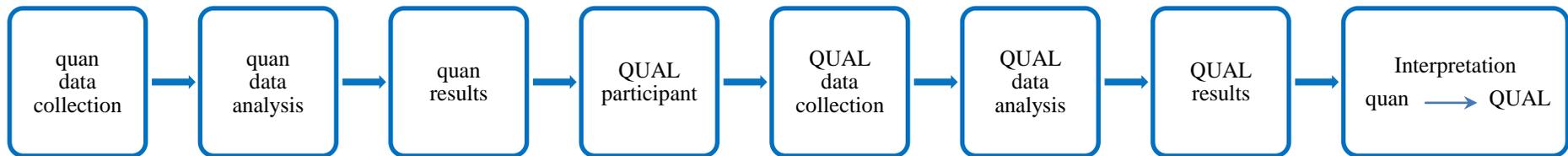
The Explanatory Design

(Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007, p. 73)

Figure 4.2: *Research process based on the mixed methods Explanatory Sequential Design with the Participant Selection Model*

Research Background Establishment	- Broad context of the research - The need and rationale for the research - Initiating the research question
Literature Review	- Developing the research question - Adopting research methods and research design - Developing research procedure
Survey	Self-administered questionnaires
QUANTITATIVE Data Collection	Quantitative data
QUANTITATIVE Data Analysis	Descriptive statistics Frequencies, Percentages and Means T-test and ANOVA
Interviews	**Connecting to the Interviews:** Sample selection criteria set (based on the results of the questionnaire) Interview protocol
QUALITATIVE Data Collection	Qualitative data: Audio files, transcripts, translations
QUALITATIVE Data Analysis	Codes (categories) Coding and thematic analysis
Mixed Results Interpretation	Discussions based on mixing interpretation Recommendations

4.4. Survey research

Survey research is a research design that relies upon surveying a part or an entire population to obtain responses regarding characteristics, attitude, opinions and behaviours of the respective population (Creswell, 2008; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Tanner, 2013). According to Tanner (2013), descriptive surveys are those that employ different forms of questionnaires and some types of interviews as common instruments to collect data and apply descriptive statistics. The outcomes of surveys can also be used to predict future behaviours (Tanner, 2013, p. 142).

This study followed a mixed methods research approach that is utilising both quantitative and qualitative data to seek the answers to the research question. Descriptive surveys were conducted with self-administered questionnaires to obtain an overall view of perceptions, opinions and attitudes that Vietnamese academic librarians provide through their responses to targeted questions. The research also included face-to-face, semi-structured interviews to elicit more detailed suggestions and ideas on specific issues regarding the possibilities of establishing successful library consortia for/by Vietnamese academic libraries.

4.4.1. Questionnaire

This quantitative research was conducted in the first phase of data collection process for this study. The quantitative approach is employed in this case to obtain a variety of responses to the issue from a large population. In this case the targeted population consisted of representatives from each academic library in Vietnam. Following Creswell's guidelines, administering 'a survey to a small group of selected people (called the *sample*) to identify trends in attitudes, opinions, behaviours, or the characteristics of a large group of people (called the *population*)' (Creswell, 2008, p. 61).

Surveys also appeal as a feasible approach to collecting data from librarians because it is believed that the profession is familiar with survey questionnaires as, according to Williamson, libraries have commonly utilised this category of instrument for data collection relating to their own services (Williamson, 2002).

Practically the research issue is concerned with all Vietnamese academic libraries and the number of college and university libraries is not too large to make the prospect of surveying the entire population unfeasible. An initial estimate was that there were less than 400 such libraries. Therefore, the researcher planned to survey the whole population with an expectation of obtaining a diverse and broad information base regarding respondents' perceptions of, and their opinions on, library cooperation and consortia, irrespective of whether they are currently involved in these types of arrangements. It was hoped that data collected from this survey can describe and explain specifically the current situation and the trends of Vietnamese academic libraries in their cooperative practices.

A questionnaire was determined to be a suitable form of survey to collect data from this large population. A number of comprehensive studies in the library and information science discipline, particularly on the topic of library cooperation and consortia, have utilised questionnaires as a suitable research instrument for data collection. In a study on academic library directors' perception of joining a consortium, Krieb (2011) conducted descriptive survey of over 145 libraries that were members of a consortium sharing an integrated library system, in order to identify factors that influenced the decision of the library directors to join the consortium. Ford (1995) surveyed by questionnaire 1,100 libraries in three states of the United States to investigate different types of costs associated with multi-type library cooperation. Perry (2009) provided a questionnaire to members of the International Coalition of Library Consortia in 2009 to determine an international overview of the current and future priorities of library consortia.

4.4.2. Interview

Interviewing is a qualitative research method that is commonly used in the field of library and information science (Williamson, 2013) to obtain specific and intensive information about 'personal perceptions of events, processes and environments' (Gorman & Clayton, 2015, p. 41) or about 'current operations and future requirements' (Williamson, 2002, p. 243) from those interviewed.

In phase 2 of this research, formal face-to-face interviews were conducted with selected participants to gain a deeper insight into the key issues facing academic

library consortia in Vietnam. These issues included the interviewees' perceptions regarding the impacts of library consortia; specific matters regarding consortia formation; the obstacles or barriers to Vietnamese academic libraries with regard to their participation in consortia; confirmation of the possible types and services of future Vietnamese academic library consortia; and factors that will impact on the success or failure of these consortia

Face-to-face interviewing is the most common form of interviewing (Fontana & Frey, 2011). Gorman and Clayton (2005) and Williamson (2002) have pointed out a number of arguments in favour of interviewing as a form of data collection. This approach frequently results in high response (participation) rates and high quality responses since interviewer and interviewees have direct contact and interaction before, during and probably after interviews. This allows interviewees to provide detailed responses to questions formulated by the researcher for the purpose. Both parties have the opportunity to resolve misunderstandings and clarify ambiguities about questions or responses.

A variety of studies in various social science disciplines have employed interviews. Maskell (2006), for example, used semi-structured interviews to collect data from two populations, which were librarians serving universities and government agencies. Many other researchers have conducted interviews as their exclusive methodology or as a component of their mixed methods.

4.5.   Creating instruments

The survey instruments consisted of questionnaires to gather quantitative data and interviews to collect qualitative data.

4.5.1. Creating questionnaires

Questionnaires are amongst the most common research instruments used for data collection (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010). The questionnaire developed for this mixed methods study included both closed-ended and open-ended items (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Since English is not the first or (in most cases) the second language in Vietnam, the questionnaires dispatched to libraries were in Vietnamese. The questionnaire was

constructed in English as the language of this study and it was then translated into Vietnamese to ensure semantic integrity (Flaskerud, 1988; Lee, Jones, Mineyama, & Zhang, 2002).

Although electronic survey tools such as Survey Monkey are potentially helpful, the survey questionnaires in this project were designed with a fillable-forms format using Microsoft Word so that they could be sent to libraries both by post and by email. It was decided that using both forms of distribution was necessary due to the unreliable access to email that is still the case for some Vietnamese universities, and in order to encourage the highest possible response rate.

Questionnaire design

The contents of survey questionnaires were structured in four sections (See Appendix A). The first section included a group of factual (demographic) questions that gathered general data about the respondents and their institutions; the second part collected brief information about the respondents' attitude to general cooperative and networking activities; section three sought facts and data on the current state of library cooperative activities in the form of associations or societies. Section four was designed to obtain information regarding respondents' perception of, engagement in, and attitude to library consortia, with the intention of determining whether there are possibilities for the future formation of academic library consortia in Vietnam.

Depending on the purpose for which each question was asked, different types of questions were used to gain the most suitable form of response. The format of the questions included yes/no questions; single choice or multiple-choice questions; Likert scales; and a ten-point numerical rating scale.

Likert scale and numerical rating scales were utilised in the questionnaire for questions that require the respondents to express an opinion. Likert scales were originally developed by Rensis Likert in order to measure psychological attitude with a method that could be interpreted as numerical measurements (Williamson, 2013). A 'Neutral' option is typically set as a middle point among five options for questions using a Likert scale format to allow respondents to indicate a neutral response in cases where they are unable to express a more definite opinion. Among a variety of

Likert-like scale response anchors, including a level-of-agreement anchor (Vagias, 2006) were utilised for questions that seek respondents' opinions on specific issues. With a Likert scale chosen librarians' attitude and opinions were capable of being specifically expressed when desired.

With regard to the numerical rating scales, a five or seven point rating scale is considered preferable by many researchers, a ten point scale is believed to produce higher levels of missing data (Courser & Lavrakas, 2013). A ten point rating scale was, however, chosen for a number of questions in this questionnaire to measure underlying attitudes and opinions of respondents on particular issues of library cooperation and consortia. The researcher made the assumption that it may be easier for respondents to use a ten point rating scale because most of them are familiar with a ten point grading system that is commonly used in Vietnamese education. There is also support in the literature for the view that in general 'many people are familiar with the notion of rating out of ten' (Dawes, 2008, p. 63). Furthermore, a ten point rating scale provides more options for respondents to more finely express their attitude or assessment in response to a specific issue.

A number of open-ended questions were also included in the questionnaire in order to give respondents opportunities to express opinions and ideas using their own words. In most cases the open-ended questions were placed at the end of a section of the survey. To use the final question of a section in this way is also intended to provide respondents with the opportunity to reflect on issues that may not have been raised in the preceding questions, and seeks additional comments on any aspects of the research issue that the respondents may wish to make. The data elicited from the responses to open-ended questions were categorised and quantified using SPSS and processed using similar procedures to other quantitative data.

This research uses a self-administered questionnaire, which is designed with both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Closed questions include factual questions with 'yes/no', 'contingency', single choice or multiple choices and opinion questions (Williamson, 2013). Many of the multiple-choice questions provided an 'other' category to give respondents the opportunity to provide a response other than those drawn from a prescribed list. The opinion questions in this closed-ended category are designed with Likert scales or 10-point rank order scales.

Pre-testing the questionnaire

A draft of the questionnaire was sent to six professional librarians for feedback regarding the contents, structure, use of terminology and the time duration needed to complete the questionnaire. Most feedback received were primarily suggestions for improving question wording and the Vietnamese language expressions. Since the questionnaire was basically constructed in English before it was translated into Vietnamese, some expressions were not as natural as if they were initially written in Vietnamese. Therefore, most suggestions from this pre-test phase were taken and incorporated to ensure all questions could be understood by respondents.

4.5.2. Creating the interview schedule

Interviewees were asked the same carefully constructed questions in the same order so that the researcher was able to facilitate comparison between participants' answers (Williamson, 2013) and thereby synthesise information relevant to the research question. However, during the interviews, some additional, spontaneous questions, devised in response to answers to previous questions, may be asked in order to 'capture the perspectives of participants as far as possible while ensuring that interviewees focus issues relevant to the study' (Williamson, 2013, p. 361).

An interview protocol was developed and approved before conducting interviews at the interviewees' places of work. The interview protocol was initially designed for the group of academic (college and university) library managers. An additional question was designed for the group of professional association/consortium managers in order to elicit an answer relating to difficulties and success or failure factors relevant to their positions.

It was expected that the qualitative data obtained from these interviews would complement quantitative data from the questionnaire to provide a deeper understanding of the issues related to the research question and objectives.

4.6. Population and sample identification

This study investigated issues concerning Vietnamese academic libraries so the population and sample were identified from these settings.

As Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990) state, there is no rule for determining sample size and the use of a larger sample can make the standard error smaller. As the number of colleges and universities in Vietnam was 403 institutions according to the statistics provided by MOET in 2011, the number of libraries was then estimated to be less than 400 libraries. It was planned to distribute the questionnaire to the entire population. The targeted respondents within each of these libraries were the most senior manager of libraries. However, it is predictable that in some instances managers may pass the survey questionnaires to their staff to complete on behalf of the library. All colleges and universities that constitute the two national universities, the Vietnam National University – Hanoi and the Vietnam University - HCM, and the other three regional universities comprising Thai Nguyen University, Hue University and Da Nang University, were counted individually as the various libraries serving these institutions participate independently in the current library associations and library consortium.

A list of college and university libraries in Vietnam was initially devised with the assumption that every college and university may have a library, even if this could not be verified to be the case. The names of colleges and universities were identified relying upon information derived from the list of colleges and universities provided in a guide book titled *Những điều cần biết về tuyển sinh đại học, cao đẳng năm 2011* [Guide for College and University Entrance Examination – 2011] published in 2011 by MOET and on MOET website (Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo [MOET], 2011, 2015). Further details of the population for the survey questionnaires was identified by a selection of several lists of libraries such as the lists of member libraries produced by the major professional associations (Northern Academic Library Association and the Vietnamese Library Association of Southern Academic Libraries); the lists of members of VLC; a directory titled *Các Thư viện và Trung tâm thông tin – thư viện ở Việt Nam* [Libraries and Centres for library and informationin Vietnam] prepared bythe Library Department of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism; institution websites; individual library websites, and even Wikipedia. The information checking was time consuming because of inconsistencies in the institutional names and their contact addresses. The list of libraries was compiled in a Microsoft Excel worksheet so that data could be sorted or filtered to check redundancy or inconsistency in the

names of institutions and to assist with the follow-up process of sending and receiving responses.

Although data collected from a larger population are essential because it will provide a broad and general view on the current state of library cooperation and consortia involvement of Vietnamese academic libraries, it may not be sufficient to reveal precise answers to the research question and objectives. The problem in this case was exacerbated as it was considered possible that many of the survey respondents may not be familiar with the concept of library consortia, as they have not been widely practiced or even considered in the Vietnamese context. As noted previously in Chapter 2, at present there is only one consortium for all types of libraries operating in Vietnam, to which a number of college and university libraries belong as members. Being members of a consortium, this group of academic libraries were thought likely to have more informed opinions with regard to the benefits (or otherwise) of belonging to consortia, and it was therefore decided to 'target' them as the sample for the interview phase of the data collection.

Purposive (or targeted) sampling technique is used for interviews in order to gain richer information from selected samples (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The samples for the interviews consisted of senior library managers (including Directors) who are responsible for overseeing all activities in their library, and wereidentified through their association with libraries that are members of the current consortium and who are therefore expected to have a good knowledge of, and experience in, participating in professional association and consortia. It was also decided to have a second sample drawn from the population of current senior managers of library associations who have relevant extensive experience in organising broadly-based cooperative activities.

Samples for the group of library managers were identified from respective libraries that participated in the survey. It was expected that the selected interviewees would offer more valuable opinions if they have direct experience regarding association and consortium participation. The selection list was therefore shortened to consist of libraries that reported membership of associations and consortia. The samples were selected based on the following selection criteria and process:

1) Member of consortia: 3 points. The samples were selected based on the result of Question 16 in the survey and crossed checked with the list of members of CPER.

2) Member of professional associations: 1 point for being member of an association; 2 points for being members of two associations or more. The samples were identified based on the results of Questions 8 & 9 in the questionnaire and cross checked with the lists of members of respective associations.

3) Serve on standing committee(s) of professional associations or consortia: 1 point. The samples were identified from the lists of professional association committee members.

4) Contribution of valuable ideas to open-ended questions in the questionnaire that need clarification or further discussions: 2 points. These were acknowledged from some open-ended questions in the questionnaires.

5) Hold the highest level of appointment in their respective libraries. These samples were identified from a directory of libraries and from the correspondence during administering the questionnaires.

Samples that meet the first five criteria were then refined with the following criteria:

6) Represent major geographic areas of Vietnam.

7) Represent public and private institutions in proportion to the current institution types.

8) Random selection (*, **, ***): Random selection made if the number of interviewees is larger than the number of samples required and in these cases, researcher's knowledge was used before random selection was made.

Table 4.1: *Selection criteria for the target group of library managers*

Sites	Selection criteria					Total point	6	7	8	Samples selected
	1	2	3	4	5					
Library 1	1	1	3	1	2	8				By points
Library 2	1	2	3	0	0	6			***	
Library 3	1	2	3	1	0	7				By points
Library 4	1	2	0	1	2	6			***	
Library 5	1	2	3	0	0	6	*		***	Bygeographic regions
Library 11	1	1	3	1	0	6			***	
Library 12	1	2	3	1	2	9				By points
Library 21	1	1	3	0	0	5				
Library 22	1	1	3	1	0	6			***	
Library 37	1	2	3	0	0	6			***	
Library 41	1	1	0	0	0	2				
Library 42	1	1	3	1	0	6			***	
Library 58	1	2	0	1	2	6		**	***	Institution type

It is noted that one interviewee was selected as an exception on the basis of strongly expressed negative views in response to the questionnaire.

4.7. Sample recruitment

A questionnaire 'package' was prepared with all necessary information so that the invited participants were fully aware of the nature of the study. All libraries in the population received a survey questionnaire with a covering letter and an Information Sheet that provided the information about the research project. Contact details of the researcher were provided in case further clarification was required. The questionnaire was designed to be self-administering, and returning a questionnaire was accepted as proof of agreement to participate.

As described in Section 4.6, the sample to be used for interviewing was purposively selected in order to obtain the most relevant data and information (Creswell, 2011). These targeted participants were contacted and invited to participate. Contact was made by email or phone, and potential interviewees were provided with a brief explanation about the project to determine if they agreed to participate in the research. Participants were then provided with an Information Sheet forwarded by email or fax, so they could fully understand the research purpose, timeframe and data collection methods. Setting up appointment dates and times for interviews was made after participants confirmed their willingness to participate. Correspondence between the researcher and participants was conducted in Vietnamese. A translated version of the Information Sheet, the Consent Form and the interview questions were compiled with the assistance of an accredited translator. An Information Sheet was sent or read to participants by email or phone at the time of finalising an appointment for the interviews. Interview questions were sent beforehand to interviewees if requested.

4.8. Data collection

Data collection for this research was conducted sequentially in two phases in which Phase 1 consisted of quantitative data gathered from a survey questionnaire; and Phase 2 qualitative data collected from interviews. Phase 1 was planned in order to ensure as high a response rate as possible by identifying correct names, postal addresses, email addresses, and other contact details to ensure questionnaires reached the intended population. A follow-up contact using mail and email reminders and resending the questionnaire package was applied to those who had not replied by a

specified date. Random contacts by telephone were made as an additional reminder and to double-check correct addresses and contact details if these were in doubt.

4.8.1. Administering questionnaires

One of the foremost tasks in administering the questionnaires was to identify correct addresses of libraries to which the questionnaires were sent. This was arduous due to the unavailability of a current and reliable directory of college and university libraries in Vietnam. The addresses of libraries were collected from various sources. In cases where the specific addresses or contact details of a library service could not be identified using the method previously described in Section 4.6, relying upon the address of the main campus of an institution was used. It should be noted, however, the list of colleges and universities does not exactly reflect the number of libraries because not all Vietnamese colleges and universities have a library.

A list of 310 libraries was determined after eliminating redundancy; or making contact by phone to clarify some unclear addresses, or cross-checking with different data sources. Searching the Internet has found 226 websites of colleges and universities that have a 'Library' link on their webpages. This number was close to the 2006 statistics of a popular library website that recorded 230 college and university libraries in Vietnam (Thuvientre, 2011). There were also 145 library websites found. Of the 153 library email addresses identified from institutional websites, twenty were not hosted by libraries but by an institution's network administrators.

Questionnaires, accompanied by a covering letter and Information Sheet were dispatched to the managers of all college and university libraries by post if email addresses were not available, or in some cases by both post and email. A thank you letter was sent to participating libraries after receiving a completed questionnaire to acknowledge their willingness to cooperate and their contribution to the research project.

The first distribution of questionnaires by post was made on 14[th] January 2012 with a deadline for return set at 24[th] January 2012. The questionnaire with covering letter, the Information Sheet and a self–addressed stamped envelope were dispatched to 234 college and university libraries covering the full extent of the geography of Vietnam.

An electronic version of the questionnaire and an Information Sheet were sent to a further 153 addresses by email on 17th January 2012. The package also included covering information noting that this may be a second version of the questionnaire sent in case the library preferred to return it in an electronic form. The email system claimed delivery failed for fifty addresses. Phone calls were made to these institutions to obtain alternative email addresses. For many cases that telephone communication failed, postal addresses for these libraries were then retrieved to send the questionnaires by post.

One week after the proposed deadline only two completed questionnaires had been returned via email and one received by post. Approximately a hundred phone calls were then made randomly to check whether the libraries had received the questionnaire. Some respondents claim that they have not received a questionnaire and many others confirmed they had received a copy but needed more time to complete it. During the course of the telephone conversation, some respondents who had received a questionnaire by post requested an email version be sent, while others who had received a copy by email preferred to have it sent by post. A number of personal or alternative email addresses was provided and some adjustment of postal addresses was made.

On the 31st January 2012 a reminder letter was sent to respondents with another copy of the questionnaire, the Information Sheet and a self-addressed envelope in case the former pack was deficient in some way. For the email version, since one respondent claimed that he could not open a Microsoft Word 2010 document, all files were converted to Microsoft Word 97-2003 and sent to respondents to make sure they could be opened. A revised deadline for returning the questionnaire was set for 10th February 2012.

Following the first reminder there were 45 responses (33 by email and 12 by post) received before 17th February 2012. These were accompanied in many cases by positive feedback, including an obvious willingness to discuss the issues raised; keenness to share information with the researcher; and anticipation for reading the results and findings when the research was completed. Two libraries expressed their strong interest in the issue and submitted more than one response. In these cases the response from the senior library manager only was retained, and others discarded.

Feedback was also received from the rectors of two universities, both stating that they were interested in the project and would forward the questionnaire to their libraries. Another 25 participants replied to confirm they received the questionnaires and would return it a later date.

A second and final reminder was sent to participants on 24[th] February 2012 with a final deadline set for 6[th] March 2012. Four out of the 25 participants who replied and promised to respond at a later date had still not responded. Several contacts were made by telephone and mobile phone to obtain still more email addresses in order to send questionnaires electronically. The researcher resent, received and replied to a number of emails during this period. There were 85 returned questionnaires (33 by post, 52 by email) by 6[th] March 2012, although for one response the responding library could not be determined. It is worth noting that the time was extended far beyond the original due date for returned questionnaires, however it was decided that it was in the interests of data accuracy to ensure that the response rate was as high as possible. Finally, 102 returned questionnaires were received, of which two were discarded because they were from libraries that did not have any affiliation with a college or university.

Through a follow-up process by telephone further checking the accuracy of the names and addresses provided by respondents, the list of libraries and institutions contacted was revised, as it was determined that some colleges were recently upgraded to universities and had changed name, while others appeared on lists under two or even three different names. Some respondents advised that their institutions had not set up a library or their 'library' was no more than a reading room, with unqualified staff who had no knowledge of, or interest in, the subject matter of the questionnaires. The adjustment of these cases made a final list of 288 institutions that were supposed to receive the questionnaire within the survey period. A total number of 100 returned questionnaires received from 288 institutions constituted a response rate of 35%.

4.8.2. Conducting interviews

The data collection method used in Phase 2 of the research consisted of face-to-face interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a selected population in

order to gain deeper understanding of a number of research issues and supplement and complement the data collected from the questionnaires conducted in Phase 1.

Selected potential interviewees were informed at the contact stage about the parameters and requirements of the interview, and provided with a Consent Form to be signed in order to indicate their willingness to participate and for the resulting data to be reported as part of the research outcomes. All of the intended interviewees who were contacted enthusiastically agreed to participate in an interview.

Interviews were conducted at the workplace of interviewees. As Mertens (2003) has stated, it is important that researchers make themselves present in communities in order to understand and appreciate participants' subjective experiences. On the date of conducting an interview, two copies (one in English and one in Vietnamese) of the Information Sheet, the Consent Form and the interview questions were presented to the interviewee before an interview commenced. Interviewees were given time to read all the three documents, and sign and return the Consent Form. Some interviewees read both versions and signed both versions of the consent form while others read and signed only the Vietnamese version. The researcher collected a signed Consent Form before starting an interview. In order to avoid a distraction of note-taking the researcher asked interviewees for permission to use voice-recording equipment during an interview. This was also clearly stated in the Information Sheet and the Consent Form, and orally reconfirmed with interviewees before activating the recording equipment.

The estimated time indicated for an interview session was from 30 to 40 minutes, but in practice most of the interviews required from one hour to two hours. Only one interviewee took less than 30 minutes to respond to all of the interview questions. Interviewees were quite enthusiastic about sharing their opinions, ideas and even their personal philosophies on various issues in relation to the topic, although a common cultural trait of Vietnamese is that people do not like to talk about their problems with strangers (Vuong, 1976). Perhaps in these cases, as the researcher and the interviewees were professional colleagues, the interviewees felt comfortable to share their viewpoints on the sometimes contentious issues.

Table 4.2: *Connection between research question and data collection*

Research question and sub-questions	Desired information	Data collection	
		Questionnaires	Interviews
Are library consortia suited as a means of cooperation by Vietnamese academic libraries, and if so how can they be successfully developed and implemented?	The practices of library cooperation and consortia	Section 2 (Q.4, 5 and 6) Section 3 (Q.8 and 9) Section 4 (Q. 15 and 16)	
Sub-questions: *What does the current state of library cooperation and consortia among academic libraries in Vietnam suggest for an adoption of library consortia within this community?*	Awareness	Section 2 (Q.7) Section 3 (Q. 10, 11 and 12) Section 4 (Q.13, 14, 17, 22, 23)	Do you think consortial activity might have impact on service provision and the development of academic libraries? If this is the case please describe what some of the issues might be.
	Support	Section 4 (Q.19,	
	Future participation	Section 4 (Q.20, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28	
How can libraries overcome potential obstacles for consortia arrangements?	Obstacles or disadvantages; Solutions	Section 4, Q.18	Does your library encounter any obstacles in participating in library consortia? What are they and how would you do to overcome?

		What recent issues have you faced in organising and managing the association/consortium?
Success factors	Section 4, Q. 29, 30, 31	Do you think academic library consortia will be successfully developed and implemented in Vietnam?
		What would be the most important factors for their success? What might be the possible failure factors?
Consortia types and services	Section 4, Q.30	What types of consortia do you think best benefit academic libraries in Vietnam? Which types best benefit your library?
		What services and activities do you think academic library consortia should organise?

4.9. Data analysis

Data collected during Phase 1 and Phase 2 of this research are analysed in separate chapters as two sets of results in accordance with an explanatory sequential design. Influenced by the pragmatist approach, by which researchers situate research practice according to their personal value system, this study tends to define and label variables that are believed to generate useful responses to the research issues. Measurement is used as a tool of research to limit 'the data of any phenomenon – substantial or insubstantial – so that those data may be interpreted and, ultimately, compared to an acceptable qualitative or quantitative standard' (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 21).

All data were prepared and readied for analysis. As questionnaires and interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, all data collected were translated into English and where necessary edited during the process of data input. This procedure of data processing and analyses helped to ensure that the most exact meanings were captured.

4.9.1. Analysis of questionnaire data

Translation of survey questionnaires data was undertaken at the time data was manually transferred into a Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) spreadsheet. A Vietnamese version of the responses from open-ended questions was placed adjacent to the English translation in a secondary column that was created for the purpose of double-checking the translation.

As returned questionnaires included senders' names and addresses with the envelopes, it was easy to identify the respondents. In order to ensure questionnaire anonymity, each questionnaire was archived without its envelope and was marked with an ID for the purpose of double-checking the accuracy of data inputting. Quantitative data from the survey questionnaires were coded in a machine-readable form so they could be processed using SPSS. Responses from open-ended questions were categorised into themes and quantified with assigned scores or numbers that were then analysed as quantitative data.

The analysis of questionnaire data is based on quantified data outputs generated from SPSS. Responses from closed-ended questions in the questionnaire were coded under variables to be processed by SPSS. Analysis of some questions for simple percentage used a nominal scale of measurement and produced frequencies in descriptive statistics available in SPSS. Cross-tabulation was used to analyse relationships or present values using two variables, mainly two-dimension tabulation. Mean values were calculated for data from questions using Likert scale and rating scale question formats.

4.9.2. Analysis of interview data

Interviews data in the form of voice recording (in Vietnamese) were transcribed into text, word by word, and then the full texts of the Vietnamese interviews were translated into English prior to analysis. Qualitative data obtained from interviews were managed and organised using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software package. NVivo coding was undertaken on the English version of the interview texts. The Vietnamese text was placed adjacent to the codes. Words, terms and phrases were compared and contrasted between the English copy and Vietnamese copy to ensure the accuracy of translation.

Analysis of qualitative data in mixed methods involves coding data; identifying key themes; and accumulating and recording data under selected themes. Coding interview data in this study was completed prior to categorisation into thematic strands that reflect the primary issues of the research topic. In this way they do not necessarily follow the content or sequence of the questions as used during the interview. Some interviewees may refer back to previous discussions or indeed even move ahead to address intended areas of questioning. The researcher respected any ideas or topics that were raised, and therefore did not interrupt interviewees in these cases, although this made the task of identifying data related to particular questions more difficult. According to Ryan & Bernard (2000), themes can be identified from interview transcripts, literature reviews and researcher's experience. The identification of themes for this study was based mainly on the text of interview transcripts, and selected themes were then compared to standard terms commonly used in the literature review. The researcher's experience also played a minor role in selecting and modifying some terms and phrases so that they can be easier to

understand by both Vietnamese librarians and general readers in Vietnam. Analysing interview data adhered to the selected themes, with data then compiled and organised in NVivo.

4.10. Ethical issues

This study conforms strictly to principles of ethically conducted research in order to ensure no potential issues are raised either during the course of the research or after its completion. A survey schedule with an original copy of the survey questionnaire and an interview protocol with a complete list of interview questions were submitted in accordance with the Curtin University Human Research Ethics requirements and protocols. Ethics approval was received prior to commencing data collection. As described above, all research participants were fully informed about the purposes, procedures and timeline of the research, and the use of data generated in the course of the project. All necessary documents (Information Sheet and Consent Form) were provided to participants in both phases of the research. Individuals and institutions are kept anonymous in documents and records resulting from the data analysis. All transcripts of interviews are saved in removable hard drives and kept in secure locations. Any potentially sensitive contents that may be included in the research reports are to be sent to relevant interviewees for permission prior to disclosure.

4.11. Bias

Being one of the founding members of the FESAL and one of the six initiating members of the first and to date only consortium, the VLC, the researcher has a clear understanding of the processes of cooperation and consortia in Vietnam. However, the issues being researched have at stages been objectively assessed and presented in accordance with the evidence derived from the research background, the review of literature, and most importantly the data collected in the course of the study. At all times the researcher has been careful to ensure that her previous knowledge and experience have in no way created bias in her approach to the research or her presentation of the results.

4.12. Chapter summary

This Chapter has presented full details of the methods used for this research. The mixed methods approach was selected for this study as an appropriate method of seeking data to address the research question and objectives. A two phase explanatory sequential design was employed for the data collection with priority placed to qualitative research. Data collection was conducted in the two phases in which quantitative data was collected in Phase 1 by the means of survey questionnaires, and qualitative data was obtained in Phase 2 by the means of semi-structured interviews. The process of data collection strictly followed Curtin University's established procedures and protocols with regard to research ethics. Common computer software in the form of SPSS was used to analyse quantitative data, and NVivo was used to facilitate the analysis of qualitative data. Suitable statistical options were utilised to retrieve information relevant to the research focus. Inductive and abductive logics were applied for the analysis and interpretation of results, as presented in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 5
SURVEY RESULTS

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of the survey was to collect data regarding the perception, the attitudes and the participation of Vietnamese college and university librarians regarding cooperative arrangements in the forms of networking, professional associations and consortia, in order to obtain an impression of the current state of library cooperation and consortia, and to examine possibilities for development and implementation of future library consortia among Vietnamese academic libraries. This chapter reports the results based on the responses to 27 closed and4 open-ended questions of the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was structured in four sections as follows.

1. *General Information*, includes three questions seeking information about the respondent's institution and their workplace departments, as well as the position that the respondent held.
2. *Networking,* comprises four questions regarding the respondent's experience of workplace based cross-institutional cooperation.
3. *Current state of library cooperative arrangements in Vietnam*, consists of five questions designed to elicit data on cooperative activities in which academic libraries in Vietnam might possibly be involved.
4. *Consortial practice and possibilities for establishment of academic library consortia in Vietnam*, in which there are 19 questions investigating various issues regarding consortia, with an emphasis on their prospects for future development and implementation.

The results obtained from this survey are based on data analysis of descriptive surveys that consist of determining the frequencies and percentages for the major variables in the study with descriptive statistics (Ary et al., 1990; Tanner, 2013) while inferential statistics were utilised in order to better understand selected data.

5.2. General information

It is necessary to gain background information about the research population in order to contextualise and analyse results. Responses to this section of the survey establish a profile of the respondents and the positions and contexts in which they work.

5.2.1. Respondents by institution types

As acknowledged in Chapter 2 Vietnamese higher education institutions are specifically categorised as belonging to three main types: *public, private* and *regional* institutions, of which regional institutions are also categorised as *public*. The distinctions between public and private institutions associated with differences in terms of sources of funding, tuition fees, and financial autonomy, may all influence a library's decision on whether or not to become involved in cooperative and consortial arrangements. It is, therefore, necessary to gain information on the type of institutions to which responding librarians belong.

Question 1 in the survey asked respondents to report the type of institution their library belongs to. All respondents (100%) answered this question, and the results are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: *Respondents by institution types*

Institution types	Responses	Percent
Public	74	74.7%
Private	22	22.2%
Regional	3	3%
Total	99	100%

There were 74 (74.7%) respondents indicating *Public* as the type of their institution. The summing of the *Regional* group with the *Public* means institutions that are publicly funded account for 77.7% of respondents. The group from *Private* sector accounted for 22 (22.2%) institutions as illustrated by Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: *Respondents by two main institution types*
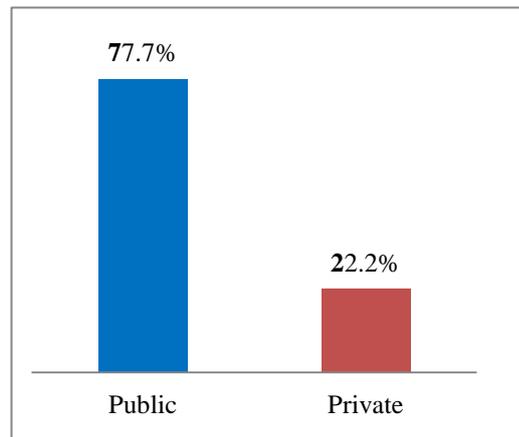
This proportion of respondents by institutions was similar to an actual proportion of public and private institutions – 334 public institutions and 80 private institutions according to the figures provided by the MOET in 2011 when this survey was conducted. Hence it can be inferred that respondents' opinions represent the actual population with respect to the institutional type. Some differences or similarities between the two groups of institutions regarding their responses to particular questions are presented throughout this Chapter.

5.2.2. Respondents by level of appointment

A respondent's workplace level of appointment, which is potentially related to responsibilities and decision making, may have an impact on their response to questions regarding inter-institutional cooperation. Question 3 in the survey therefore sought data regarding the level of appointment that respondents hold in their library. Although the questionnaires were sent to, and were intended to be responded to by senior library managers, this question provided options for respondents to confirm their exact position. All respondents (100%) answered this question, with some ten respondents selecting more than one option, and in these cases the highest level of appointment was recorded, on the basis that these respondents had also indicated that they are also a *Qualified librarian*. Respondents who described themselves *Qualified librarian, Library staff* or *Library staff with Bachelor degree* but provided no additional response regarding their level of appointment were recorded as *Library staff*for level of appointment. All responses are presented in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: *Respondents by level of appointment*

	Responses	Percent
Director/deputy director	63	63.6
Head of department	19	19.2
Library staff	17	17.2
Total	99	100.0

Nearly two thirds of the respondents reported that they are Directors or Deputy Directors of a library. Several respondents chose to self-describe their position using phrases such as *Manager of a small library*, or *Person in charge of library,* instead of selecting the option provided of *Director/Deputy director*. These respondents were included as *Director/Deputy Director*, on the basis of their own description of their level of appointment, making the total responding to this item of the survey question up to 63 (63.6% of responses). The number of *Head of Department* was 19 (19.2% of responses). *Library staff* was reported by seventeen responses (17.2% of responses) and responses given to the *Others* item in which respondents described themselves as *Library staff* or *Library staff with Bachelor degree*. These results (see Figure 5.2) indicate that a majority of respondents held the highest level of appointment in their respective libraries. Therefore it is expected that the data obtained are based on a comprehensive knowledge of their libraries. The issue of whether or not the level of appointment of respondents made any differences regarding their attitude to future library consortia is considered in Section 5.5.5.

Figure 5.2: *Proportion of respondents by level of appointment*
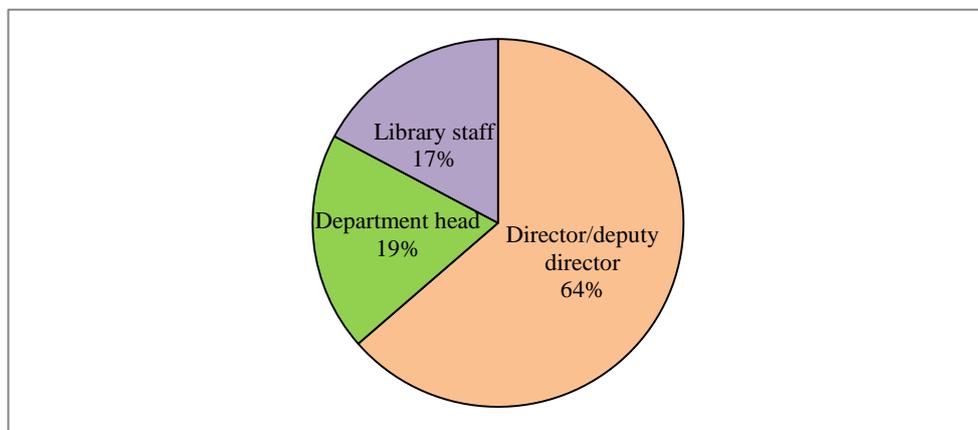
5.3. Participation in library networking activities

This second section of the questionnaire investigated the rate of participation by respondents in a number of forms of basic networking.

5.3.1. Workshops and conferences

Questions 4 and 5 asked how often respondents attended professional workshops or conferences organised in Vietnam and abroad, and the frequency with which they attended these events. As indicated in Table 5.3 all participants (100%) responded to these two questions.

Table 5.3: *Attendance at conferences and workshops*

Frequency	Local		International	
	Responses	Percent	Responses	Percent
Nil	20	20.2%	56	56.6%
Once a year	23	23.2%	23	23.2%
2-5 times per year	39	39.4%	8	8.1%
6 times and more per year	2	2%	0	0%
Unspecified (ad hoc)	15	15.2%	12	12.1%
Total	99	100%	99	100%

About a fifth of the respondents (20.2% of responses) did not attend any local conferences or workshops and the rate for non-attendance at international conferences/workshops was much higher, 56 responses (56%). These figures confirm, as expected, that librarians have fewer opportunities to attend international conferences or workshops than those to participate in local events.

5.3.2. Funding sources to attend workshops and conference

Question 6 sought information about the sources of funding received by librarians to support their attendance at workshops and conferences. One-fifth of respondents (22 cases) who did not provide any responses to this question, and it is likely these are respondents who neither attended any local conferences/workshops nor participated in international events. As this is a multiple choice question, respondents can choose more than one from the six options in the list and or provide any other relevant

source. The funding sources for attending conferences or workshops are reported in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: *Funding sources for attending conferences and workshops*

Sources of fund	Responses	Percent
Parent Institution	56	72.7%
Free of charge	15	19.5%
International Sponsors	12	15.6%
Library Suppliers	12	15.6%
Government	11	14.3%
Self-cover	4	5.2%

The majority (56 responses) of respondents (72.7% of responses) reported their funding was provided by their *Parent institution*. Fifteen respondents (19.5% of responses) indicated that they attended events free of charge. Funding supplied from *International Sponsors* and *Library Suppliers* were both reported by 15.6% of respondents. Funding from *Government* was provided by 11 respondents (14.3% of responses). There were only four cases (5.2% of responses) where respondents indicated they *Self-cover*.

Reviewing funding sources used by respondents for attending conferences or workshops, which are presented by institutional types in Table 5.5 below, it can be seen that in both types of institutions (public and private), librarians received funds mainly from their parent institution for these networking activities, with 72.9% for public and 68.4% for private institutions.

Table 5.5: *Funding sources for attending conferences/workshops by institutions*

Funding sources		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Parent Institution	Count	43	13	56
	% by institution	74.1%	68.4%	
	Total	55.8%	16.9%	72.7%
Free of charge	Count	8	7	15
	% by institution	13.8%	36.8%	
	Total	10.4%	9.1%	19.5%
International Sponsors	Count	11	1	12
	% by institution	19.0%	5.3%	
	Total	14.3%	1.3%	15.6%
Library Suppliers	Count	8	4	12
	% by institution	13.8%	21.1%	
	Total	10.4%	5.2%	15.6%
Government	Count	9	2	11
	% by institution	15.5%	10.5%	
	Total	11.7%	2.6%	14.3%
Self-cover	Count	2	2	4
	% by institution	3.4%	10.5%	
	Total	2.6%	2.6%	5.2%
Total	Count	58	19	77
	% of Total	75.3%	24.7%	100.0%

Libraries from public institutions reported more opportunities to access international sponsorship, while their colleagues from private institutions indicated that they were more frequently supported by international sponsors (19% compared to 5.3%). Libraries in private institutions (21.1%) also rely on library suppliers to fund attendance more frequently than libraries in public institutions (13.8%). A number of librarians who attend Free of charge is higher in private institutions (36.8%) compared to public institutions (13.8%). Although Self-cover funding is not common in both types of institutions, librarians from private institutions are more likely to use their own finances to pay for attending conferences or workshops (10.5% for private institutions compared to 3.4% for public institutions). The figure 5.3 illustrates the funding sources received by the two types of institutions.

Figure 5.3: *Funding sources by institution type*
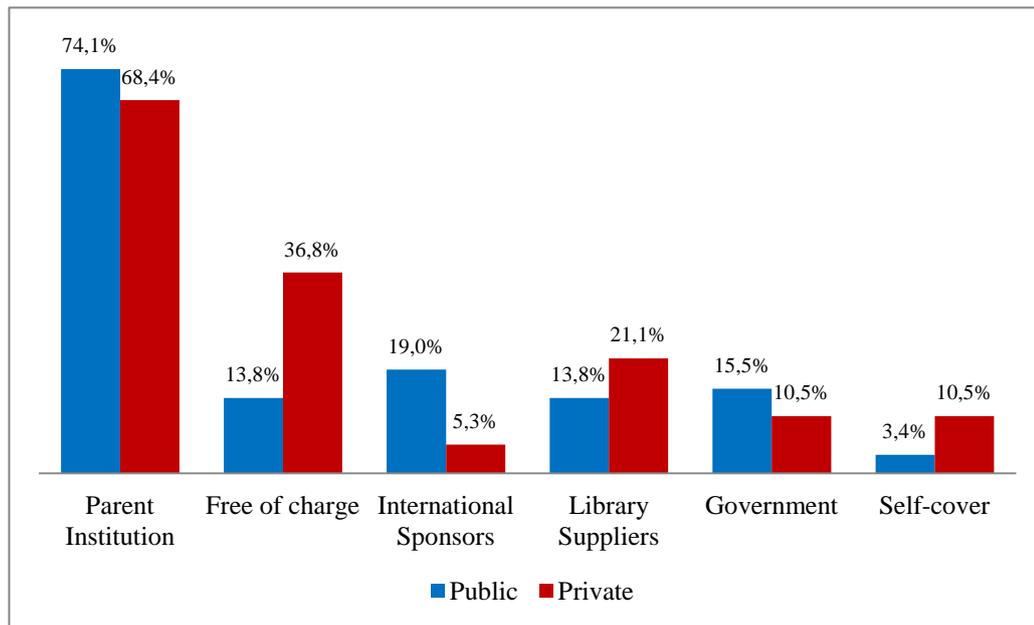
5.3.3. Perceived importance of workshops and conferences

Question 7 asked respondents to assess the importance, using a scale of 1-10, that they placed upon each of three reasons for attending a workshop or conference. The three reasons were *Improving practical skills*; *Improving professional knowledge*; and *Networking*. The responses are presented in Table 5.6, which ranks them according to their Mean response with N=80.

Table 5.6: *Reasons for attending workshops/conferences (ranked)*

Reasons		Ranked by importance on scale 1-10										Mean
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Improving practical skills	N	-	2	1	1	6	7	5	23	24	11	**7.85**
	%	-	2.5	1.3	1.3	7.5	8.8	6.3	28.7	30	13.8	
Improving professional knowledge	N	2	1	-	1	6	5	14	18	17	16	**7.79**
	%	2.5	1.3	-	1.3	7.5	6.3	17.5	22.5	21.3	20	
Networking	N	1	2	4	-	8	5	12	23	16	9	**7.36**
	%	1.3	2.5	5	-	10	6.3	15	28.7	20	11.3	

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All three reasons received a positive response, recording a mean of 7.36 or higher. The results however, indicate that respondents placed the greatest importance on *Improving practical skills*, ahead of *Improving professional knowledge*, although the latter received the greatest number of responses (16) at the level of 10. The psycho-social benefits associated with *Networking* received the lowest overall mean result (7.36) and also the lowest number of responses at the level of 10. However, all of the given items were confirmed by respondents as reasons for participating in conference or workshop events.

5.4. Current state of library cooperative arrangements in Vietnam

5.4.1. Libraries participation in professional library associations

It was considered important as part of this project to investigate the libraries' membership of professional associations or organisations, in order to help assess the current engagement of libraries in professional networking and collaboration in general.

Question 8 in the survey asked respondents whether their library was a current member of a professional library association/society or whether it has previously held any such memberships. Details of libraries' membership status breakdown by institution types are presented in Table 5.7 following.

Table 5.7: *Membership of professional associations (public vs. private)*

		Non-member	Member	Total
Public	Responses	29	48	77
	% by institution	37.7%	62.3%	100.0%
	% of Total	29.3%	48.5%	77.8%
Private	Responses	12	10	22
	% by institution	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
	% of Total	12.1%	10.1%	22.2%
Total	Responses	41	58	99
	%	**41.4%**	**58.6%**	**100.0%**

A majority of respondents (58.6%) reported their employing library was a member of a professional association. Libraries in public institutions are more likely to

participate in professional associations than those in private institutions, with 62.3% compared to 45.5%. Those respondents who reported non-membership to this question were then referred to Question 11, while those whose employing library is a member of a professional organisations provided further details on these memberships in Questions 9 and 10.

As outlined in Chapter 2, currently Vietnamese academic libraries participate in some broadly-based cooperative arrangements in the forms of professional associations or organisations, including the Vietnamese Library Association (VLA), the Northern Academic Library Association (NALA), the Vietnamese Library Association for Southern Academic Libraries (VILASAL), formerly the Federation of Southern Academic Libraries (FESAL) and the Library Club.

Question 9 asked those respondents who reported membership in Question 8 to identify the names of the relevant professional associations and to provide the year their library commenced the membership. Data obtained from this question helped confirm the existence of, and the current cooperative arrangements in, professional associations in Vietnam. Details of libraries' participation in specific organisations are presented in Table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8: *Membership of professional associations*

Memberships	Responses	Percent
Non-member	41	41.4%
VLA	32	32.3%
FESAL/VILASAL	28	28.3%
NALA	21	21.2%
Library club	10	10.1%
Others	3	3.0%

More than a half (32 out of 58) of respondents reporting their employing library was a member of professional associations reported membership of the Vietnamese Library Association (VLA) (32.3% of responses). This might be considered to be a low percentage of membership given that the VLA is the foremost professional association in Vietnam, with membership representing all types of libraries from across the breadth of the country. Academic libraries can also be members of the two

major professional bodies representing academic libraries in the north and south of the country. Twenty eight respondents (28.3% of responses) indicated membership of the FESAL/VILASAL (covering libraries in the south of the country), and another 21 (21.2% of responses) reported their library is a member of the Northern Academic Library Association (NALA). Again these figures indicate a considerable underrepresentation of membership of the major professional associations, and suggest that they are not all convinced of the value or benefit these associations provide to members. It is notable that 41 respondents (41.4% of responses) reported that their employing library is a member of no major professional association.

At the *Others* category in Question 9, several respondents described their membership of some other organisations such as Consortium for Purchasing Electronic Resources (CPER); Nam Dinh Province Library Association; Vietnam Scientific and Technological Information Society; and Thai Nguyen Learning Resource Centre (Thai Nguyen LRC); however, it is noted that CPER is a library consortium and Thai Nguyen LRC is a regional university library, not a professional association. Therefore, these responses are not counted for this category. Two respondents listed four organisations for their library's memberships, making them the libraries with the most memberships of associations.

Breakdown by institutions of library participation in these various associations indicated that libraries in private institutions report lower rates of association membership, with more than a half (54.5% of responses) of libraries reported to be non-members of any professional associations, compared to 37.7% of libraries in public institutions. Details are presented in Table 5.9 following.

Table 5.9: *Members of organisations by institutions*

Memberships		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Non-member	Count	29	12	41
	% by institution	37.7%	54.5%	
	Total	29.3%	12.1%	41.4%
VLA	Count	27	5	32
	% by institution	35.1%	22.7%	
	Total	27.3%	5.1%	32.3%
FESAL/VILASAL	Count	23	5	28
	% by institution	29.9%	22.7%	
	Total	23.2%	5.1%	28.3%
NALA	Count	17	4	21
	% by institution	22.1%	18.2%	
	Total	17.2%	4.0%	21.2%
Library club	Count	9	1	10
	% by institution	11.7%	4.5%	
	Total	9.1%	1.0%	10.1%
Others	Count	3	0	3
	% by institution	3.9%	0.0%	
	Total	3.0%	0.0%	3.0%
	Count	77	22	99
Total	% of Total	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%

Among respondents who reported membership of the above associations, a number indicated they are members of more than one association. Details of these multiple memberships are presented in Table 5.10:

Table 5.10: *Multiple association memberships*

Memberships	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
One association	30	30.3	51.7
Two associations	21	21.2	36.2
Three associations	5	5.1	8.6
Four associations	2	2.0	3.4
Total	58	58.6	100.0

5.4.2. Activities for members of organisations

Question 10 (a) is an open-ended question asking respondents who reported membership of organisations for their employing library to list the main cooperative

activities their library had undertaken. The number of respondents who claimed their library was a member of a professional association addressed the main networking and cooperative activities they had engaged in as members of a professional association. These activities were categorised as described in Table 5.11 below.

Table 5.11: *Main cooperative activities*

Main activities	Responses	Percent
Conferences, workshops and training courses	41	81.4%
Site visit and experience sharing	29	50.0%
Group purchasing	8	13.8%
Resource sharing	7	12.1%
Other activities	4	6.9%

Among respondents who reported cooperative activities, 81.4% of responsesnominated *Conferences, workshops and training courses* as the most common activities. *Site visitsandexperience sharing* was indicated by 29 responses (50% of responses). *Group purchasing* and *Resource sharing* received fewer responses with eight (13.8%) and seven (12.1%) respectively. Some other minor responses included *Preparing statistics and reports*; *Preparing databases to join OLICON* [the Online Library Community Network]; *Receiving sponsorship*; *Writing papers for some workshops and conferences*, and *Writing articles for the bulletins of the organisations* accounted for 6.9% of responses. These results indicate that cooperation tends to be at the comparatively superficial level of what might be described as continuing professional development, rather than cooperation at the level of professional activities that are more indicative of the types of engagement undertaken by contemporary library consortia. It is not surprising that the *Group purchasing* and *Resource sharing* was reported with a considerably low rate (13.8% and 12.1% respectively), given the apparent lack of consortia engaging in this activity.

5.4.3. Reasons for participation in professional library associations

Question 10 (b) sought respondents' reasons for their participation in cooperative activities. Three options were presented: *Follow other libraries*; *Meet with other colleagues; Visit libraries in other parts of the country*. *Others* was an open category

for respondents to provide their own reasons if available. These results are displayed below in Figure 5.4.

The reasons *Meet with other librarians* and *Visit libraries in other parts of the country* received the highest responses, with 87.9% and 82.8% of responses respectively. The third listed category, *Follow other libraries,* received only 8 responses (13.8%). A considerable number of respondents indicated they had *Other*reasons for participating in cooperative activities. These responses were categorised as *Experience learning or sharing*, with 32.8% of responses) and *Professional knowledge improvement*with 13.8% of responses. Consistent with responses to Question 10 (a), *Resource sharing* was also given a reason for cooperation with 8.6% of responses.

Figure 5.4: *Reasons for participation in cooperative activities*
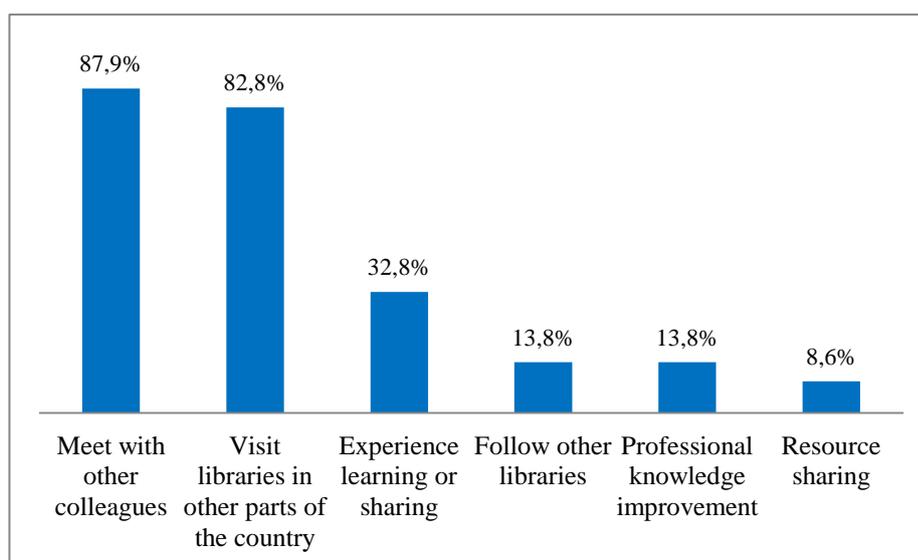
The reasons for libraries to participate in cooperative arrangements organised by associations varied between respondents from public and private institutions, as indicated in Table 5.12.

Table 5.12: *Reasons for participation in cooperative activities, public vs. private*

Reasons		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Meet with other colleagues	Count	40	11	51
	% by institution	85.1%	100.0%	
	Total	69.0%	19.0%	87.9%
Visit libraries in other parts of the country	Count	39	9	48
	% by institution	83.0%	81.8%	
	Total	67.2%	15.5%	82.8%
Experience learning or sharing	Count	14	5	19
	% by institution	29.8%	45.5%	
	Total	21.1%	8.6%	32.8%
Follow other libraries	Count	4	4	8
	% by institution	8.5%	36.4%	
	Total	6.9%	6.9%	13.8%
Professional knowledge improvement	Count	7	1	8
	% by institution	14.9%	9.1%	
	Total	12.1%	1.7%	13.8%
Resource sharing	Count	2	3	5
	% by institution	4.3%	27.3%	
	Total	3.4%	5.2%	8.6%
Total	Count	47	11	58
	% of Total	81.0%	19.0%	100.0%

The reasons *Meet with other colleagues* (85.1% of responses for public group and 100% for private) and *Visit libraries in other parts of the country* (83% for public and 81.8% for private) were cited favourably by both groups. Other reasons, however, differed considerably between the two groups. Respondents from private institutions cited the reasons *Experience learning or sharing* with 45.5% of responses compared to 29.8% indicated by those from public institutions. *Follow other libraries* was reported by respondents from private institutions with much greater frequency (36.4% of responses) than their counterparts working in public institutions (8.5% of responses). This result suggests that respondents in private institutions are less likely to proactively motivate themselves for participating in cooperative activities. *Professional knowledge improvement* is not a reason for libraries in private institutions to participate in cooperative activities while it is a more relevant reason for libraries to participate in professional association than the other two reasons, *Follow other libraries* and *Resource sharing*. Approximately one third (27.3%) of libraries in private institutions consider *Resource sharing* as an

impetus of association participation, considerably more than libraries in public institutions (4.3%) suggest this reason.

5.4.4. Benefits of being members of professional library associations

Question 10 (c) was an open-ended item asking respondents to *Describe the benefits your library has obtained from joining these activities.* Respondents provided various benefits their library gained from participation in professional library associations that include *Communication; Knowledge improvement; Experience sharing; Resource sharing; Attending conferences, workshops or training* and *Saving cost in purchasing.* The respondents' opinions were grouped into six categories as shown in Figure 5.5 and frequencies are calculated as multiple responses.

Figure 5.5: *Benefits obtained from cooperative activities*
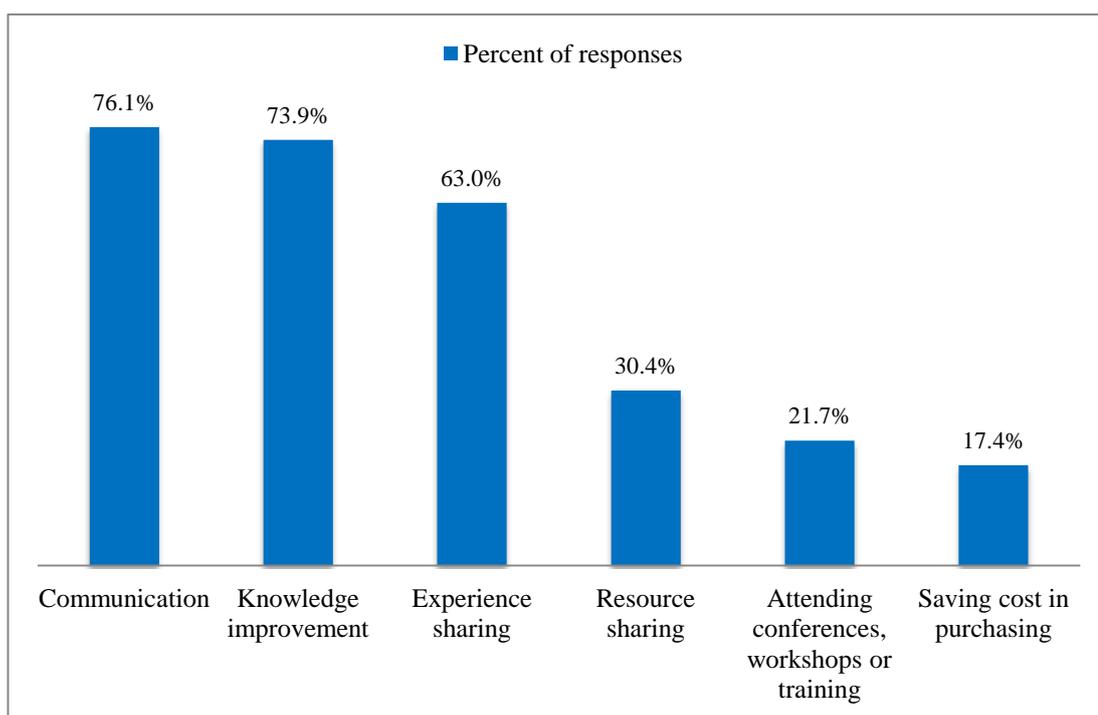
The most common benefits listed were once again those that could be described as general psycho-social benefits or broadly within the area of continuing professional development, with nearly four fifths of respondents (76.1% of responses) indicating *Communication* as a major benefit received from cooperative activities; followed by

Knowledge Improvement with 73.9% of responses, and *Experience sharing* accounted for 63% of responses.

In comparison, the survey respondentsdescribed *Resource Sharing* (30.4% of responses) as a benefit of cooperative arrangements in the form of professional associations while it is more likely an arrangement of consortia while the one category of response that might be said to be indicative of a professional association activity, *Attending conferences, workshops and training courses* received fewer responses (21.7% of cases). A modern consortial activity, *Saving cost inpurchasing*, was reported by 8 respondents (17.4%) as benefits gained from joining professional associations. Perceived benefits libraries claimed to receive vary between public institutions and private institutions, as presented in Table 5.13 following.

Table 5.13: *Benefits obtained, public vs. private institutions*

Benefits		Responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Communication	Count	27	8	35
	% by institution	73.0%	88.9%	
	Total	58.7%	17.4%	76.1%
Knowledge improvement	Count	26	8	34
	% by institution	70.3%	88.9%	
	Total	56.5%	17.4%	73.9%
Experience sharing	Count	23	6	29
	% by institution	62.2%	66.7%	
	Total	50.0%	13.0%	63.0%
Resource sharing	Count	11	3	14
	% by institution	29.7%	33.3%	
	Total	23.9%	6.5%	30.4%
Attending conferences, workshops or training	Count	10	0	10
	% by institution	27.0%	0.0%	
	Total	21.7%	0.0%	21.7%
Saving cost in purchasing	Count	7	1	8
	% by institution	18.9%	11.1%	
	Total	15.2%	2.2%	17.4%
	Count	37	9	46
Total	% of Total	80.4%	19.6%	100.0%

Most respondents, 88.9% of responses at private institutions, reported opportunities for *Communication* among consortia members as a benefit their libraries obtained from association activities. Like their colleagues in public institutions, respondents in

private institutions described *Knowledge improvement* and *Experience sharing* as benefits their libraries receive. However, none of respondents at private institutions reported any benefits of *Attending conferences, workshops or training* and *Saving cost in purchasing* as a minority ofrespondents (21.7% and 15.2%) from public institutions described.

5.4.5. Disadvantages of participation in associations

Question 10(d) was another open-ended question asking respondents to list any disadvantages from their libraries engagement in professional associations. Figure 5.6 below presents the major categories of disadvantages that respondents reported.

Figure 5.6: *Disadvantages of cooperative arrangements (ranked)*
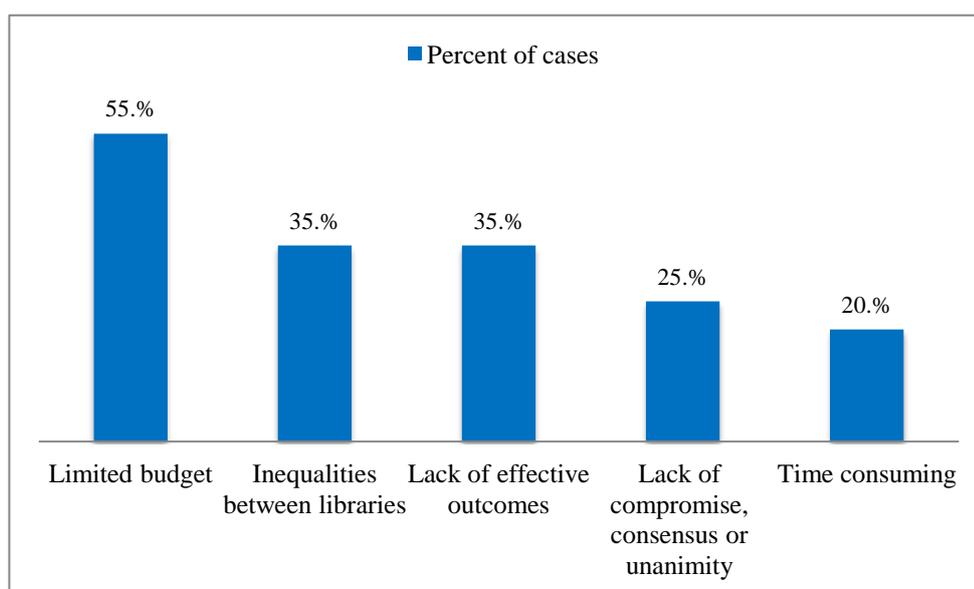
Disadvantages include difficulties that individual libraries experienced and disadvantages brought by cooperative arrangements. Among disadvantages of cooperative activities, *Limited budget* was reported by more than half of respondents (55%). This category was used to describe responses that drew attention to the respondent's library's incapacity to participate in cooperative activity due to lack of finances. It should be noted, however, that this response provides a reason for non-participation, rather than a 'disadvantage' of participation.

A second disadvantage, the *Inequalities between libraries* in terms of their general development, including library staff backgrounds and qualifications; library facilities, and library budget was proposed by one-third of respondents (35% of responses) as another disadvantage for library cooperation. A similar number of respondents assessed *Lack of effective outcomes* as being a disadvantage (or perhaps disincentive) to cooperation. The final two reasons given, *Lack of compromise, consensus or unanimity* and *Time consuming,* pointed to some of the administrative challenges involved in maintaining effective cooperation.

5.4.6. Involvement in other library cooperative arrangements

In order to explore whether there were any spontaneous or *ad hoc* cooperative activities other than those organised by professional associations that might involve academic libraries, Question 11 asked all respondents, not only members of organisations (as with Question 10), whether they participate in four listed activities: *Group purchasing e-resources; Online cataloguing; Group purchasing print materials;* and *Interlibrary Loan.* An *Others* option was also provided for respondents to list any additional cooperative activities. Table 5.14 presents details of these activities.

Table 5.14: *Other cooperative activities*

Other activities	Responses	Percent
Group purchasing e-resources	44	44.4%
Online catalogues	34	34.3%
Group purchasing print materials	18	18.2%
Interlibrary Loan	8	8.1%
Others	4	4.0%
Non participation	33	33.3%

Forty four responses (44.4% of responses) reported *Group purchasing e-resources*; 34 responses (34.3%) stated *Online catalogues,* and 18 responses (18.2%) indicated *Group purchasing print materials,* as cooperative activities in which their libraries participated. *Interlibrary library loan* was reported by 8.1% of respondents. The other four respondents (4%) indicated cooperative activities including

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Communication; *Book list exchange,* and *Use electronic resources purchased by other libraries*.

These results indicate that the concept of cooperative acquisitions (in either print or electronic form) may be far more common than other results have indicated, but suggest that it is taking place outside the established professional associations on which previous questions and answers have focused.

5.4.7. General views on library cooperative arrangements

At the end of the section on library cooperative arrangement, an open-ended question, Question 12, was designed to seek respondents' general views towards cooperative practices.

A majority of respondents (80 out of 99) provided a response to this open-ended question. Table 5.7 presents groups of respondents' views towards library cooperation.

Figure 5.7: *Official views regarding cooperative practices*
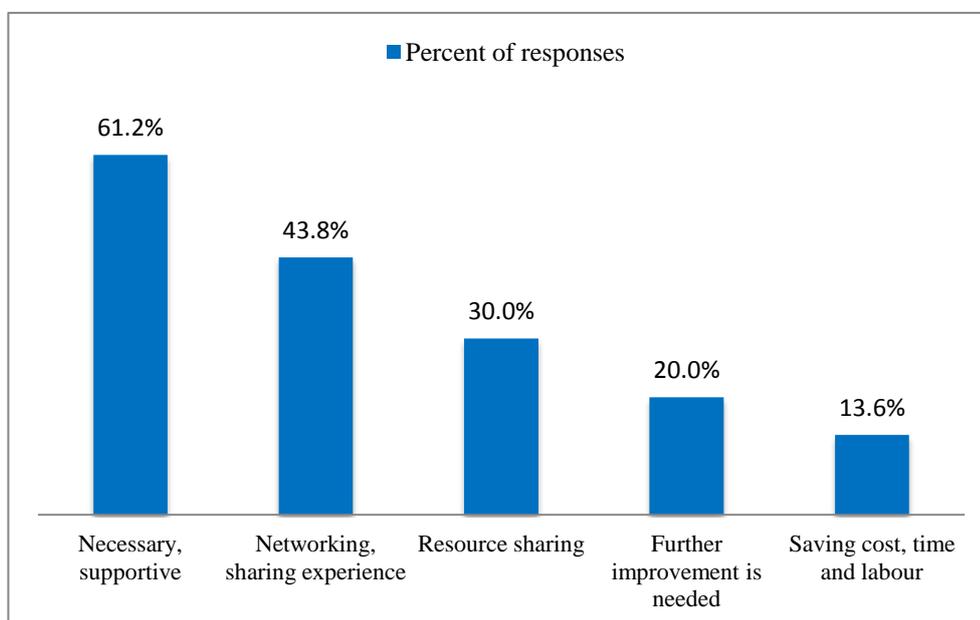
More than a half of the respondents (61.2% of responses) described their libraries as having a generally positive attitude towards cooperation or directly stating their willingness to participate in broadly-based cooperative arrangements (*Necessary, supportive*). Another group of responses identified a series of particular benefits

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associated with cooperation, these included *Networking, experience sharing* (43.8% of responses), and *Resource sharing* (30.3%) as areas of particular interest in cooperative activities. The numbers of respondents who suggested that *Further improvement is needed*with regard to cooperation, was slightly higher than the number of respondents who considered *Saving cost, time and labour* in groups purchasing or cooperative cataloguing as important points of cooperation.

In indicating their library's views regarding cooperation, the five categories of responses attracted a generally similar level of notice from the respondents from both public and private libraries. Details are presented in Table 5.15 below.

Table 5.15: *Official views towards cooperation, public vs. private*

Viewpoints		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Necessary, supportive	Count	38	11	49
	% by institution	61.3%	61.1%	
	Total	47.5%	13.8%	61.2%
Networking, experience sharing	Count	30	5	35
	% by institution	48.4%	27.8%	
	Total	37.5%	6.2%	43.8%
Resource sharing	Count	18	6	24
	% by institution	29.0%	33.3%	
	Total	22.5%	7.5%	30.0%
Further improvement is needed	Count	10	6	16
	% by institution	16.1%	33.3%	
	Total	12.5%	7.5%	20.0%
Saving cost, time and labour	Count	10	1	11
	% by institution	16.1%	5.6%	
	Total	12.5%	1.2%	13.8%
	Count	62	18	80
Total	% of Total	77.5%	22.5%	100.0%

Respondents indicated that library cooperation is necessary and they are willing to cooperate with each other (61.3% of responses from public institutions and 61.1% from private institutions). Libraries in public institutions offered more responses on *Networking, experience sharing* than their colleagues in private institutions. The number of respondents who view *Resource sharing* as a part of library cooperation was also similar (29% and 33.3%) in both types of institutions. More respondents in private institutions see that *Further improvement is needed* in their cooperative

arrangements, while libraries in public institutions are less inclined to this view (33.3% compared to 16.1%).

5.5. Consortial practice and possibilities for establishment of academic library consortia in Vietnam

The questions in the first three sections of the survey prepared respondents for this final section, which was designed to obtain their personal opinions and attitudes regarding aspects of library consortia from academic libraries in Vietnam, rather than reflecting on the broader cooperative practices of the library or institution for which they currently work.

5.5.1. Perception and practice of library consortia

Question 13 raised the concept of consortia, asking respondents whether they have heard/learned about the concept of 'library consortium'.

All 99 respondents (100%) responded to this question, with 96% of cases answering *Yes*, and 4% answering *No*. Those who indicated they were not familiar with the concept were then directed to Question 15.

Question 14 asked those respondents who had answered *Yes* to Question 13, where they had received information about library consortium/consortia. Four common sources of information were listed for multiple choices including *Literature / Media; Internet / Library websites; Conferences / Workshops;* and *Colleagues / Friends.* An option of *Others* was also provided allowing respondents to provide any other sources from which they obtained information about library consortia. All respondents who stated that they learnt about the concept of 'library consortium' (95 out of 99) responded to this question, and the results are presented in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16: *Sources of information about library consortia (ranked)*

Sources	Responses	Percent
Literature / Media	69	72.6%
Internet / Library websites	69	72.6%
Conferences / Workshops	63	66.3%
Colleagues / Friends	62	65.3%

The number of respondents who chose each of the four available options was broadly similar. *Literature/Media* and *Internet/Library websites* both received the same number of responses (69 responses; 72.6% of cases). The other two sources, *Conferences/Workshops* and *Colleagues/Friends*, attracted slightly lower responses of 63 (66.3%) and 62 (65.3%) respectively.

Question 15 sought further evidence of consortia involvement by asking respondents whether there were any documents (official or unofficial) regarding cooperation or consortia that have been issued or received by the respondents' library and asked them to indicate the number of documents if any. Table 5.17 presents details of responses.

Table 5.17: *Documents on cooperation or consortia*

		Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Public	Count	35	32	9	76
	% within Institution	46.1%	42.1%	11.8%	100.0%
	% of Total	35.7%	32.7%	9.2%	77.6%
Private	Count	10	8	4	22
	% within Institution	45.5%	36.4%	18.2%	100.0%
	% of Total	10.2%	8.2%	4.1%	22.4%
Total	Count	45	40	13	98
	% of Total	45.9%	40.8%	13.3%	100.0%

Ninety eight respondents replied to this question, of those 45 respondents (45.9%) claimed that they had received or issued documents on library cooperation and consortia, and 40 respondents (40.8%) said that their library did not hold any documents. The other 13 respondents (13.3%) were *Not sure* whether their library had issued or received such documents. Data in Table 5.17 indicates that 46.1% of public institution libraries produced or received documents regarding library cooperation and consortia, and private libraries reported a similar rate (45.5%). Among 45 respondents (45.9% of responses) who claimed that their libraries had

issued or received documents regarding consortia, 25 respondents provided a specific number of documents. The distribution numbers of documents issued or received by libraries are presented in Table 5.18 below.

Table 5.18: *Number of documents on library cooperation and consortia*

| Institution | | Number of documents | | | | Total |
		Not sure	1-5	6-10	10 or more	
Public	Count	4	9	3	3	19
	% within Institution	21.1%	47.4%	15.8%	15.8%	100.0%
	% of Total	16.0%	36.0%	12.0%	12.0%	76.0%
Private	Count	2	3	1	0	6
	% within Institution	33.3%	50%	16.7%	.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	8.0%	12.0%	4.0%	.0%	24.0%
Total	Count	6	12	4	3	25
	% within Institution	24.0%	48.0%	16.0%	12.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	24.0%	48.0%	16.0%	12.0%	100.0%

The results indicate that both types of institutions, public and private, had commonly received or issued between 1 and 5 documents regarding library consortia. Among public institutions, 15.8% of cases reported more than 10 documents, while no libraries serving private institutions reached this number. This may suggest that government sources are responsible for much of the available documentation.

5.5.2. Engagement of academic libraries in library consortia

Question 16 was designed to investigate whether Vietnamese academic libraries are members of a consortium or consortia. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is currently only one library consortium in the country, the Vietnam Library Consortium (VLC), which was, at the time this study conducted the survey, named the Consortium for Purchasing Electronic Resources (CPER), therefore the name CPER is used throughout this chapter and CPER was listed in this question as an available consortium.

In Question 16, respondents were asked if their library is a member of CPER or any other consortia. Respondents who reported non-membership (66% of responses) of library consortia were referred to Question 18 of the survey while those who

indicated membership of a current consortium (CPER) or any other consortia (if any) were invited to provide the relevant names and the year they commenced their membership for the purpose of acknowledging any consortia other than the CPER available in Vietnam and double checking if respondents offered an exact answer to *other consortia.* Details of responses from Question 16 is presented in Table 5.19 following.

Table 5.19: *Membership of library consortia*

Members of consortia	Responses	Percent
Non-membership	68	66.0%
Other consortia	18	17.5%
CPER	17	16.5%
Total	103	100%

Of the 35 respondents who reported consortia membership, 17 (16.5% of all cases) stated their library was a member of the CPER, and 18 (17.5% of all cases) stated their library is member of some other consortia and provided the names of these consortia, such as VLA; NALA; VILASAL/FESAL, or some other named organisations, including the Nam Dinh Province Library Association, Vietnam Scientific and Technological Information Society, Francophone. This was again a case of respondents indicating that their understanding of the concept of consortia is very broad and includes professional associations that do not necessarily function to provide the deeply collaborative forms of shared purchasing or licensing that are widely held to be the core activity of contemporary library consortia. It is noted that respondents who listed the Nam Dinh Province Library Association and the Vietnam Scientific and Technological Information Society also listed these organisations as library associations in response to Question 9. Therefore only members of CPER is counted as consortium members which is 16.5% of respondents, and the other 83.5% were identified as non-members. Figure 5.8 illustrates the percentage of consortium membership.

Figure 5.8: *Consortium membership*
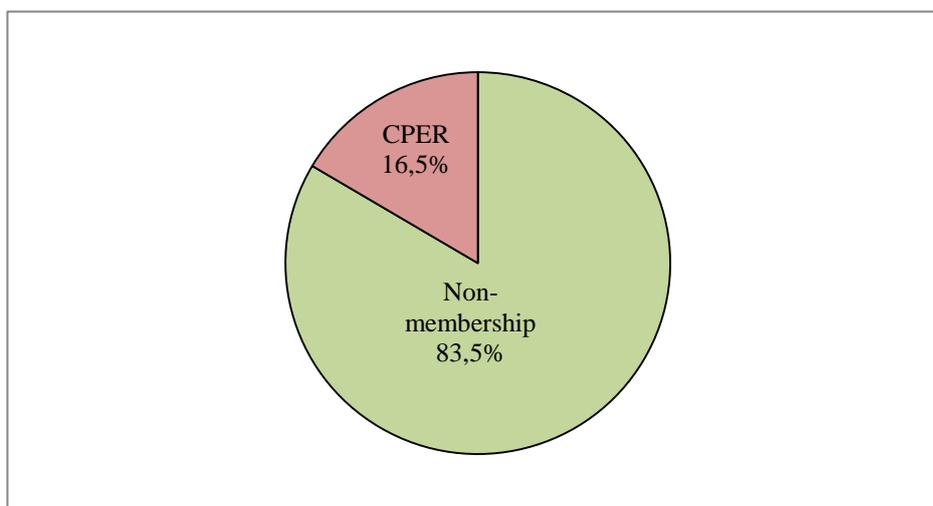
5.5.3. Benefits of library consortia

The perceived benefits of belonging to a consortium may vary from one academic library to another depending on their financial and other circumstances. Question 17, a multiple choice question, was designed to seek respondent's opinions on the benefits of consortia membership. Respondents who answered *No* to Question 16 were directed to Question 18. Respondents who confirmed membership of CPER or other consortia were asked to identify the benefits of consortia in Question 17. It is noted that many respondents who stated their library is not member of any consortia and those who reported membership of some other consortia which are in fact not consortia, still replied to this question. However, these responses, 39 out of 56 cases, were eliminated. Therefore, the results of this question include only opinions of respondents whose libraries are members of CPER.

Respondents were provided with a list of possible answers that were derived from the existing literature on the subject, and these included *Saving cost in purchasing library materials; Solving technological issues; Saving cost and efforts in cataloguing; Spirit of cooperation andsharing*. The *Other benefits* category was also provided as an open-ended opportunity for respondents to list additional perceived benefits. Among 17 members of CPER, 16 identified benefits their library obtained from consortia participation.

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Of 17 CPER members who offered responses to this question (93.8% of cases) indicated that *Saving cost in purchasing materials* was a benefit of library consortia. A comfortable majority (87.5% of responses) also indicated that the *Spirit of cooperation and sharing* was a benefit of consortia. Of other categories, *Saving cost and efforts in cataloguing* was nominated by exactly a half of respondents (50% of responses), and *Solving technological issues* (43% of responses) by fewer respondents. The results indicate that respondents are generally able to identify number of perceived benefits of consortia as displayed in Figure 5.9 below.

Figure 5.9: *Perceived benefits of consortia*
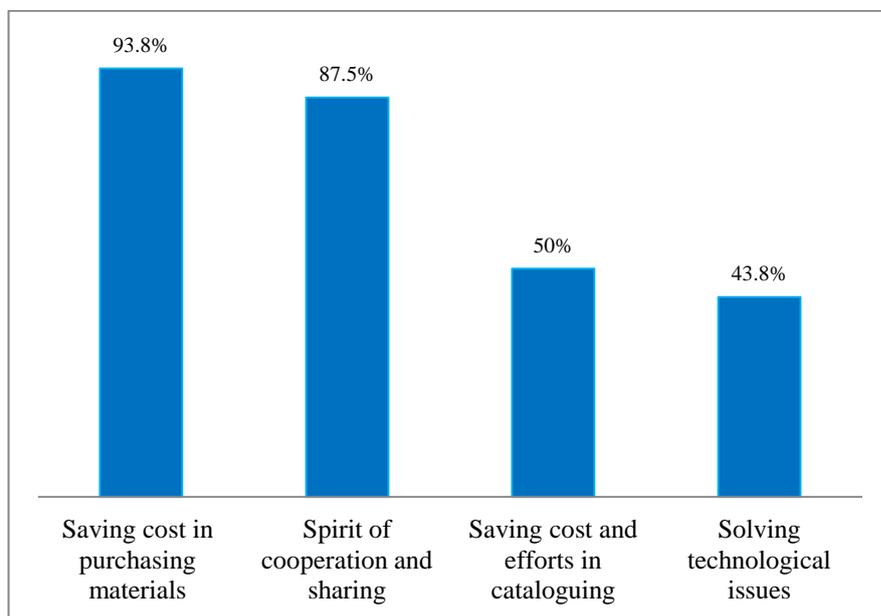
The members of a current consortium from public institutions and private institutions perceived the benefits of library consortia slightly differently, as presented in Table 5.20 below.

Table 5.20: *Perceived benefits of consortia, public vs. private*

Perceived benefits		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Saving cost in purchasing materials	Count	12	3	15
	% by institution	100.0%	75.0%	
	Total	75.0%	18.8%	93.8%
Spirit of cooperation and sharing	Count	10	4	14
	% by institution	83.3%	100.0%	
	Total	62.5%	25.0%	87.5%
Saving cost and efforts in cataloguing	Count	6	2	8
	% by institution	50.0%	50.0%	
	Total	37.5%	12.5%	50.0%
Solving technological issues	Count	5	2	7
	% by institution	41.7%	50.0%	
	Total	31.2%	12.5%	43.8%
Total	Count	12	4	16
	% of Total	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%

All respondents (100%) from public institutions nominated *Saving cost in purchasing library materials* as a benefit, while their colleagues in private institutions favoured the *Spirit of cooperation and sharing* to the same extent (100%). Although the number of respondents from private institutions is low, this may suggest that financial issues are more important to public institutions, which in turn may reflect the level of funding for these institutions.

5.5.4. Reasons for a lack of consortia arrangements

Question 18 asked: *For each of the following statements, please tick the appropriate box to indicate your level of agreement on possible reasons for a perceived lack of consortial arrangements in Vietnam.* Respondents were prompted with the following options on a five point Likert Scale, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* to *Strongly Agree*:

- *There was a lack of information about library consortia,* (*Lack of information* in the table(s)).
- *Culture of cooperation has not been popular among academic libraries in Vietnam,* (*Culture of cooperation*).
- *Joining consortia was not beneficial to my library,* (*No benefits*).
- *My library had difficulties in terms of legislation and administrative requirements,* (*Legislation and administration)* and

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- *There was a belief of unequal sharing of responsibilities or interests (Unequal sharing).*

The number of responses for each item were 99, and the results are presented in Table 5.21 with frequency and percent of selection of responses for each nominal scale statistic option beside the means in order to let the 'reader decide how to interpret the results at the Likert-item level' (Brown, 2011, p. 13).

Table 5.21: *Reasons for a perceived lack of engagement in library consortia (ranked)*

Reasons		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Means
Culture of cooperation	N	1	6	9	57	26	**4.02**
	%	1%	6.1%	9.1%	57.6%	26.3%	
Lack of information	N	2	13	16	52	16	**3.68**
	%	2	13.1	16.2	52.5	16.2	
Legislation administration	N	10	22	31	29	7	**3.01**
	%	10.1%	22.2%	31.3%	29.3%	7.1%	
Unequal sharing	N	12	33	39	13	2	**2.60**
	%	12.1%	33.3%	39.4%	13.1%	2%	
No benefits	N	27	49	17	5	1	**2.03**
	%	27.3%	49.5%	17.2%	5.1%	1%	

The reason *Culture of cooperation has not been popular among academic libraries in Vietnam* accounted for the highest percentage of agreement from respondents - 83.9% with 26.3% at *Strongly agree* and 57.6% at *Agree* level, and a Mean result of 4.02. This result strongly supports the evidence and discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 which indicated the extent to which Vietnamese socio-cultural and business traditions are likely to rely upon independence and autonomy rather than cooperation. The result for this proposition regarding the lack of popularity of cooperation confirm that the culture of cooperation has not been embraced by Vietnamese academic libraries to an extent that can encourage engagement in consortia, an enhanced form of library cooperative that requires members work together in joint programs that cannot operate without effective cooperation. Figure 5.10 highlights the responses regarding the general perception that Vietnamese academic libraries have an inadequate culture of cooperation.

Figure 5.10: *Culture of cooperation has not been popular*
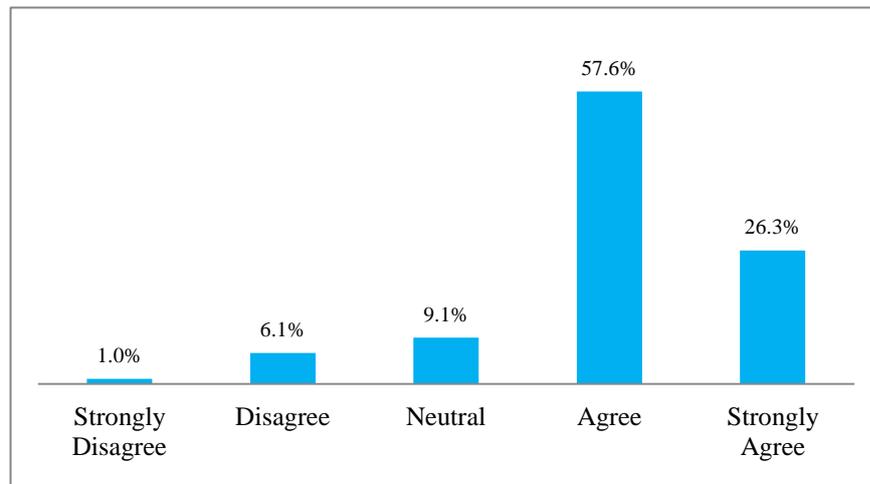
Other responses to the propositions included in Question 18 indicate that respondents also agreed with the proposition that *There was a lack of information about library consortia*, with 52.5% at *Agree* and 16.2% at *Strongly Agree* (Mean = 3.68). Respondents' opinions therefore express a need for further information on library consortia. Figure 5.11 indicates the respondents' high rate of agreement on this issue.

Figure 5.11: *There is a lack of information about library consortia*
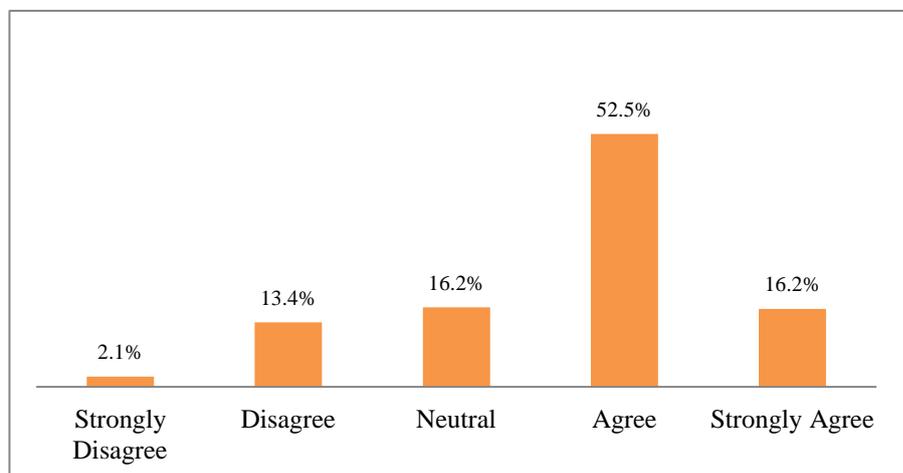
Given the current levels of non-participation in consortia, it would seem likely that any attempt to improve this situation would require the provision of information attempting to convince non-participating libraries of the benefits of consortia membership. The survey results, however, indicate that there is a lack of such material and information about consortia.

The proposition (also included in Question 18) that, *My library had difficulties in terms of legislation and administrative requirements* received less responses at *Agree* and *Strongly Agree* level. The propositions: *There was a belief of unequal sharing of responsibilities or benefits* received only 15.1% of responses at *Agree* and *Strongly Agree* level while percent of *Strongly disagree* or *disagree* are higher (45.3%) and *Joining consortia is not beneficial to my library* received the lowest responses at *Strongly agree* and *Agree* level (6.1% of responses) and over two thirds of responses (76.8%) at *Strongly disagree* or *disagree*.

5.5.5. Attitudes of academic librarians to future library consortia

While there was a perceived lack of consortial arrangements among academic libraries it was important to find out whether librarians would support any future initiatives to implement consortia for Vietnamese academic libraries, and Question 19 addressed this issue. There were 99 responses received and they all (100%) replied *Yes* to this question.

Question 20 which asked respondents whether their employing library would join academic library consortia if they were established in Vietnam, and again all 99 respondents (100%) answered *Yes* to this question.

Question 21 was designed to gauge the level of commitment that respondents thought their library might show to potential consortial arrangements by asking them to rate the level of activity (*Active*; *Very active*; or, *Just participate*) their library might demonstrate in future consortia.

Sixty eight respondents said they would be active members. The *Very active* category was a choice of 27 respondents (27.3%), and 68 (68.7%) indicated they would be *Active*. This result suggests that respondents see value in committing to the activities of a consortium and believe that their library would be prepared to do so. Illustrated by Figure 5.12, the results show that respondents hold positive attitude to future consortia.

Figure 5.12: *Level of activity*
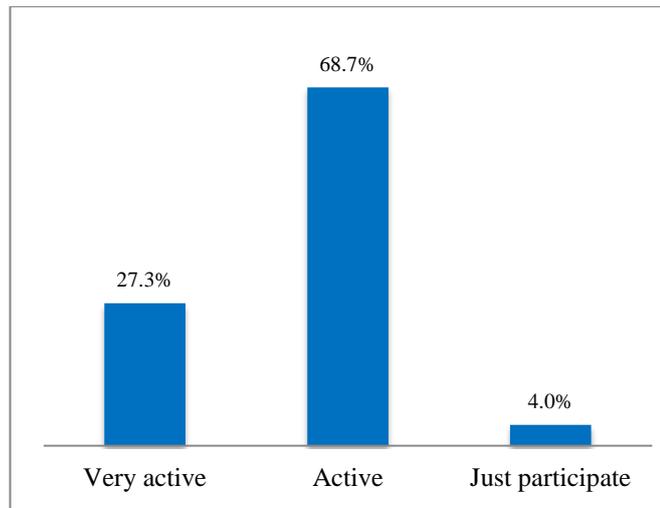
In order to compare the likely level of activity between academic libraries in public institutions and private institutions, an independent-samples T-test was used. Table 5.22 showed the results of the test.

Table 5.22: *Independent samples T-test for level of activity by institution types*

	Institutions	N	Mean	SD	Probability
Level of activity	Public	77	3.24	.488	
	Private	22	3.23	.612	**0.223**
	Total	**99**	**3.235**	**0.55**	

The results indicate that the probability values of 0.223 were higher than .05. This means there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of institutions so the anticipated level of activity of both groups in future consortial arrangements are not able to be distinguished. This indicates that institutional type did not influence the level of activity that libraries may perform in future consortia.

A similar test was conducted in order to see if there was a significant difference in responses from the three groups of respondents regarding levels of appointment: library directors, library department heads, and library staff. This test confirms that the respondents' level of appointment did not influence their responses regarding the level of activity.

Table 5.23: *One-way ANOVA between groups of librarians by level of appointment*

	Level of appointment	N	Mean	SD	Probability
Level of activity	Director	63	3.30	0.494	
	Department head	19	3.05	0.524	**0.193**
	Library staff	17	3.24	0.562	
	Total	**99**	**3.24**	**0.515**	

The results of one-way ANOVA analysis of variance indicate that there was no statistically significant difference between the three groups of respondents.

5.5.6. Expected benefits to future library consortia

Question 22 focused further on the benefits that academic libraries would expect to obtain from joining library consortia, in the form of an open-ended question: *What benefits would you expect if your library joins consortia?* Note that this is unlike Question 17, which was directed only at the subset of respondents who indicated previously that their library was a member of a consortium.

In response to this question, respondents (87.9% of cases) expressed their opinions, and the various benefits they described are grouped into particular categories for ease of analysis. Details of these grouped opinions are shown in Table 5.24 below.

Table 5.24: *Expected benefits of future library consortia (ranked)*

Expected benefits	Responses	Percent
Resource sharing	66	75.9%
Communication, networking or experience sharing	60	69.0%
Professional knowledge improvement	44	50.6%
Service improvement	25	28.7%
Saving cost in purchasing materials	24	27.6%
Standardisation or solving technological issues	19	21.8%
Saving cost and efforts in cataloguing	10	11.5%

Among expected benefits, *Resource sharing* was indicated with the highest response rate (75.9%), and sixty responses (69%) indicated the expectation for benefits related to *Communication, networking or experience sharing*. The high response rates for these two categories of benefit suggest that respondents' anticipate both practical and psycho-social advantages to flow from consortia membership. It is interesting to note the difference in response between *Resource sharing* and *Saving cost in purchasing materials* (27.6%) when these two might be thought to be strongly related.

The expected benefits cited by libraries at both public and private institutions were placed at the same priorities although specific percentage of cases was slightly varied. Details are presented in Table 5.25 below.

Table 5.25: *Expected benefits of future library consortia by institutions*

Expected Benefits		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Resource sharing	Count	50	16	66
	% by institution	74.6%	80.0%	
	Total	57.5%	18.4%	75.9%
Communication, networking or experience sharing	Count	44	16	60
	% by institution	65.7%	80.0%	
	Total	50.6%	18.4%	69.0%
Professional knowledge improvement	Count	32	12	44
	% by institution	47.8%	60.0%	
	Total	36.8%	13.8%	50.6%
Service improvement	Count	19	6	25
	% by institution	28.4%	30.0%	
	Total	21.8%	6.9%	28.7%
Saving cost in purchasing materials	Count	19	5	24
	% by institution	28.4%	25.0%	
	Total	21.8%	5.7%	27.6%
Standardisation or solving technological issues	Count	15	4	19
	% by institution	22.4%	20.0%	
	Total	17.2%	4.6%	21.8%
Saving cost and time in cataloguing	Count	7	3	10
	% by institution	10.4%	15.0%	
	Total	8.0%	3.4%	11.5%
	Count	67	20	87
Total	% of Total	77.0%	23.0%	100.0%

Data obtained from this question show that libraries in both public and private institutions have common priorities to expectations of benefits of consortia.

5.5.7. Potential reasons for joining future consortia

Libraries may have many reasons for joining future library consortia, and these may not necessarily be reflected in responses to questions that investigated the benefits of joining consortia.

Question 23 in the survey therefore asked respondents to rank by importance, on a scale 1-10, the importance of six possible reasons for them to join future consortia. The reasons provided were based on a review of the literature reporting on reasons that has been provided by academic libraries in other countries joining consortia. The six options listed for respondents were: *Saving cost in purchasing electronic resources; Saving cost in purchasing print materials; Saving cost and efforts in cataloguing; Improving library services; Improving staff skills;* and *Networking*. Table 5.26 presents the respondents' rankings of the listed categories ranked by importance on scale 1-10.

Table 5.26: *Reasons for joining library consortia (ranked)*

Reasons		Ranked by importance on scale 1-10										Mean
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
Improving library services	N	1	2	2	1	5	3	12	28	21	24	**8.03**
	%	1	2	2	1	5.1	3	12.1	28.3	21.2	24.2	
Electronic resources	N	3	-	2	2	9	6	5	25	17	30	**7.94**
	%	3	-	2	2	9.1	6.1	5.1	25.3	17.2	30.3	
Networking	N	3	-	-	1	10	8	13	24	21	19	**7.75**
	%	3	-	-	1	10.1	8.1	13.1	24.2	21.2	19.2	
Cataloguing	N	-	3	4	3	2	10	19	25	17	16	**7.54**
	%	-	3	4	3	2	10.1	19.2	25.3	17.2	16.2	
Improving staff skills	N	3	2	1	3	4	10	22	26	20	8	**7.31**
	%	3	2	1	3	4	10.1	22.2	26.3	20.2	8.1	
Print resources	N	2	2	4	5	19	15	12	25	8	7	**6.56**
	%	2	2	4	5.1	19.2	15.2	12.1	25.3	8.1	7.1	

The overall trend indicated in Table 5.26 is that the respondents rated all the reasons as important to the extent that the majority of responses for each reason fell within the range 7 to 10. In calculating the Mean value for each of the six reasons, *Improving library services* gained the highest value at 8.03. The other reasons are

ranked above point 7, as follows: *Saving cost in purchasing electronic resources* (7.94), *Networking* (7.75), *Saving cost and efforts in cataloguing* (7.54)*;* and *Improving staff skills* (7.31)*. Saving cost in purchasing print materials* receives the lowest Mean value at 6.56.

The ranked Means indicate that *Improving library services* is considered the most important reason for libraries to participate in consortia. Some other reasons are quite important and *Saving cost in purchasing print materials* is less important to libraries than other benefits associated with digital content (*Electronic resources*).

5.5.8. Library role in decision making

It may be difficult for libraries to independently make the decision to join a consortium. It was therefore decided to seek information on the level of autonomy respondents believe their library might enjoy when joining a consortium. Questions 24 and 25 in the survey sought feedback on whether the respondent's library could independently decide to join a consortium or whether they would need to the approval of their parent institution, and if the latter was the case then who in particular would be the decision maker. All respondents (99) answered these two questions. Data shows that only 17.2% of libraries can make decision regarding joining library consortia. Table 5.27 presents the data relevant to libraries in both public and private institutions and their capacity to independently decide to join consortia.

Table 5.27: *Decision making regarding joining consortia, public vs. private*

Decision making		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
No	Count	64	18	82
	% by institution	83.1%	81.8%	
	Total	64.6%	18.2%	82.8%
Yes	Count	13	4	17
	% by institution	16.9%	18.2%	
	Total	13.2%	4.0%	17.2%
	Count	77	22	99
	% of Total	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%

Among 77 respondents from public institutions, 83.1% of cases reported that their library was not able to independently decide to join a consortium. This rate in private institutions was very similar at 81.8% of cases. Therefore libraries serving both public and private institutions of higher education are in most cases unable to independently decide to enter into a consortial relationship with other libraries.

Table 5.28 below presents details regarding decision makers for libraries in public and private institutions that include *Rector / President, Line manager* and *Library manager*.

Table 5.28: *Decision makers by institutions*

Decision makers		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Rector / President	Count	54	17	71
	% by institution	70.1%	77.3%	
	Total	54.5%	17.2%	71.7%
Line manager	Count	10	1	11
	% by institution	13.0%	4.5%	
	Total	10.1%	1.0%	11.1%
Library manager	Count	13	4	17
	% by institution	16.9%	18.2%	
	Total	13.1%	4.0%	17.2%
	Count	77	22	99
Total	% of Total	77.8%	22.2%	100.0%

Data obtained from Question 25 revealed that the decision makers in the majority of these cases were principally *Rectors/Presidents* of the parent institutions, and this was the case for both public institutions (70.1%) and private institutions (77.3%). The number of *Library manager* who could make the decision on behalf of their library within their institution was 16.9% for public institutions and 18.2% for private institutions. A number of respondents (11.1%) indicated that in some cases the decision-making rested with an intermediate *Line manager* other than a library manager or senior institutional manager such as a *Rector / President,* and the cases are 13% in public institutions and 4.5% in private institutions.

Since library managers in many cases are unable to make decision on joining consortia, the interest and support from parent institutions is critical to encouraging and supporting cooperative engagement among libraries.

5.5.9. Seeking support

It is important to understand whether Vietnamese academic libraries require support to engage in consortial arrangements, and if so, what types of support they require and whether such support would influence their decision to participate in consortia. Questions 26, 27 and 28 were designed to cover these issues.

Question 26 asked whether the respondent's library would be seeking support from the Government, parent institutions, international organisations or some other sources, to enable it to engage in consortia. Respondents were invited to choose more than one option. Among 99 respondents who answered this question, 86 respondents (86.9%) replied *Yes* and 13 respondents (13.1%) replied *No*. The group of respondents who confirmed that their library would not need to seek for any support to join library consortia were referred to Question 29.

The eighty six respondents who replied *Yes* to Question 26 were asked what kinds of support their library would seek in order to be able to join consortia. Four options were listed as multiple choices that include *Financial, Professional, Legal* and *Encouragement for cooperation and sharing.*

The need for *Financial* support was the most common response, indicated by 80 out of 86 (93% of responses), affirming the frequently encountered problem of

insufficient financial resourcing of Vietnamese academic libraries. The second in priority, *Legal* assistance, was indicated by 59.3% of responses. A smaller number of respondents indicated that they required *Encouragement for cooperation and sharing* (44.2%) which suggests that there is a lack of confidence in many libraries with regard to joining consortia. Figure 5.13 presents this data:

Figure 5.13: *Required support*
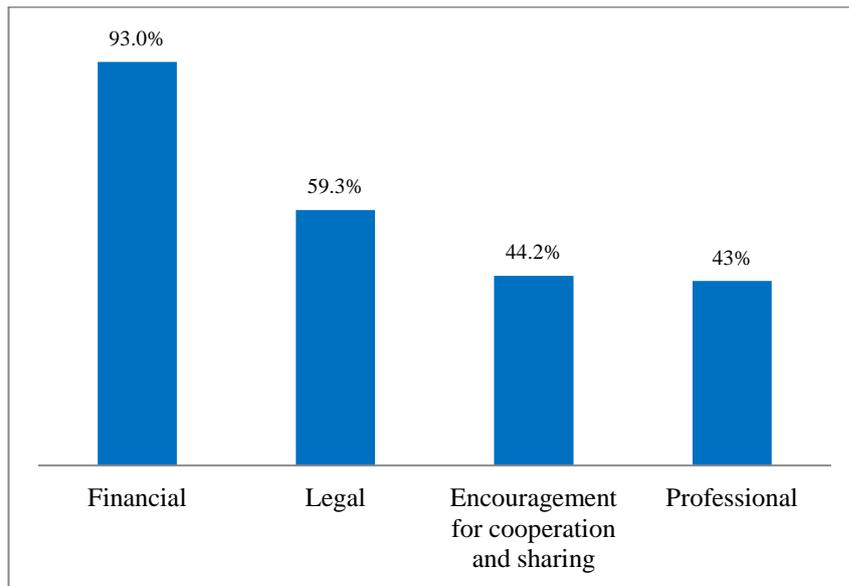
As reported in Table 5.29 below, the responses to Question 26 were also analysed according to respondents' affiliation with public and private institutions.

Table 5.29: *Support required by libraries, public vs. private (ranked)*

Support types		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Financial	Count	66	14	80
	% by institution	95.7%	82.4%	
	Total	76.7%	16.3%	93.0%
Legal	Count	39	12	51
	% by institution	56.5%	70.6%	
	Total	45.3%	14.0%	59.3%
Encouragement for cooperation and sharing	Count	27	11	38
	% by institution	39.1%	64.7%	
	Total	31.4%	12.8%	44.2%
Professional	Count	29	8	37
	% by institution	42.0%	47.1%	
	Total	33.7%	9.3%	43.0%
	Count	69	17	86
Total	% of Total	80.2%	19.8%	100.0%

Respondents working in public and private institutions expressed their common need for *Financial* support, *Legal* support, *Encouragement for cooperation and sharing* and *Professional* support at the same order of priority but at different levels of need. *Financial* assistance is placed first in priority by both institutional types, being indicated by 95.7% of responses from public institutions and 82.4% of responses from private institutions. In this context it is worth noting that private institutions receive no annual funding allocation from the government for their major operation as public institutions do. The second priority, which was *Legal* support, appears to be a more important concern to libraries from private institutions (70.6% of responses) than those from public institutions (56.5% of responses). The other two categories, *Professional* and *Encouragement for cooperation and sharing* received quite similar levels of response; however, the need for *Encouragement for cooperation and sharing*was much greater for libraries in private institutions, 64.7% of responses, as compared to 39.1% of responses in public institutions.

Not all required support can be obtained, so it is necessary to determine whether respondents believe their library would join consortia if they found the support was

not forthcoming. Question 28 therefore asked: *In the situation that you could not get any support, would your library still be willing to join consortia?*

Considerably more respondents (75% as opposed to 25%) reported that they would be willing to join consortia even if support was not found. This result indicated a positive attitude to the future of consortia in Vietnam, suggesting that although librarians are acutely aware of the need for various forms of support they are still able to perceive that the benefits of belonging to a consortium would make membership worthwhile even if support of the types indicated was not forthcoming.

5.5.10. Key agencies in organisation of future library consortia

Because library consortia are typically initiated by management and/or staff providing leadership from an individual library or professional association, the role of the initiator is important, and even essential, in the establishment process. In order to obtain input from respondents as to who would be best placed to undertake this key initiation role in Vietnam, Question 29 asked respondents to rank by relevance the following bodies:

- *the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET);*
- *the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST);*
- *Vietnamese Library Association (VLA);*
- *the National Library of Vietnam (NLV);*
- *Large universities and regional universities;*
- *Groups of libraries;*
- *Other(s) please name.*

A rating scale of 1 to 10 points was utilised to elicit respondents' opinions on the most relevant body or organisation who could initiate or lead the establishment of future consortia. Details of rating and average responses are presented in Table 5.30.

Table 5.30: *Preferred institutions for initiating library consortia (ranked)*

Agency		Ranked by relevance on scale 1-10										Mean
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
VLA	N	1	-	2	5	1	4	18	22	31	15	**7.95**
	%	1.0	-	2.0	5.1	1.0	4.0	18.2	22.2	31.3	15.2	
MOET	N	4	-	1	4	7	7	7	18	21	30	**7.90**
	%	4.0	-	1.0	4.0	7.1	7.1	7.1	18.2	21.2	30.3	
Large universities	N	2	3	2	3	5	9	17	24	17	17	**7.46**
	%	2.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	5.1	9.1	17.2	24.2	17.2	17.2	
MCST	N	3	3	2	1	14	6	23	15	16	16	**7.17**
	%	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	14.1	6.1	23.2	15.2	16.2	16.2	
NLV	N	3	3	2	1	5	10	29	24	10	12	**7.16**
	%	3.0	3.0	2.0	1.0	5.1	10.1	29.3	24.2	10.1	12.1	
Groups of libraries	N	7	2	2	3	30	29	10	6	4	6	**5.73**
	%	7.1	2.0	2.0	3.0	30.3	29.3	10.1	6.1	4.0	6.1	

The data indicates that the *VLA* receives the highest score (Mean = 7.95), followed by *MOET* which obtained an average score at 7.90. The lowest rating score was received for *Groups of libraries* (Mean = 5.73), indicating the respondents were more comfortable with the notion that a specified government department or professional association should be responsible for initiation, rather than encouraging this role to be taken by an organic formation of libraries.

5.5.11. Potential services

Question 30 aimed to determine what services would be of libraries' strength. This question asked what services the library could actually provide to consortia members or what it would do to contribute to consortia agreement(s). A list of six common services was available for respondents to select if applicable and respondents might choose more than one service:

- *Reference and/or virtual reference*
- *Cataloguing*
- *Inter Library Loan*

- *Collection Development*
- *Staff training programs*
- *Shared digitised institutional repository collections.*

Details of responses are shown in Table 5.31 below.

Table 5.31: *Services offered to consortia members (ranked)*

Services	Responses	Percent
Cataloguing	66	68.0%
Staff training programs	62	63.9%
Shared digitised institutional repository collections	61	62.9%
Interlibrary Loan	58	59.8%
Collection development	57	58.8%
Referenceand/or virtual reference	47	48.5%

Ninety seven libraries responded to this question, of which 68% of responses indicated their libraries would offer *Cataloguing* service to future consortia members. *Training courses* and *Institutional repositories* were the two services that received similar response rate of 63.9% and 62.9%. The response rate for *Interlibrary Loan* and *Collection development* were very similar at 59.8% and 58.8% respectively. *Reference and/or virtual reference* service including traditional form and virtual form was confirmed by 48.5% of cases. Overall, responses received indicating the various services that academic libraries would offer to future consortia members did not demonstrate a wide variation.

5.5.12. Major issues of concern regarding consortia

Question 31, the final question in the survey, was an open-ended category seeking any additional suggestions for consortial arrangements that would contribute to the future development of academic libraries in Vietnam. Although this question was an optional item, 72 respondents offered opinions which were categorised, analysed as multiple responses items and presented in Figure 5.14 below.

Figure 5.14: *Areas of interest for future development of library consortia*
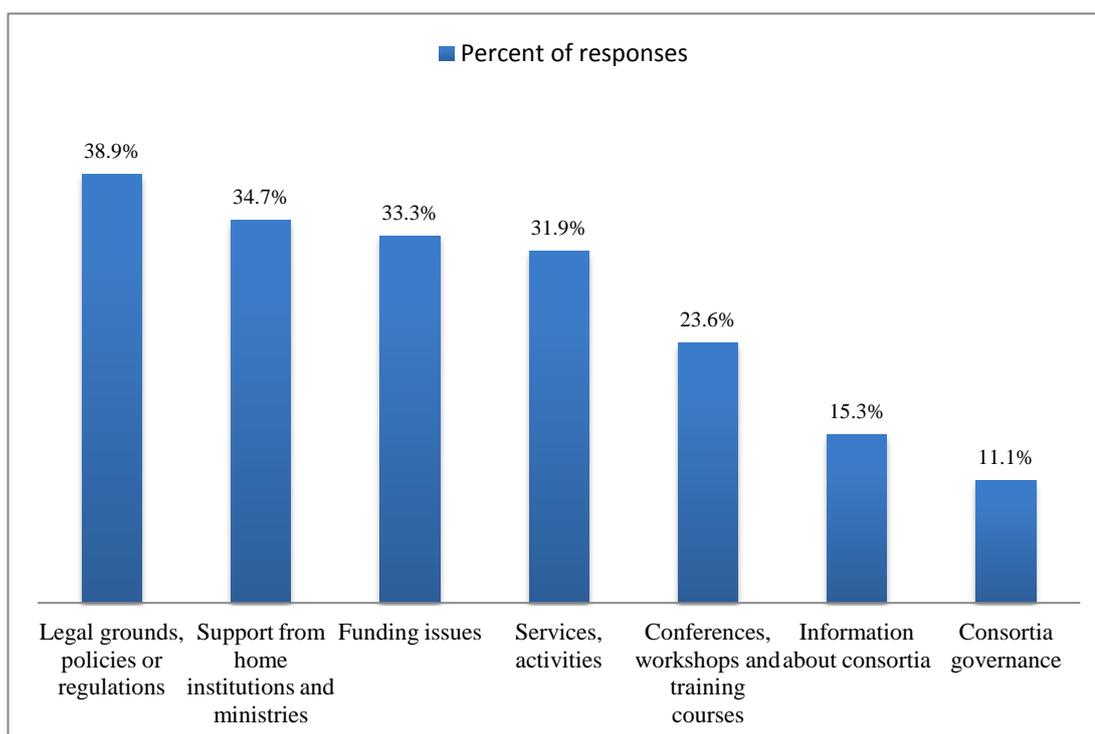
The four major areas of concern described with the most responses were related to legal issues, required support, consortial services or activities and funding issues. The group of opinions concerning *Legal grounds, policies or regulations* included respondents' comments (38.9% of responses) on a lack of sound legal basis for supporting the current consortial arrangements; suggestions for future consortia to be aware of developing strategic plans for sustainable development; practical implementation plans; and the need to formulate sound policies that ensure equality in sharing benefits and responsibilities among member libraries. A fewer number of responses asserted a need for more *Support from home institutions and ministries* (34.7%). In regards to *Funding issues*, respondents (33.3% of responses) suggested the MOET and the MCST should provide initial funds for consortia and other professional associations like VLA and its regional branches; library consortia would need stable funding sources to ensure their effective operation; libraries' parent institutions should contribute funds for consortia to organise more services; seeking more funding sources. In the group of opinions on consortia *Services or activities* respondents (31.9% of responses) suggested consortia should organise more services or activities; focus on resource sharing; and organise reference and interlibrary loan

services. A number of respondents considered organising *Conferences, workshops and trainingcourses* as a type of consortia activity so they suggested library consortia should either organise more, or improve the quality of conferences and workshops. Among 72 respondents who offered their suggestions, 15.3% claimed that their libraries need more *Information about consortia* so that they can participate with more confidence. Another number of respondents (11.1% of responses) offered suggestions on *Consortia governance*.

Respondents in both types of institutions provided suggestions to Question 31. Table 5.32 presents details of the cases between the two types of institutions.

Table 5.32: *Suggestions for future development of Vietnamese academic libraries, public vs. private (ranked)*

Suggestions		% of responses by institution		Total
		Public	Private	
Legal grounds, policies or regulations	Count	18	10	28
	% by institution	32.7%	58.8%	
	Total	25.0%	13.9%	38.9%
Support from home institutions and ministries	Count	21	4	25
	% by institution	38.2%	23.5%	
	Total	29.2%	5.6%	34.7%
Funding issues	Count	19	5	24
	% by institution	34.5%	29.4%	
	Total	26.4%	6.9%	33.3%
Services, activities	Count	16	7	23
	% by institution	29.1%	41.2%	
	Total	22.2%	9.7%	31.9%
Conferences, workshops and training courses	Count	13	4	17
	% by institution	23.6%	23.5%	
	Total	18.1%	5.6%	23.6%
Information about consortia	Count	9	2	11
	% by institution	16.4%	11.8%	
	Total	12.5%	2.8%	15.3%
Consortia governance	Count	6	2	8
	% by institution	10.9%	11.8%	
	Total	8.3%	2.8%	11.1%
Total	Count	55	17	72
	% of Total	76.4%	23.6%	100.0%

The breakdown of suggestions offered by libraries in both types of institutions reveal that libraries have common concerns about and interests in major issues although the levels of priority may slightly differ. Libraries in private institutions are more likely to be interested in legal issues, as the response *Legal grounds, policies or regulations* received more responses from private institution libraries (58.8%), in comparison to 32.7% from public institutions.

5.6. Some distinction between public institutions and private institutions

Most breakdowns and comparisons of the data obtained from both public and private institution groups of libraries indicate that there are few measureable differences between the two groups regarding perception of cooperation, and their cooperative behaviour and practices except the following.

Libraries in public institutions are more likely to participate in professional associations than those in private institutions, with 62.3% of public institution libraries reporting their likelihood to participate compared to 45.5% of private institutions. A similar differential was also reflected in their current participation in a consortium (18.2% compared to 13.6%).

Libraries in private institutions are less likely to be reached by correspondence regarding cooperation and consortia than their counterparts in public institutions. The results report that no private institution libraries received a high number of official documents. This result may indicate that the sources of these documents were mainly from government agencies who may wish to support cooperative activities and are providing information to publicly funded institutions.

The number of libraries that are dependent on a line manager in making decision regarding whether to join consortia was three-fold more for public institutions. This result is very likely a reflection of a more heavily bureaucratised culture in the public sector than that which applies to privately owned institutions.

Libraries in private institutions reported they need more support in terms of legislation and they also need more encouragement in order to participate in consortia. Data presented indicates that 75% of respondents from private institutions

reported *legal* support is required, as compared to 55.9% of cases in public institutions. *Encouragement* was sought by 62.5% of respondents in private institutions in comparison with 39.7% of case in public institutions. The issue regarding legal grounds, policies or regulations was again confirmed as a matter of concern by more libraries in private institutions than those in public institutions (58.8% of responses compared to 32.7% of responses). These results are likely related to the results reported above regarding the availability of documents and information relating to cooperation and consortia. Libraries and librarians with public institutions are more likely to feel supported, and may have a greater awareness of the current legal and regulatory environments.

5.7.   Association membership and consortia

The use of inferential statistics has demonstrated that there might be a correlation between participation in professional associations and the level of likely activity indicated for future consortia participation. Table 5.33 presents differences between members and non-members of association regarding the level of activity libraries may perform in future consortia.

Table 5.33: *Level of activity by members and non-members of associations*

Membership	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Members	58	3.29	0.530	**0.030**
Non-members	41	3.15	0.478	

Figures from this table which indicate the Sig. value = 0.030 <0.05 show statistically significant difference at 0.05. This suggests that there was significant difference between members and non-members of associations regarding the level of activity that respondents indicated for participation in future consortia. Observations of the mean values show a higher score for members of associations (3.29 – 3.15 = 0.14). This means members of associations indicate higher level of activity to future consortia. Details of an independent sample test are presented in Table 5.34.

Table 5.34: *Independent Samples Test for level of activity by membership of professional associations*

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | |
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Level of Activity	Equal variances assumed	4.833	.030	1.413	97	.161	.147	.104	-.059	.353
	Equal variances not assumed			1.439	91.379	.154	.147	.102	-.056	.349

In order to further examine the group of association members to explore whether there is any relationship with multiple memberships on the level of activity libraries may perform with future consortia, see Table 5.35.

Table 5.35: *Multiple memberships and level of activity*

Number of associations	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
1	3.10	0.481	
2	3.41	0.503	
3	3.75	0.500	0.006
4	4.00	0.000	

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) demonstrated that the influence of the number of association memberships was significant at 0.05 (Sig. = 0.006 < 0.05). This suggests that the levels of activity that libraries may perform in future consortia are different in accordance with the number of association memberships. Observations of the mean values indicate that the more associations the libraries participate in the higher the level of activity they may perform in future consortia. Specifically, the mean score of membership of one association is 3.10; membership of two associations gets a mean score of 3.41; mean score of membership of three associations is 3.75; and four associations reach 4.00 of mean score. This result may suggest that the number of association memberships is directly proportional to the

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level of activity that libraries may perform in future consortia. Details of these results are presented in Tables 5.36 & 5.37 following:

Table 5.36: *Details of One-way ANOVA*

Multiple memberships	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
1	3.10	.481	.088	2.92	3.28	2	4
2	3.41	.503	.107	3.19	3.63	3	4
3	3.75	.500	.250	2.95	4.55	3	4
4	4.00	.000	.000	4.00	4.00	4	4
Total	3.29	.530	.070	3.15	3.43	2	4

Table 5.37: *One-way ANOVA between association memberships and levels of activity*

Level of activity	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.249	3	1.083	4.580	.006
Within Groups	12.768	54	.236		
Total	16.017	57			

5.8.   Chapter summary

Findings of the survey draw a general picture of library cooperation and consortia in Vietnam which may reveal useful suggestions for future consortial arrangements for Vietnamese academic libraries. The findings provide a set of evidence of cooperative arrangements at a loose or general level of partnership such as joining library professional associations or societies as well as the current consortial arrangements in Vietnam.

Libraries' motivation for and expectation from consortia appear to be driven by common psycho-social value like *Networking, Communication* or *Spirit of cooperation and sharing* which are opinions consistently listed by the survey respondents. In addition to common benefits of consortia such as *Saving cost in purchasing materials,* the *Spirit of cooperation and sharing* was overwhelmingly reported by respondents (Table 5.20). One of the two most expected benefits of

future consortia was *Communication, networking or experience sharing* (Table 5.24). *Networking* was ranked as one of the top three priorities of motivation for joining consortia (Table 5.26).

The primary reasons for the perceived lack of engagement in consortia are that the *Culture of cooperation has not been popular among academic libraries* and *There is a lack of information about library consortia*. Although the data disclosed a majority of respondents selected to either *Agree* or *Strongly agree* that cooperation culture was one of the reasons for the perceived lack of consortial engagement among academic libraries in Vietnam, further discussion of this issue is quite sensitive. Therefore, the researcher would need to seek confirmation on this issue from library leaders and association managers by face-to-face interviewing.

Respondents reported that cooperation is necessary and they are supportive of and willing to cooperate and join future library consortia if they will be established. However, there exist difficulties and the dependent administrative status of a majority of libraries (82.8% of responses) may not allow libraries to easily enter into a cooperative or consortial relationship. These can be potential disadvantages for future library consortial arrangements. Therefore, it is necessary to have confirmation and further discussion on the factors that may hinder the development of library consortia in Vietnam and how academic libraries overcome these.

CHAPTER 6
INTERVIEW RESULTS

6.1.   Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative data collected from the interviews conducted with college and university library managers and senior managers of relevant library associations. The purpose of these interviews was to gain comprehensive opinions and suggestions regarding critical issues concerning library consortia that may reveal the possibilities for the future development and implementation of academic library consortia in Vietnam.

The interview protocols focused on the primary objectives of the research: the impacts of library consortia arrangements; issues of establishment of library consortia; the obstacles or difficulties faced; the services and activities provided by consortia; and the possibilities of success or failure for future academic library consortia in Vietnam.

Seven library managers and two association senior managers were invited to participate in the interviews in accordance with a purposive stratified sampling method as indicated in Chapter 4. In order to ensure anonymity of participants, the name and position of the interviewees are assigned with the following particular codes:

> AM = Association Managers (AM1 – AM2)
>
> LM = Library Managers (LM1 – LM5)

It is anticipated that the set of qualitative data obtained from these interviews can complement quantitative data from the questionnaire in order to provide deeper understanding of the issues addressed by the research.

6.2.   Impacts of consortial arrangements:

This study firstly investigated with interviewees the perceived impacts of library consortia activities on library service provision and library development. The first interview question asked the interviewees whether they thought consortia activity

might impact on service provision and the development of academic libraries and to describe some of the central issues impacting academic libraries in this regard.

A number of interviewees stated that there were certain to be impacts from consortia, while a minority only noted these impacts with hesitation. It was notable that several interviewees did not provide any response regarding the perceived impacts of consortia, but simply described the general nature and roles of consortia.

6.2.1. Spirit of association and cooperation

In an indication of the quite rudimentary understanding of consortia held by some interviewees, one (AM1) simply defined the term 'liên hợp' (consortium) as 'liên kết and hợp tác' (association and cooperation) which is a combination of the first words of two Vietnamese terms; that is 'liên' in 'liên kết' (association) and 'hợp' in 'hợp tác' (cooperation). This expression has not as yet been offered by popular dictionaries of the Vietnamese language, but it provides a meaningful expression of the concept. This interviewee affirmed that association and cooperation in the form of consortium was a real need and the arrangements should pertain to particular library services.

> *Actually, a consortium is about association, a concrete example of association and cooperation. So, such association and cooperation is needed. . . . There is a saying 'a life without friends is a life without sun'. Nobody can do business without partners. In other words, your business and others have to be linked together. That's the reason why associations exist. This consortium [VLC] was like an informal organisation at the beginning, and then it will become a more regular one, which is a formal consortium.* (AM1)

Another interviewee viewed the impact of library consortia in a way that indicated an understanding that they should not be seen primarily as a means of professional networking, but rather to have a practical, beneficial impact on the provision of library content.

> *The next step is networking through consortium to connect people, not to share professional skills but to exploit resources.* (AM2)

Through networking arrangements library consortia enhance the spirit of association and cooperation that can gradually establish a deeper culture of cooperation among libraries, which is one of the beneficial impacts of consortia.

6.2.2. Collective strength

Access to a wider range of resources

Another interviewee, a library manager, asserted that an essential advantage of a consortium was that they provided collective strength in terms of the provision of resources and services that a single library working alone could not.

> *Theoretically, a group of libraries will be stronger than one individual. One library alone is unable to provide sufficient services and information resources to meet their users' demand.* (LM5)

Another library manager described the need for consortia to focus on areas of particular institutional demand in order to make them relevant for the library with which she is associated.

> *There are a lot of library services; a service to provide technical and scientific documents is the one where we are in need. I haven't seen any units supplying architectural databases. If cooperating with other places with a similar training major [in architecture], institutions can be mutually assisted and the provision for architectural databases will be much more effective. Documents in this subject are expensive.* (LM7)

On the other hand, an improvement in the diversity and abundance of resourceswas considered by several interviewees as one of the important benefits that consortia arrangements had contributed. Asserting that consortia 'will be very useful for the services and development of libraries', one interviewee (LM1) specified the beneficial impacts in the following terms, which demonstrated a good understanding of the way in which contemporary consortia have developed internationally:

> *First, it will make the information resources more diverse. There are many forms of consortium. The simplest one is the group purchasing consortium. One unit cannot afford to buy much material, but if it belongs to a consortium, it can share resources with the others at little expense. Therefore, we can see that your material resources will increase many times by joining a consortium. . . . Moreover, if a consortium is more strictly organised and all of the material and information resources are shared, users can utilise a considerable amount of material.* (LM1)

Access to a wide range of resources is one of the constant requirements of library users and meeting that demand is one of the major goals of many academic library consortia. Interviewees indicated that when joining consortia libraries were putting themselves in a position to share information resources with one another, although as in this case the thinking was sometimes seemingly grounded in print materials

Consortial arrangements will have a big impact on the service supply and the development of university libraries. They bring particular benefits, such as the foremost benefit is to provide users with better, more diversified and plentiful information. Another benefit is that libraries can avoid being a separate, unaffiliated operation which results in extravagant expenditure and an inability in exploiting sources of information. . . . A consortium will provide for a wider selection and more diverse sources of information. For example, at my library, users want more books and other documents related to research methodologies, training programs and teaching methods. This doesn't mean they don't need to research other related fields like economics, basic science, or technical science to gain insights into a certain piece of research. (LM6)

Another library manager, LM2, affirmed that her library 'can get access to sources of information' which the library could not afford to buy on its own budget, and LM3 stated that consortia help academic libraries to 'reinforce and share their information resources'.

Mutual benefits

While the impact of consortia was reflected in the discussion of some specific benefits to libraries and their staff, it was also acknowledged that they would provide less tangible benefits that were nonetheless important for library improvement.

As for sharing, there will be mutual support. The weaknesses of one can be complemented by the strength of others, so the community can grow stronger. In order to develop services there should be a library consortium, especially in the current scenario in Vietnam, where the trend towards digital and electronic documents is growing rapidly. (LM4)

Another perception of the impacts of consortia was related to the current arrangements of the VLC. It was noted by several interviewees that this consortial purchasing arrangement was beneficial for member libraries as many of them could not independently afford the cost of online databases, which were often too expensive for most Vietnamese academic libraries. The practice of making scholarly content affordable for libraries that suffer chronic funding shortages has resulted in an important impact on their scholarly community.

The joining of a consortium brings us two impacts. The first one is about buying databases. Since we ourselves cannot afford to buy them now, it is reasonable for us to join with others to buy the Proquest database. The second is that we can get access to sources of information which our university cannot afford to buy if we join Mr. Hung's consortium [VLC]. . . . Personally, I realise the first benefit to mention is the financial impact as VLC can help reduce the cost and suit my university's circumstances. (LM2)

Expense reductionwas noted by most interviewees as an important benefit of library consortia. Some interviewees related this benefit to their experience with the VLC:

> *One library cannot afford to buy much material, but if it belongs to a consortium, it can share resources with the others at little expense. . . . For example, a library joining the Consortium for Purchasing Electronic Resources just has to pay USD 1,000 but it can utilise a database worth over 100,000 US dollars.* (LM1)

Another interviewee, LM3, confirmed the impact of library consortia in the context of contemporary research cultures, which generate a wide and multidisciplinary range of publications to the extent that no individual library can collect comprehensively.

> *In fact, the information resource of any single library could hardly meet the need for studying, teaching and doing scientific research of both students and teachers. This is due to the integration of various scientific fields. Meanwhile many libraries enrich their resources only to be commensurate with their university's specialisations.With the current financial capacity of many Vietnamese university libraries, it is very difficult to fully develop the library resources to correspond with particular scientific domains. For this reason, consortia arrangements are an inevitable trend and an effective measure to help university libraries reinforce and share their information resources, particularly the electronic resources, in order to minimise the expense and avoid the redundancy among library collections.* (LM3)

Another interviewee acknowledged that while local books could be purchased more cheaply there is still a need to acquire the more expensive international publications. Consortial purchasing is therefore necessary in order to get access to the best resources.

> *Printed documents are having the same issues. Locally published books are published frequently, but often have repeated themes. Imported books containing higher levels of information, however, are often too expensive. If every library purchases separately, the efficiency is low due to the tight budgets. There should be collaboration for the better quality printed and electronic collections.* (LM4)

Interviewees expressed different views of the impacts of consortia, but almost all of them confirmed as LM1 claimed, that: 'It is for sure that consortia activities will have a positive impact on offering services and developing libraries.' It can be said that librarians whose libraries participated in a library consortium fully acknowledged the potentially important roles and the beneficial impacts of library consortia.

In the circumstances of a developing country such as Vietnam where financial shortage is always a major issue, library consortia can perform a number of other important roles. It was suggested, for example, that consortial arrangements could

help participating libraries to reduce cataloguing labour and costs, and improve the quality of bibliographic data.

> *Another possibility is where a library having a large number of cataloguers with highly professional skill can be responsible for cataloguing and other libraries will provide support somehow or other. That will help to decrease the number of cataloguers and improve the quality of bibliographic databases.* (LM1)

6.2.3. Improvement of staff knowledge and skills and institution image

Interviewees AM1, AM2, LM4, LM6 described professional engagement and learning as another benefit of consortia. They noted several types of networking activities that were believed to have beneficial impacts that would enhance the competency and engagement of library staff. For example one interviewee, notably a manager of a professional association, noted with the use of consortia:

> *Less effort brings in more benefit and the strength of synergy is recognised. People learn some more skills or something new, share experience or develop new relationships every time they gather. . . . Workshops and conferences are held annually, inviting overseas experts to present good information. This will help us to perform two tasks at once: raise people's awareness and enhance their qualifications, and to be exposed to new technology and new ideas.* (AM2)

Other interviewees replied to the question in a manner that indicated they considered consortia to be synonymous with the broader concepts of professional networking and professional associations. Their responses highlighted, amongst other things, the lack of professional conferences as an example of the shortage of opportunity for building consortial partnerships.

One interviewee stressed the importance of activities currently supported by the VLA, including workshops and conferences, as opportunities for improving library staff's competency in the absence of some more practical benefits of consortia.

> *At present, Vietnam Library Association has not yet implemented any activities for sharing resources like VLC has, but it holds conferences and training workshops to advance the competence and professional qualification of library staff. Through conferences and workshops, we can get information about the development of libraries around the world as well as about the activities and the actual state of libraries in Vietnam. Also, we can enrich our knowledge of the library field and become more dedicated to our job. . . . Writing papers [conference, workshop or newsletter] for associations, we will be provided with documents of the association, and informed of our colleagues' concerns, [which will] raise the community's awareness about the field of librarianship and enhance knowledge about the activities of each other.* (LM2)

If the role and status of Vietnamese academic libraries were enhanced they might have more confidence in developing and following advanced libraries elsewhere in the world. Library consortia were acknowledged to influence the development of their member libraries in line with examples of international best practice, although in this case the interviewee appeared to be suggesting that consortia themselves should be international:

> *Consortial arrangements encourage the libraries to keep up with the common development of library consortia. . . . Actually, in many countries all over the world, university libraries have already set up library consortia so that they can participate in the international relationships. Consortia influence and stature have a direct impact on the development of member libraries.* (LM3)

One library manager interviewee, LM6, also made a similar point, noting that the particular benefits that libraries received from consortia would further promote the status and profile of academic libraries within the Vietnamese higher education system:

> *A consortium will help to standardise the professional expertise of libraries and unify our strategies for collection development policies, cataloguing, and bibliographic records at different libraries. The final impact is the enhancement in the role and status of the academic library system in general and university libraries individually.* (LM6)

From the interviewees' perceptions, the primary impacts of library consortia were the positive influence on the spirit of cooperation, and the emergence of a collective strength and enhanced professionalism. These results suggest that interviewees are generally aware of the current lack of a cooperative culture in Vietnam, and familiar enough with their operation and benefits to be optimistic that they could improve the current state of academic library cooperation in the country.

6.3. Issues for establishment of academic library consortia

The second interview question sought suggestions from interviewees with respect to major issues related to the establishment of library consortia, which might hopefully inform a decisive process for bringing library consortia into existenceand performing their various roles. The responses to this question described a number of important areas that had been raised in the context of the survey, including the role of the initiators of consortia; financial resources and affordability; controlling legislation; implementation; responsibilities and benefits; and ensuring that full benefits are received.

6.3.1. Initiators and leaders

The important role played by the initiator of consortia was raised by a number of interviewees. Any consortium requires a library or even an individual to take the lead in its establishment and initial leadership. This is a critical function as the leadership role during the initiation phase will set many of the parameters for the future scope and conduct of the consortia. In regard to the initiation of consortia, most interviewees affirmed the significant role played by initiators and described some essential attributes of an initiator:

> *It is for sure that no libraries will join consortia if there are no initiators, no dedicated people and no one taking the helm. In short, the initiator, as a pioneer, plays a very important role. . . .* (LM2)

> *The initiator is the one who has capacity, enthusiasm, and has been fundamentally trained about the management model and activities of modern libraries in terms of techniques, equipment, information capacity and the profession.* (LM3)

One interviewee stated that an initiator needs to have established leadership credentials in order to take on the leadership of a consortium, coupled with sufficient time in which to undertake the work that was required in the start-up phase.

> *Firstly, there should be a renowned leader who stands up to gather people. Secondly, it is a matter of making time available as the form of the consortia is important and it won't work if it is superficial.* (LM1)

This interviewee also acknowledged the role of the initiating institution of the current consortium, the VLC, as an example of a competent leader who is supported by staff with the necessary skills and experience to undertake the role:

> *A big advantage this consortium has got is that its initiator is the National Agency for Science and Technology Information. . . . They are even offered more financial support since it is responsible for acquiring and providing all materials on science and technology. Thanks to abundant sources of finance, they are able to take an active role in any situations, and they can even subsidise more than 50% of acquisitions expense for the consortium's databases. . . . They have staff qualified enough to manage everything. . . . In short, there must be a relatively large unit with a complete system and experienced staff to carry on the organising process such as negotiating, signing contracts, and even administering networks used for getting access to shared databases.* (LM1)

Several other interviewees also stressed that the role of initiation is indispensable in the development of library consortia and that it requires a substantial organisation to provide the depth of support necessary for the role.

I believe there are many issues for the establishment of library consortia. The first and also the most important is having an agency or organisation such as Ministry of Education and Training, Library Department, National Library or an information centre such as NASATI, which has credibility, authority, functional and management capacity to initiate the establishment of a consortium. (LM6)

Another interviewee shared the view that consortia leaders should be libraries that have the leading positions in a state library system as a result of either seniority or size.

After participating in many places, I personally believe that positive impact of library consortia on the library system should be as a whole so the initiator that sets up the consortia should be able to have certain influence over the whole system. In Vietnam, every library operates independently and locally, and not as part of a system. They keep their database and information resources unshared. To associate the leader or the initiators should start from the top down. . . . The Library Association or consortium is currently developing thanks to the leaders like the National Library, and the National Agency for Science and Technology Information, which are capable of encouraging others to participate. (LM4)

There was a suggestion by an interviewee from a private university that the initiation role could be shared by publishers who also have a commercial interest in the development of strong and effective consortia.

There must be an initiator, who may be a leading library, a large library or any library that is competent and has the financial capacity. This may also be one or two libraries, or a publisher who coordinates with one or two libraries. (LM5)

It was also suggested by a potential initiator that the role requires a significant investment of time that can only be found at the expense of other functions and roles. LM1 described the role of a leader of a professional association as an example of how an organisational leader might act within his role.

Even for a chairman like I am now, there are many things that I do not have much time to take care of. Indeed, certain tasks, which I am experienced in and have the management ability to perform, or which thanks to the good relationships I have built so far, are still able to be well-done and they do not require much investment of my time. I will give up taking on this role [as consortium leader] if completion of a fixed schedule of tasks for the organisation is required. (LM1)

Another interviewee pointed out the situation of a leader of an association who found it difficult to devote sufficient time to broader engagement with professional associations and consortia during their normal working life, and whereas moving into

retirement might leave scope for greater involvement it was often made difficult by the loss of institutional support.

> *The second confusing matter is that people in their working days are all too busy with their own business. They don't have time to take part in the association's activities. However, when retired, they lack the favourable conditions like financial support or vehicles.* (AM1)

Interviewees pointed out further disadvantages that their libraries would be facing if they took on the role of initiation, or indeed were even to participate as members. One such difficulty is the lack of personnel to lead the consortia or to undertake the associated work. As one interviewee pointed out, a lack of staff to undertake consortial activities or responsibilities, or to assist an executive committee, would be a difficulty facing consortia and member libraries as they work to maintain their activities.

> *In fact, this is not because people refuse to cooperate, but rather the shortage of permanent staff and the lack of support groups for an executive committee. Therefore, many things are mentioned and then left unresolved. Whenever a new plan is launched, some support is gained at first, but no one actually takes the helm. . . . Though people all agree about the advantages of having library consortia, the implementation is not simple in the current conditions in which the library staff shortage is everywhere.* (LM1)

As another library manager interviewee concluded, there are various logistical problems faced by Vietnamese libraries that discourage the development of Vietnamese library consortia, but the lack of initiation remains the major inhibitor:

> *The initiator, the finance, the responsibility, and the procedures, all together have certain impacts on consortia. But it seems that we lack the initiators to take the helm.* (LM2)

6.3.2. Finance, budget, funding

Nearly all of interviewees raised the matter of finance as a significant issue for the development of future consortia in Vietnam. Apart from the optimistic view of one interviewee from a private university (LM5) who stated that finance for consortia could be obtained from tuition fees or from the fee-based services that would result from the services offered by the consortia or their member libraries, other interviewees consistently expressed the view that a lack of financial support severely hindered the implementation of consortia.

The situation of the largest professional association for Vietnamese libraries was described by one interviewee as an example of an organisation that was not funded or sponsored by the government and therefore struggled to provide basic infrastructure for the business of the association:

> *Our Library Association is self- financed, and has neither personnel nor head-quarters. At the moment we are just asking this library [the National Library of Vietnam] for temporary housing. . . . In the future, I have to gradually move to another place. These are our practical difficulties and they are the reasons for the fact that many people are afraid to set up an association, not because of their lack of awareness.* (AM1)

These difficulties mentioned above by AM1 are quite real, and many associations are in the similar situation of having little or no operating funds or other forms of centralised support.

LM1 confirmed that finance was a critical problem for Vietnamese library consortia because it is such an ongoing and major issue facing the libraries that would form the basis of consortia membership.

> *The problem of finance is very essential to library consortia in Vietnam. Libraries joining consortia have to be able to ensure their own long-term financial capacity.* (LM1)

Some other interviewees described several aspects relating to financial problems in their response to this question; however, the discussion of these issues is presented in the other part of this chapter where the focus is specifically on obstacles confronting libraries in the future arrangements for consortia.

6.3.3. Legal grounds and administrative issues

Currently in Vietnam, while new library laws are under consideration, the existing Library Ordinance is crucial as the only official legislative document governing the conduct of libraries. According to interviewees, the activities of neither academic libraries nor library consortia are adequately reflected in the Library Ordinance. In the recently drafted library law, there appears a term (*liên thông*) that implies library cooperation and networking, but it is a concept that currently appears to be of secondary importance to academic libraries. As a consequence, there is currently a lack of legislative guidance and associated procedures to assist with the foundation of academic library consortia. As described by one interviewee, the current situation is frustrating for academic libraries:

Recently, a library law was about to be submitted to the national assembly, but was delayed as it has less priority than other laws. Moreover, it has been figured out that this library law is in favour of public libraries which are under control of the Ministry of Culture. The situation for academic libraries was not as clear. . . . Public libraries are important but they are not the whole system but the governmental management of other types of library was still loose. (AM2)

Another interviewee held the same view as AM2 regarding the situation of academic libraries and indicated that the direction for participation in associations and the legal principles regulating consortium development remained unclear:

On a legal basis, there hasn't yet been a library law in Vietnam. The library consortium isn't highlighted in library ordinances where the main focus is on public libraries. The legal ground isn't clear enough or open for a consortium to be founded. . . . Legally speaking, Vietnam doesn't create a path for institutions and libraries to participate in associations. There haven't been rules for the establishment of a library consortium but any individual place that wishes to form one is welcome. They can submit for the relevant authorities' approval. Since there hasn't yet been guidance for such establishment and individuals have to manage themselves, seek particular consultancy to get it right then submit to the government or ministries for approval. It's very difficult at the beginning. (LM4)

It is clear that libraries have expected and required more than the current legislative structure has been able to deliver, with interviewees expressing their expectation for an improved legal basis that is needed to support the initiation of library consortia. It was pointed out by one interviewee that even the basic term of library cooperation was not included in the current Library Ordinance (it should be noted that this is not strictly correct, as Article 13, Clause 5, does make passing reference to 'cooperation' (hợp tác, liên thông), although the issue is certainly not addressed in any detail).

It's also essential to have a solid legal ground. In Vietnam, there hasn't been the term 'library cooperation' in the active Library Ordinance but it's supposed to appear in the Library Law being drafted for the near future. Actually, 'library cooperation' which is usually called 'cooperation' in Vietnamese way is not the term we need. Connection is based on principles such as consensus, field, location/area, or professional activities. What we are doing now is 'library consortium' with a sharing scheme based on members' capacity to meet their information demand and on the spirit of little contribution but more benefit and obtaining reciprocal assistance not only in information activities but also in other activities, such as services, skills, social suggestions for society to make library activities better. (AM2)

It is likely that it was the widespread lack of awareness of the practice of library consortia that resulted in the absence of this concept and term in the current and the future legal documents.

Another interviewee, LM6, affirmed that legal documents or guidelines for consortia were required and suggested specific types of documents that libraries would need.

> There needs to be a deployment schedule suitable to the condition of academic libraries in Vietnam that defines clearly every step of the establishment process [of consortia]. There should also be a legal document that clearly defines the responsibilities and rights, the different levels of cooperation, funding, and human resources needed for this collaboration. These documents must be signed by the institution's leadership to ensure the implementation of the activities of the consortium. (LM6)

This interviewee further argued that legal documents need to emphasise the connection between responsibilities and practical benefits that stakeholders at different levels may gain in order to ensure the enforcement of responsibilities and provide motivation for becoming members of consortia.

> As for regulating responsibilities, libraries need legal documents to follow otherwise it would be difficult to place blame. The document should describe clearly the rights, obligation and benefits, not merely based on the voluntary spirit of participating libraries but also on the recognition of the benefits for libraries' users, individual university libraries, and academic libraries as a whole. (LM6)

Interviewees expressed the view that if the governmental legal framework could provide some proper legal basis to library operations including those entered into cooperatively, there will be more opportunities for academic libraries to develop and to initiate cooperative programs including consortia because parent institutions can have a basis for additional investment in libraries.

> Our library, as some others, lacks a legal basis to convince our leaders that the library needs to participate in a library consortium. (LM6)

> Theyneed to be binding in term of finance and legislation as well as willingness to cooperate from institution leaders. . . . There should be a force from the Ministry of Education. (LM5)

> Only with official documents issued by the Ministry [the MOET] can libraries have the basis to present to their university executives for approval and implementation. (LM1)

Despite the fact that academic libraries might have some difficulties in forming consortia due to the lack of a suitable legal structure and documents that can act as a framework or guideline, it was also argued there was currently no apparent legal impediment to the development of consortia. As interviewees affirmed:

> The establishment of a consortium has no obstacles on a legal basis; however, there should be guidance and a consultative process for a more systematic implementation. This step can also be difficult. (LM4)

There are no difficulties in legal procedures, except for associations which have to obtain permission for the establishment [of consortia], and the procedure is rather complicated. Generally speaking, there will be no problems for the establishment of professional associations such as library associations, archives associations, museum associations, etc. The procedures must be submitted to authorities at many levels and to the Ministry of Domestic Affairs. Now the Vietnam Library Association must be officially licensed by the Ministry of Domestic Affairs. The Ministry of Cultural Affairs used to be in charge of this. The procedures for establishment of branches of associations are simpler because they can get permission from the national association. Moreover, Vietnamese authorities rarely impose a fine in the cases of establishments that were undertaken without the government being informed in advance. (LM1)

From the interviewees' perspective, legal issues refer to not only official legislative documents concerning the establishment of consortia, but also to the associated policies, guidelines, and other matters regulating the conduct of libraries and related institutions such as professional associations. These might all have potential effects on the implementation of consortia.

Interviewees also indicated their preferred steps for the establishment and implementation of consortia, including the relationships with government agencies. For example, one interviewee suggested including the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) in the negotiations.

First of all, we should draw up a specific written master plan in which the responsibilities, benefits, directions and potential outcomes from being a member of the consortium are clearly stated. This plan then will be sent to each institution for reference and suggestions and to finally decide whether or not to engage with it. For better results, after receiving this plan, the Ministry of Education will give these institutions directions to participate and implement. Not all university leaders are concerned about libraries, waiting for voluntary participation can be ineffective. (LM4)

This interviewee further recommended using MOET's influence as a policy maker to drive certain institutional behaviours through leadership.

Therefore, the initiators should start from the top down to the smallest unit. There should be a policy issued by Ministry of Education and Training to university libraries to make it an obligation for every institution in the system to implement because self-motivation won't result in high efficiency. (LM4)

Another interviewee agreed with LM4 on this point and proposed that participation in consortia should be imposed at the outset as a means of enforcing institutional engagement until such times as the benefits of membership became manifest.

So as to forming such consortia, it's necessary to have an agreement in which all sides' rights and responsibilities are clearly stated. At the beginning, it

could be somewhat obligatory, and they will then change their mind once the benefits become obvious. The obligatory spirit finally will change into voluntary. They will think more openly and be more willing in serving the community. (LM6)

Conversely AM2 affirmed a different point of view when stating that *'a consortium should be built on consensus, volunteering and responsibility'*. LM2 and LM3 shared similar views with AM2 at this point, by also emphasised the importance of voluntary participation.

The importance of the legal framework for consortia membership was confirmed by a library manager interviewee as a significant issue for consortia development since it would provide a context for discussing with institutional managers the basis on which consortia membership could proceed.

> *I personally think that apart from finance, knowledge, and experience, university libraries in Vietnam will be facing quite big issues – the lack of a legal foundation is the first. . . . Our university, as with some others, lacks a legal basis to convince our leaders that the library needs to participate in a library consortium.* (LM6)

Another library manager commented that libraries might get involved in consortia for the wrong reasons, and without being properly prepared for the levels of obligation required. Therefore, he suggested that binding agreements in terms of legal and financial commitments should be required from participants.

> *I did mention earlier, there is trendy cooperation and actual cooperation. Psychologically, people want to join because other people joined. People might sign but whether or not they will contribute to the purchase of resources is another story. Therefore, there should be a financial obligation among the parties. As long as you sign a consortial agreement, you must be allocated with certain funds and get written approval from your management unit. Without any such obligation, a consortium has a huge likelihood of failure.* (LM5)

Most interviewees claimed that libraries needed a sound legal basis on which to enter consortial arrangements. Legal grounds they referred to include the legislative mechanism and framework on which libraries can rely to regulate their participation in, or implementation of, consortial activities. It was argued that legal documents such as the Library Ordinance and the future Library Law should make clear the situation of academic libraries as they attempt to widen their collaborative activities and engage with consortia.

6.3.4. Reconciliation between responsibilities and benefits

Academic libraries will only choose to join and take an active role in consortia when they are aware and convinced of the benefits that consortia can deliver. It is therefore important to understand both attractions and benefits of consortia, as well as their limitations, from the point of view of library managers and other interviewees in order to understand the factors that are driving their decision making.

Most of the interviewees emphasised the various benefits associated with consortia. Benefit is always expected by participants in any cooperative arrangements entered into by libraries, and formalised consortia are no exception. The President of a current consortium expressed his belief that once potential consortia participants have the benefits made apparent to them then they will be likely to join.

> *The reason why the existing consortium attracted much attention was due to the benefits it may bring. A little contribution can bring considerable benefit and the strength of the synergy [between member libraries] was recognised. . . . Following an administrative path won't work [in acquiring the necessary financial support], so there is a need to find another way and that can be by associating together to bring about mutual benefits. It's said that "it is better to have mutual benefit than a lifelong enemy". Once people can see the benefit they will join. There are groups of people with the same interests, who will experience the same benefit from working together in the long term. By cooperating more benefits can be achieved with less money invested. Everyone likes to benefit. . . . When they associate with each other, both the strongest and the weakest can gain benefits.* (AM2)

Interviewees were clear that libraries definitely expected certain benefits to result from participating in consortia. These benefits were described as both a realistic improvement in services for library users and specific advantages for particular services or to a library in general.

> *A committed founder should be capable of figuring out its problems and pointing out the mutual benefits and responsibilities of both sides and mapping out a plan for the development of the consortium. For example, a library at a certain level can attain a higher level after taking part in a consortium because of the benefits of resource sharing and service improvement.* (LM4)

> *First of all, we need to understand what benefits it [a consortium] will bring for its participants, what library A or B will gain from it, and how to make this process flow smoothly.* (LM5)

It was suggested that the benefits of library consortia needed to be pointed out not only to libraries and librarians, but in some instances to institutional managers as the decision to join consortia frequently rested with these managers.

Rectors and managing boards will need to see the benefits before making up their mind on whether to take part in consortia. . . . Libraries actually wish to cooperate. As I see it, every member seems to recognise the benefits. (LM5)

When discussing benefits, one library manager interviewee described the case of his library which resigned its membership from a current association because it found that the participation did not deliver any practical benefits.

We haven't made people realise the benefits of participation in library consortia. [My library] used to participate in the Federation of Southern Academic Libraries but then withdrew although the annual fee is small, just 1 to 1.5 million [VND] to maintain the operation and activities of the association. However, participating in the organisation we were often invited to visit new places, but it was mainly for social reasons and the activities didn't bring any practical benefits. Participation in an association should have benefit which is what I can get when I collaborate with others. The reason we collaborate [with other libraries] is to create products for users. (LM4)

As noted earlier, one of the interviewees claimed that when libraries, '*associate with each other, both the strongest and the weakest can gain benefits*' (AM2), thereby suggesting that the core member (NASATI) of the current consortium, which contributes the largest part of the purchasing costs, can still benefit. Another interviewee expressed the same view on the benefit that NASATI could receive:

At the moment, National Agency for Science and Technology Information participation is counted on for the purchase of the ProQuest database, but they still benefit financially from their participation. They [NASATI] do not lose at all. (LM4)

This role of NASATI in the VLC was noted earlier, including that they provide for 50% of the purchase cost of an online database program. It is obvious that NASATI gains from their VLC membership in the form of a considerable cost saving, plus there are also intangible benefits including the prestige associated with being the lead member of a high profile, nationalconsortium.

The type and extent of benefit proved to be the main point to be considered by libraries when assessing the value of a consortium membership, and their decision whether or not they would participate in certain consortial activities.

We deserve the right to make the decision [on joining or not joining consortia] but how about their effectiveness? What can they do for us after joining? If no benefit is gained, then joining will be disapproved. . . . The reason for success lies in the fact that it brings benefits to individual libraries. (LM2)

In spite of the fact that 'sometimes responsibilities and benefits contradict with each other' as LM1 stated, another interviewee (LM6) confirmed that 'Once people can perceive the benefits, they will take part [in consortia] without hesitation'.

Alongside the benefits gained are the responsibilities undertaken, and of which consortium members also need to be made fully aware before joining. As one of the interviewees (AM2) affirmed: '*We are creating a community, with common responsibility and mutual benefit.*' Interviewees indicated that responsibilities of consortia members need to be clearly stated in official documents or supported in legal documents at institutional or state level, so that libraries are fully aware of what they are required to do to fulfil their membership responsibilities. Most interviewees' opinions regarding the perceived responsibilities of consortia members derived from their experience of participating in the VLC consortium. A consortium member could simply '*pay money [for consortia purchasing]*' as LM1 stated, or their participation might also include a desire to support the library community regardless of an individual member's low level of demand for the commonly purchased resources:

> *Some libraries have bought many more specialised databases such as Springer, IEEE, ScienceDirect, etc., so the statistics show that the usage of Proquest Central is not very much. However, we still have to join in the consortium due to our responsibility to the community.* (LM1)

> *If we join a consortium, and then say that we shouldn't buy it [the shared resource] because it will be of no benefit to us that will not meet our responsibility, or help the implementation of our plans for library development. . . . It is not just an issue of jointly buying material, but also the issue of raising awareness [of consortia activities] and responsibility [for doing consortia related tasks] of library staff.* (LM2)

The 'responsibility' mentioned was not only the responsibility of libraries as consortia members but may also extend to their staff as well. One interviewee described the situation of a current collaboration where the sense of responsibility was limited and the benefits were constrained as a result.

> *Smaller university libraries will be wondering if the responsibility will be a burden. Many institutions just sign up in name rather than in fact. Their responsibilities and roles are not well-defined. Some libraries just participate, pay a certain fee, and get together for a celebration at the end of the year mainly for fun.* (LM4)

This interviewee (LM4) also expressed the same view as a number of other interviewees in pointing to the need for a clear description of both the benefits of consortia membership and the specific responsibilities required in return.

> *An established consortium should come with a clear procedure for organisation and operation, with a detailed plan of duties and responsibilities attached with benefits to attract voluntary participation. . . . The matter is we should help people to realise the benefit of participating and for them being a responsible member. Even if we can call on their participation, it would turn out to be not effective if the duties, activities, and benefits are not clearly defined.* (LM4)

Another issue raised by interviewees that might impact upon the decision to join library consortia, or library selection and content development more generally, is related to the use of 'issue fees' (*phát hành phí*) and other financial benefits that can be derived from the relationship between librarians and database or book vendors. The 'issue fees' are a form of promotion made to some libraries in some circumstances by vendors in return for subscription to databases, purchase of books or equipment. The revenue from issue fees is used by some libraries to supplement staff income or in some other way support library activities and services. This is a potentially sensitive issue, but a number of interviewees in the groups of library managers and association managers raised the matter, although in several cases they also requested not to be directly quoted.

The nature of the comments made points to a situation in which some library managers choose to be directly involved in selection in order to benefit from issue fees. Several interviewees claimed that some acquisitions staff would make decisions based on the presence and size of issue fees rather than the intrinsic merits of the material or content selected for the library.

> *The problem is also related to issue fee, which is not a problem at all in foreign countries, but in Vietnam it is an issue because when we buy materials, the issue fee is the support for a library's activities, particularly for the library staff. . . In some cases they might prefer buying material users do not really need, but do so because issue fees are applied. We should understand that this situation was really happening.* (LM1)

The implication for the development of consortia is that some library managers will be reluctant to enter into consortial arrangements if it appears likely that in doing so they will surrender their role in selection and negotiation with suppliers and thereby lose direct access to the issue fees. The interviewees indicated it was the case that

some libraries would consider this matter when they were considering joining consortia.

> *When using a part of our budget to buy books or other materials we have special offers from publishers or suppliers. If we join a consortium for purchasing print materials there appears a common fear of losing such offers. We are concerned if this kind of benefit should be reduced or there is no transparency in group purchasing.* (LM6)

This comment regarding 'no transparency in group purchasing' points to a concern that within a consortium, some members will be worried that those responsible for negotiation will benefit from issue fees while other will not be able to share this benefit.

Having acknowledged this matter, the VLC applied a stratagem to attract to the consortium those persons who were most involved in decision making with regard to libraries joining a consortium or to the amount of a library's budget available that would be spent on collaborative or group purchasing. To some extent it was believed that the benefits such as a consortium-based approach delivered would outweigh the competing benefits delivered by an issue fee.

> *That's the reason why we want to invite a trio of key staff from each institution to annual meetings. The institution leaders always want to have the best content and quality in order to provide better services. The library director is more or less responsible [for the quality of the library service]. However, the acquisition staff doesn't really care about that. When the three of them realise how a little money spent can bring substantial benefits, they will volunteer to join [the consortia].* (AM2)

One interviewee warned about a situation whereby vendors might exploit the influence of promotional offers or discounts to discourage individual libraries from joining group purchasing or licensing initiatives such as consortia. This is a challenge for consortia arrangements.

> *Actually, as a business, the biggest purpose of any supplier is to make profits from making sales. Suppliers definitely don't like the idea of library cooperation. Hence, they always try to approach individual libraries with promotional offers, discounts, etc. in order to make more sales and profits. This makes it difficult to form consortia. Therefore, people in charge of library consortia should realise this strategy is used by the vendors and emphasise to potential members the practical benefits it will bring if they cooperate.* (LM4)

6.3.5. Democratic principles and mutual respect

In addition to the primary issues covered by the interview question such as initiation, finance, legislation and administration, responsibility and benefits, there were a number of related issues raised by interviewees that may also influence the future development of academic library consortia in Vietnam.

Consortial arrangements are obviously collective efforts in nature to which all members contribute. Strong consensus or unanimity among member libraries is likely to be achieved only where a sense of democracy and respect is established and maintained. As a manager of a consortium asserted, '*principles of a consortium are consensus, volunteering and responsibility*'. A number of interviewees raised this matter and gave examples taken from the practice of current associations as lessons for future consortia performance. Several interviewees cited a case whereby a consortium leader had made decisions relevant to the operation of the consortium without discussion or consultation with other members as an example of the lack of democracy that could result in member discontent, and may even result in resignations from committees or executive positions.

> *This is perhaps one of the factors contributing to the disagreement among members in the association. People assume that there is no democracy. Actually, not many are committed members, so we should listen to their voice. We can show them where they are wrong if this is the case. I see no need for serious conflict in the library field.* (LM1)

> *After joining the association we can see that many issues are now all decided by a few members on the Executive Board. From time to time, they call for meetings just to discuss something and no plans for upcoming activities are mentioned. We were informed only by a pro forma announcement after everything is done, or as Mrs. X said: "I have not been informed of anything". That is the feeling that members in the Executive Board like me have had, and people are not happy about that. . . . Everything should have been discussed [among all members of the Executive Board] as a matter of principle. In the next term conference, I won't engage in the Executive Board any more since we have never been asked for our opinion although we are members of the Board.* (LM2)

The sense that there is a lack of democratic decision making and respect for other consortium members can lead to and explain a lack of enthusiasm among some members. One interviewee frankly expressed a strong opinion that respect for other consortium members was a must and that it was not always present.

> *To attract people to a consortium, besides the problems of the parent institution and levels of authority, members in the consortium must have a*

spirit of cooperation and respectfulness. . . . It is a pity to say that some dedicated people are not willing to contribute since they don't want to be puppets. (LM2)

The relationship of members in consortia must be based on mutual respect that is given to the initiators or leaders by members and members also receive the same level of respect in return. Similar levels of regard should also exist between members of a consortium.

Although the matters of democratic decision making and mutual respect were not a concern of all interviewees, they were raised by several as a pressing matter and as a result of their own negative experience. It is necessary to consider these atmospherics around the style of management as an important issue for the performance of consortia.

6.3.6. Equity and equality

It is worth noting that in the context of the current consortium in Vietnam, the sense of equity and equality was interpreted differently by interviewees. On one hand, an interviewee from the group of association managers claimed that 'equality', in the sense of all members being required to contribute equally to licensing costs could not be maintained in the initial stage of a consortial arrangement.

> *Libraries with better financial capacity are encouraged to contribute first. Smaller libraries with less finance can follow later. It can be difficult to ask everyone to contribute equally at once. That's the way Vietnam is.* (AM2)

According to this interviewee, larger or better financed libraries should contribute more. However, on the other hand he argued that the current consortium ensured equity in its arrangements in that smaller libraries were given the opportunity to join the consortium and to access valuable databases.

> *Furthermore, we ensure equity for members. I don't want to talk about equality which is dealt with by the law, equity in this context means people with better budget should contribute more. Larger libraries must be more responsible for the cost. They pay more, not necessarily because they use more, but because they have a larger budget and more students. We must categorise members and make people understand that larger libraries with more users will pay more not only for their usage but to help smaller units develop. The equity is maintained, and everyone is satisfied.* (AM2)

The English word 'equity' rather than the Vietnamese '*công bằng*' was used by the interviewee (AM2). He went on to explain that based on this contribution sharing

scheme, the core member (NASATI) should contribute 50% of the purchase costs; while libraries in the 'larger' or 'better financed' group contributed from 3% to 5%; and most other consortium members pay from 1% - 2%. According to AM2, cost sharing among members of the current consortium was allocated as the following.

> *Of 100,000 USD, we subsidised 50% and the rest was divided for other members to pay. The other two 'richest', the Institute of Science and the National University [the Vietnam National University – Hanoi] shared a larger amount. The Learning Resource Centres and other institutions that have the capacity contributed a large amount. The National University in Hanoi pays 99.5 million VND [approximately 5,000 USD]. Other libraries pay 40 million VND. Cost applied for newly established universities, only 19.5 million VND.* (AM2)

This interviewee, AM2, also expressed the opinion that all members were satisfied with the way the current consortium approached the matter of financial contributions. However, other interviewees expressed different opinions on this matter. One interviewee from the group of library directors argued that there was currently a mismatch between responsibilities and benefits to members, and he proposed a scheme by which members would receive benefits according to their level of contribution.

> *The responsibility is to pay money, but now some units pay less than the others. . . . Sometimes responsibilities and benefits contradict with each other. For example, if you pay 1%, you have the right to use 30% or 40%. If you pay 2%, you can use 60% or 70%. If you pay more, you are allowed to use all.* (LM1)

Additionally, having commented on the cost sharing arrangements of the consortium this interviewee warned of potential inequity and conflict between partners and emphasised the necessity to find a suitable new scheme for distributing the costs and drawing benefits. LM1 described the situation from the views of members who contribute more than the others.

> *In the case of this consortium, although you pay 1% only, you still can use 100%. Somehow, this may encourage members facing financial difficulty, but it is easy to make others envious. . . . We have to think about an appropriate solution which ensures the interests of participants. In other words, there must be distinction among gold members, silver members and others. At least members paying more must be differently treated from those paying less.* (LM1)

This interviewee further stated his reaction to one of the consortium arrangements as *'not to participate [in one of the activities organised by the consortium] as a way of showing my disagreement'*. Another interviewee (LM6) presented the views of

members who paid less and pointed out potential concern about inequity in cooperative relationships for those larger libraries that owned substantial resources.

> *In cooperative relationship, there remains a fear of inequality in sharing which comes from the local interests and possessive thinking. People don't want to be at a disadvantage if they happen to possess a larger amount of information resources.* (LM6)

6.3.7. Suitable types and services of library consortia

Interviewees in both groups were asked what types of consortia they thought would be of the most benefit to academic libraries generally in Vietnam, and which types would most benefit their own library.

According to several interviewees, groups of academic libraries that had similar subject focus in their collections might establish consortia for purchasing resources. One interviewee from the group of association managers affirmed that consortium types were currently concerned with user needs, and proposed the need for consortia based on disciplinary affiliations.

> *I believe any types of consortium that best meet users' demand will have good reasons to exist. Therefore, beside a consortium for sharing resources at national level, there might be consortia grouping libraries according to their majors, subjects such as economics, natural sciences or banking.* (AM2)

Another interviewee from the group of library directors shared a similar view with AM2 and suggested a future for Vietnamese academic library consortia based around institutions and libraries with similar disciplinary affiliations.

> *Actually, now in Vietnam there is only one consortium for group purchasing [VLC] and I still don't know much about models applied elsewhere. If there are consortia in Vietnam, a group of agriculture institutions, or forestry and fishery institutions, or a group of economics institutions, or polytechnic institutions, may have their own consortium for purchasing materials in the same fields and use the same resources or cooperate to build up a union catalogue with the same standards, software and IT support.* (LM1)

LM6 suggested that both disciplinary affiliations and regional factors could be considered for types of consortia.

> *We may set up consortia for groups of university libraries that have similar demand because of their similar curricula and resources. We can group libraries by subjects or by geographic areas. For instance, we can group those in Ho Chi Minh City or in the South.* (LM6)

An association manager interviewee further supported this idea of establishing consortia for groups of four or five academic libraries that might have common

discipline needs in resources and services. However, this interviewee argued that it is not necessary to form consortia by regions especially when there exists a consortium [the VLC] at national level that encompasses all types of libraries.

I think it's a good idea to establish consortia for groups of academic libraries having similar subjects or demand. First, we create a consortium for many libraries then four or five libraries find themselves to be fully capable of forming consortia to share particular resources. They can start that way. . . . In Vietnam there is no need to have consortia by location because the internet is rapidly developing, so geography is not really an issue. When there is a consortium for the whole country, what is the good of northern and southern consortia? (AM2)

An interviewee from the group of library managers, LM3 expressed the view that discipline-based consortia would be useful to maximise library resources and reduce costs in purchasing materials.

Library consortia by subject specialisation such as Medical, Law, etc. will bring most advantages for university libraries in sharing their distinctive resources, which makes each university and its library stronger, and avoids overlap purchasing and therefore saves costs. (LM3)

A contrary view was put by LM2 who asserted that geographic characteristics should be considered when establishing consortia, as regional consortia would save costs and effort for member libraries. This interviewee suggested that consortia should be positioned within the chapters of the VLA.

Should there be small consortia, they can be ones belonging to chapters or local branches of the Vietnam Library Association. Vietnam is geographically divided into three regions. These are the North, the Centre and the South. There are two academic library associations belonging to the Vietnam Library Association, the Northern and Southern Academic Library Associations, but there are no association for Central Vietnam which causes a loose relationship among these libraries. If units in the Central area can be grouped together and located in the middle, that will help save the cost of travelling. It will also be much easier for us to share resources in that way thanks to the common characteristics of each region. (LM2)

LM4 expressed a view in favour of a type of consortium that would include a wide range of library services, and not just function as a 'buying club' for a single database. He believed that when libraries fully cooperate in consortia they have more opportunities to develop their library and its services.

A library consortium should cooperate in all aspects, not only in individual areas. At present, the National Agency for Science and Technology Information is operating on the basis of buying one database. Members only contribute their part of the shared cost of the database. This is not a good idea. A consortium needs to be in full cooperation. This means everything can

be shared, from the services and collections to knowledge. That way, all libraries can improve. (LM4)

LM4 also suggested an approach to establishing future consortia, which was to start with a small core of members then increase membership later. This interviewee further suggested a model of support among consortial members as a strategy to develop library consortia in the circumstances where the level of development among libraries was unequal and some libraries were underdeveloped.

> *The initiator should build the consortium on a small scale before expanding. For example, HCMC National University which has already set up a connection with its member universities can invite Can Tho University and some other universities to take part in it. One or two large libraries can't coach five or six small institutions at once. It's difficult to start too big. However, two large libraries should help one small one. The small one will develop gradually then these two big ones will move to the next stage. This model may work. However, there is a need to determine the real capacity of each library. Actually, the government budget is not big enough to cover for the whole library system.* (LM4)

This could be a practical approach for dealing with the current situation of academic libraries in Vietnam where funding from the government is limited and there can be a significant disparity between the size of libraries and their access to resources.

Interviewees were asked to provide their thoughts on the services and activities academic library consortia should organise and provide on behalf of members. One interviewee stated that her library had resigned their consortia membership and so she had no ideas about activities and services that might suit her library. Other interviewees described a wide range of services and activities regarding sharing information resources.

> *Cooperate in purchasing materials including the electronic and print resources to avoid duplication and reinforce resources that an individual library has, as well as to improve interlibrary loan service. There needs to be standardised user services by setting up common policies about fees, user privileges and responsibilities, and a common library card for users of library members of a consortium. Setting up a consortium for group purchasing electronic resources should be a special focus because electronic resources will require a large amount of money if libraries purchase them individually.* (LM3)

The group purchasing of electronic resources was heavily favoured by almost all interviewees. LM2, LM5 and LM6 had common views on sharing electronic resources and institutional resources.

Group purchasing electronic resources is of great importance now. . . . It is good to buy electronic resources together. (LM2)

I think that a consortium for sharing electronic resources or institutional resources will best suit our library. (LM6)

Sharing of electronic resources and institutional resources should be done first. My university is in favour of this type of consortium. When providing resources to users from other institutions, we lose nothing, and we also get the advantage of marketing for our institution. (LM5)

One interviewee suggested that a union catalogue should be created as a common search interface to encourage users of consortia member libraries to utilise shared resources and services.

It's necessary to set up a union catalogue for users to search and locate documents so they can come and borrow in person or make a request through interlibrary loan services. The operation will run much more quickly and smoothly so more time and energy will be saved. (LM6)

Similarly, LM2 believed that *'bibliographic record sharing will help save time and human labour'*, and also pointed out the emphasis needed to be on electronic rather than print resources when it came to cooperative acquisitions.

Group purchasing electronic resources is of great importance now. The purchase of print items is not so important. It is good buying the electronic resources together. Currently, libraries are not cooperating in buying printed resources. (LM2)

Interviewees were ambivalent on this question of whether or not consortia should undertake the cooperative purchase of print material. On one hand several interviewees stated that consortia should organise group purchasing of print materials, but on the other hand they asserted that it was impossible for various reasons such as the limitation in quantity of library materials, the complexity of administrative procedures, or potential disadvantages in borrowing and lending process.

There has not been a consortium for sharing print resources. I think that in the future, we should promote the sharing of printed resources. At the moment, a consortium for sharing print resources can be quite impossible because libraries lack resources and rely too heavily on institutional administrative procedures. (LM6)

Printed materials have not been cooperatively bought and shared because people find it inconvenient with group purchasing that may make certain items available in one place but not in other places and it should take too much time for users to borrow and get them delivered. Other libraries do not actively cooperate, except for libraries that belong to the Vietnam National Universities because they are under a single institution and are required to collaborate. (LM4)

An interviewee from the North confirmed that there were no arrangements for group purchasing of print materials in that region of the country. This interviewee could not account for the unavailability of group purchasing print materials, although it had once been proposed and implemented by the Northern Academic Library Association in circumstances that ensured the benefits of member libraries were safeguarded.

> *We don't have any types of consortia that work closely together. Nowhere do libraries buy print materials together. Once a publisher suggested the association [Northern Academic Library Association] should introduce a scheme and encourage libraries to buy books together. The publisher still pays the university their percentage of commission and extracts a certain amount to pay the association for its encouraging people to buy books. Yet eventually, this method failed to be maintained. It can be claimed that at the moment we can see nowhere in the North buying books together.* (LM1)

LM5 suggested consortia organising to buy out-of-date books at the cheapest possible rate as a mechanism to attract members.

> *Vietnam doesn't have any consortium for purchasing print materials. Some publishers have advised that libraries should share the purchase of out-of-date books in order to obtain them at the cheapest rate. Extra copies of these books are available and publishers can sell them at a cheap price. These on-sale books will only bring more benefits without affecting any rights. If the consortia do the same, it will certainly achieve the best offer.* (LM5)

Interlibrary loan, a very obvious, popular and widely used form of cooperation implemented in many countries was described by interviewees as a necessary service in order to share resources. In the survey results reported in Chapter 5, 58 out of 100 respondents (Table 5.29) replied that their libraries wished to offer this kind of service to their users and to consortia members.

> *Here it's not only limited to the so-called Consortium of Purchasing Electronic Resources, but it is also related to library activities. For instance, interlibrary loan is also needed, and so is the sharing of information resources, particularly the institutional resources of those units themselves, and linking together to serve their users.* (AM1)

However, even with such an established service such as inter library lending interviewees pointed to a number of constraints and shortcomings that impacted upon the development of these services for Vietnamese academic libraries. Among the familiar problems raised were the lack of resources, the discrepancy between libraries and their differing capacity to play a role in the network, and the failure of various forms of regulation and governance to create the appropriate environment.

> *We may do interlibrary loan, but the mechanism for borrowing and lending has not been created. This issue has been planned to be put into the law*

regulating libraries, and we can only solve the problem when this issue is properly regulated by law. Only when it is supported by law do institutional leaders support it. There are issues of shipping cost, time-frame, even item loss, etc. (AM1)

Interlibrary loan may be impossible as institution's leaders do not provide support. Besides, what form of loan to apply, with or without charge, and what if the loan is provided in only one direction are matters of concern. Those things have been a problem for some time but still remain unsolved. (LM1)

According to interviewees, there are various perceived difficulties to be overcome in order for consortia to organise interlibrary lending services, although some indicated a very cautious and risk-averse approach to the service, such as concern over the loss of books.

However, trying to get support for inter-lending among libraries when it raises issues related to facilities, resources and even human implications, is obviously difficult since the university executive's approval is required. In fact, some books in the library can be available for loan, but people just do not want to share. . . . Secondly, the cost for doing interlibrary loans is a growing matter. For example, the books loaned are sent by post or the people in charge have to come directly to the other library to borrow. What if a loss of the item occurs? Those things are still under discussion and there are a lot of disadvantages. As a result, people do not concentrate on finding a solution yet. (LM1)

The fear of loss of books and the slow delivery time resulting from the poor quality of postal services in Vietnam were noted by several interviewees as yet another frustration to libraries in implementing interlibrary lending.

There are many risks including the user's lack of responsibility. Postal service is not very reliable so it's difficult to attribute responsibilities. Many people want to propose the establishment of a consortium as simple as interlibrary loan, however it's still impractical. (AM2)

LM4 described a range of disadvantages of interlibrary loan arrangements associated with the cost, time and efforts that consortia members must invest in this service. He suggested, however, that advances in digital technology and the changing circumstances of library users were making traditional forms of interlibrary lending redundant.

Interlibrary loan should be only for rare materials because we are now living in a technology age. It's now a flat world, and people prefer sharing electronic documents to printed ones because it absolutely comes with more advantages. It probably takes a few months for printed documents to be mailed, or a week to be photocopied but two or three days is impossible for everything to be done. Nowadays, living conditions are more or less improved. Students with better finance can afford to buy books from bookstores or they can find anything they need from the Internet. Therefore borrowing books through interlibrary loan is not that effective anymore. (LM4)

As interlibrary loan was claimed to be difficult to implement for reasons including the loss of items that were purchased and then subsequently not returned or damaged, LM5 suggested that interlibrary loan should be restricted to donated books, since this type of resource had incurred no direct purchase cost and was therefore not subjected to the same level of monitoring.

> *Donated books should be taken into account for sharing in a consortium to maximise the usage that will surely meet donors' expectation. As donors always expect their donation to be used effectively, this is important in obtaining further funding. Donated books can be shared because they weren't purchased from the institutional funds. We should focus on this and start from here. Donors certainly welcome this sharing of donated items and institutions will not complain as they are not paying for the materials, perhaps only a part of shipping cost. Besides sharing electronic resources, sharing donated books is a good idea.* (LM5)

Despite the various problems that were described in the interlibrary loan-based sharing of print items, a number of interviewees did express their enthusiasm for sharing material collections once they were available in a digital form.

> *Each member should build up its own digital collection to put on the shared portal in order to create the Vietnamese database for university libraries.* (LM2)
>
> *At the present, digitised collections can be connected. They are fast, convenient and ready to serve readers as soon as they are connected.* (AM1)

Interviewees believed digital resources included potentially unique content that would bring considerable benefit to users of educational libraries.

> *Especially for the university library system, sharing of institutional resources is very important because their users are faculties and students whose interests are education and doing research. Because of the importance of these activities, its products - the institutional resources - become invaluable as they can't be purchased elsewhere in the market. This is a speciality. Sharing these kinds of resources will be very useful for users.* (LM6)

Several interviewees (AM2, LM5 and LM6) claimed that reference services would also benefit within the context of a consortium.

> *Reference service is very important because it can help users to search and locate information resources from consortium member libraries. People don't know what a library does besides checking in and checking out books. Therefore a consortium can implement reference service.* (LM5)

The point was made by LM1 that the consortium currently did not engage in training and the general development of library staff and services. It was suggested that conferences, workshops and other forms of training courses offer substantial potential benefit given the current underdeveloped circumstances of Vietnamese

academic libraries whereby even the most basic training was needed in many institutions.

> *Our current consortium [activities] is so lax in that it does not often organise conferences, workshops or training courses for members. Training courses need to be practical because many libraries, for example, still have no idea about basic services like providing open stacks for users. At the moment, our activities are still restricted to these fundamental issues, and fail to reach a higher level.* (LM1)

Another interviewee in the group of library managers pointed to the coverage of content and the quality of this type of training provided by consortia.

> *Consortium activities should be more diversified. Conference themes and topics should be more in-depth. More attention should be paid to the contents of the conferences in order to make them more effective.* (LM6)

Several interviewees suggested organising courses on information literacy for library users as a way to promote and optimise the use of library services.

> *We have organised information literacy training classes to introduce databases to every faculty and school. Not many places are able to organise such classes to improve the skill of users of these products for their better use.* (LM4)

> *If possible, libraries [in a consortium] should organise courses on 'information literacy' to instruct users how to search for their needed documents in our library and others, how to do scientific research, and how to use the reference collections. This course should be held for many libraries not only one or two. At the moment, institutions often separately organise workshops inviting Mr A and Mr B to present certain topics. Why don't consortium organise those for all members and charge a small fee to use for the consortium's activities.* (LM5)

One interviewee offered an idea of cooperation in creating library subject guides for common use within a consortium, and that these could even be used in 'marketing each other'.

> *It is possible to share information provision services. Providing information for doing research is one example. If medicine is your strong point, let's prepare subject guides on medical or healthcare service, or agriculture and economics. Libraries can also collaborate in training, marketing one another.* (LM2)

6.4.   Obstacles for consortia

As has been noted throughout this thesis, academic libraries in Vietnam are faced with a number of challenges in initiating and maintaining consortia. Interviewees were therefore given the opportunity to respond to a question that sought their

opinions on the nature and extent of the challenges that might inhibit the introduction of future consortia.

6.4.1. Budget shortfalls

Financial issues were asserted by most of interviewees as being a major obstacle that prevented their libraries from being involved in consortial arrangements. There was a paradox in this response, as libraries in other countries have typically engaged with consortia in order to address budget cuts, whereas librarians in Vietnam argue that budget shortages had, or would, limit their library's participation in consortia.

As interviewees were quick to point out, however, in order to join a consortium for purchasing resources, libraries must have a sufficient start-up budget, but the situation in Vietnam is such that many libraries cannot afford even a comparatively small contribution of USD 5,000 or USD 7,000 per year that is required if they are to join the VLC.

> *Libraries joining consortia have to be able to ensure their long-term financial capacity. Now it is very hard to ask participating units to pay 5,000 US dollars or 7,000 US dollars to buy databases, for they just can afford 1,000 US dollars or 2,000 US dollars at the most. . . . Universities are in need of these databases, but they do not have much money.* (LM1)

It is the case that Vietnamese libraries are facing persistent budget shortfalls while their expenditure on resources and other library operations are increasing rapidly. It is therefore not unexpected that one of the most frequently cited reasons for the lack of cooperative arrangements or consortia (or indeed any new initiative that might deflect the focus on their most pressing and immediate needs) among the library community in Vietnam are the financial barriers. An interviewee noted that adequate financing was the most difficult issue for libraries in Vietnam, and that one of the few ways of addressing the problem was to rely upon aid 'projects' (*dự án*) that are the result of government or foreign sponsorship of identified areas of need chosen for their potential to bring benefits to the community.

> *Financial sources are always the most difficult problem to be solved in Vietnam. Usually institutions which want to buy foreign databases must have projects, but such projects only last three years at the most. As a result, the problem of finance is very critical to library consortia in Vietnam.* (LM1)

Looking at this financial challenge from the point-of-view of NASATI, the core member of the VLC, there was a similar view. Although NASATI has covered a

major part of the purchase cost and other libraries joining VLC only contribute a comparatively small amount of the cost of the one jointly purchased database, libraries still could not fulfil their financial undertaking.

> *Eventually, money collected was enough to pay for the databases. Last year money was collected in full but the year before was not. We fulfilled our share of 50% but IGROUP [the supplier] was struggling with chasing the debts for the rest of the money. Everybody fell behind with their payment, paid late and didn't pay in full.* (AM2)

Although this shared cost might not be a big issue for some potential member libraries, it was still a considerable amount and a real difficulty for many other libraries because of their limited budgets. As an interviewee claimed:

> *[My library] pays 63 million [equivalent USD 3,000] each year for their share. This is not so big an amount of money but it is a big amount of money in terms of our annual budget. Not many libraries can constantly afford their share.* (LM4)

This interviewee asserted that the process is also complicated by the various institutional management structures that impact upon the efficient distribution of available funds. The complications arising from inadequate management structures and administrative processes added greatly to the difficulties created by the financial obstacles.

> *In fact, Vietnam Library Consortium is still facing many financial difficulties because not all institutions have money [to pay for a shared cost]. Many depend on provincial committees for their funds. The province's institutions and ministry's institutions have different budgets. For example, for an institution in a province under the provincial committee, the funding must go through a very long process. . . In most provinces universities most likely have to prepare an annual budget proposal and then must wait to see if they can get the money.* (LM4)

This problem with internal administrative processes consequently caused inconsistent and unpredictable allocation of funds to libraries. Furthermore, libraries' annual budgets provided by government or their parent institutions was so constrained that it could result in their reluctance to make a financial commitment to a consortium. An interviewee explained the situation of his library which was facing a dearth of funds.

> *The amount of allocated funds for my library is limited. This limits us in cooperation with other libraries. . . For recent cooperation [referring to VLC] in purchasing one online database [each library] contributed at least 20 million [less than USD 1,000]. My library is allocated with 100 million annually. If we spend 30 million on this, we have only 70 million left.* (LM5)

Interviewees confirmed that financial shortages was a '*common drawback*' (LM2) and an ongoing problem for libraries (LM6), with a representative of even one of the better resourced libraries noting that '*finance is the only matter for my library*' (LM1).

The problems resulting from a lack of finances extended not only to consortia formed for the acquisition of electronic content, but also to more generalised forms of cooperation such as professional associations. Although the amount of money required to pay for annual membership of an association is comparatively small, several libraries could not afford the amount required. As a leader of one such professional association described:

> *Years ago, the fee [membership fee of an association] was only one million Vietnam Dong but they refused to pay because there was no money or their dean didn't allow them to. The library kept begging: "I asked for the money [to pay for membership] but he kept saying no". We could not say that "if he doesn't, I could not let you join the association"* (LM1)

For secure long term participation in consortia or professional associations, libraries would need to establish a stable fund to cover the cost of their joint purchasing or membership. Interviewees demonstrated a good understanding that the benefits of collaborative purchasing through a consortium would be apparent once the financial barriers preventing initial participation are removed.

> *Finance is also an essential prerequisite. If we had a lot of money, we could buy many databases, which would enable participating members to enjoy lots of benefits.* (LM2)

Another interviewee expressed a similar view regarding the necessity of sufficient and reliable financial support from parent institutions, stressing that it was only with investment that the library would be in a position to deliver the benefits of consortium based purchasing.

> *The financial source of the consortium must be stable and sufficient to maintain their sustainability. Currently most libraries are operating with allocated funds from their parent institutions. Some university libraries exploit the fund from World Bank for Higher Education Projects. The institution must provide the library with a stable budget, not only for its regular operation but also to enable it to spend its own funds on the consortium. In order to share the electronic databases, which are very expensive, we need a considerable budget without which we can't cooperate with other libraries.* (LM6)

Although libraries were aware of the importance of having stable and adequate budgets to cover their shared purchase costs in a consortium, their current budgets

were consistently described as insufficient to meet the cost of expensive online databases.

> *As wealthy as the Vietnam National University Library is, or even if we had 10 times as much [money], it still doesn't suffice [to acquire online databases].* (AM2)

As annual budgets continue to be insufficient, libraries could not expect any major improvement in their prospects for initiating or joining consortia. Some interviewees described the use of external sponsorship to buy more locally licensed and offered electronic resources (LM2) and to conduct regular library operations (LM4), but these funding sources were often short term and therefore did not allow for long term commitments to be made. As one library manager indicated, genuine development depended on a commitment from the Vietnamese government to fund parent institutions and supplement other irregular sources of funds.

> *With the current circumstance in Vietnam, using the funding collected for libraries' activities it is quite difficult to maintain and develop libraries. Accordingly, there is a need to call for investment from both the government and the universities, to frequently set up extra activities which return income, to search for projects and join them, and particularly to cast around for sponsorships from domestic and international organisations. . . . It is a feature of our country that the government and officials expressed little concern for libraries and have therefore made inadequate investment. In addition, there is an objective reason that universities have so many elements that need investment. It is agreed that investment for libraries is essential, but universities prioritise many other matters which are said to be more important. As a result, libraries themselves have to seek extra project funding and investment from the outside to enhance their activities.* (LM3)

It was also pointed out, however, that foreign investment could be used to help establish consortia, with an interviewee from the association managers describinghow*'We used foreign sponsorship to kick start'* (AM2) the current consortium. Another interviewee proposed a solution for a shortage of funds that relied on a separate source of money, possibly from with government that was earmarked for collaborative higher education licensing of digital content.

> *There should be an organisation that can act as a pioneer and initiator, such as the Ministry of Education, to initiate a consortium grouping all the universities under their system, and allocate a budget aside from those allocated separately directly to university libraries for the purchase of shared electronic database.* (LM6)

Although there have been considerable efforts made by the leader and the members of the VLC, the amount of money contributed for joint purchasing could only buy one online database. Therefore, it can be said that financial shortages remain a big

issue for libraries in Vietnam, and that these shortages continue to deter the development of new consortia.

6.4.2. Administrative and legal problems

It was also claimed by interviewees that Vietnamese academic libraries experience administrative or managerial prohibitions that deter or prevent external collaborations. These obstacles were described as affecting both local service provision and the implementation of consortia arrangements.

Issues regarding the legal framework and governmental recognition and regulation of professional associations were described by one interviewee as a problem that disadvantaged associations.

> *It is our difficulty in terms of state mechanism and VLA has not confirmed its position and role. . . . At the moment there are 700 associations nationwide but only 28 of them which have paid salary positions, and with their finances and headquarters provided by the state. . . . Another difficulty is that VLA is just a professional association for which the government doesn't provide any official documents or recognition. The government's perception of democracy is in general quite superficial.* (AM1)

According to LM2, only a few university libraries have been granted administrative independence, with almost all such libraries remaining dependent on their institution for approval and permission before proceeding with major initiatives such as joining consortia.

> *For many libraries, if they want to join associations, they have to ask for permission. It is very difficult for libraries in our member universities to join an association. Almost all of our member libraries [in a regional institution] haven't been members of library associations. . . . Other libraries have to be dependent on many levels of authorities.* (LM2)

This interviewee (LM2) also argued that libraries encountered constant difficulties getting approval and support from parent institutions.

> *Libraries wish to join [consortia] but they may give up because their parent institution doesn't support them. There remain some other drawbacks such as complicated formalities and payments. The parent institutions saw no point in attending training courses or seminars. That cooperative culture and practice won't be improved without support from the parent institution. Librarians themselves cannot spend their pocket money on cooperative activities.* (LM2)

In this situation, some dependent libraries might encounter difficulties getting involved in consortial activities while other interviewees reported that their library does receive institutional support.

> *We are not an independent unit with our own seal and account. We have to ask for the institution's permission to appoint staff to take part in a consortium. The challenge is how to make it convincing enough. Generally, the board of rectors is very open and willing to provide support.* (LM4)

Administrative and legal issues were further obstacles interviewees reported in the development and implementation of consortia. One legal issue raised by several interviewees was the process of financial transactions in which libraries have to deal with the lack of understanding by Treasury staff and institutional accountants of the intangible (digital) form of many contemporary information products.

> *Legal problems are also important and are mainly related to the problem of payment and settlement. Libraries must be regular buyers of databases to be able to persuade the Treasury Department. They have to prove that the databases they want to acquire are online and that they will lose access to them after one year if they will not continue the subscription. It is not something which is tangible and can be stored as people usually think will be the case. It is very difficult for small libraries to explain such problems, and even if they can, the money transferring process is still complicated and delicate.* (LM1)

As this same interviewee, LM1, described, the financial matters became even more complicated as a result of the particular payment method that was adopted by the current consortium.

> *As for money transferring, the Treasury Department just knows that it is transferred to NASATI, while in fact NASATI has to buy databases from iGroup, Springer or somewhere. However, NASATI does not have the function of doing business. In some universities, the Department of Finance makes it more difficult when dealing with this matter because in reality, the money is sent to NASATI, which merely acts as an agent and has no sales department, while that money should have been paid to the seller. Once it is considered an intermediary agent or entrepreneur it can make the process complicated to a certain extent.* (LM1)

In situations where consortia members make payment to NASATI, they would need to provide an explanation to the local Treasury department. For these cases the Treasury requires tax invoices (receipts), which NASATI are not able to provide due to the legal status of the consortium. In the absence of a tax receipt the formalities of making payments through the Treasury become far more difficult and even impossible.

Another problem reported was the imposition of spending limits that might restrict the capacity of consortium members to make large, one-off payments. At the present, any purchase valued at 100 million VND (approximately 4,500 USD) or above

isrequired to be put out to tender. One of library manager interviewee described the situation:

> *The library regularly contributes to group purchasing every year. It was 5,000 US dollars in the previous time but it has been lowered to less than 100 million VND recently in order to avoid a tender, which is very complicated. The payment amount is therefore lower than 100 million VND since a larger amount would provoke a tender. Consortia purchasing cannot be tendered due to legal restrictions [on the rights of groups to engage in a tender].* (LM1)

Several interviewees claimed that the necessary processes and guidelines for organising or conducting specific procedures required of library consortia were deficient:

> *We can only solve the problem when it is properly regulated by law. Only when it is supported by law do institutional leaders support it. There are issues of shipping cost, time-frame, even item loss, etc.* (AM1)

The cause of legislation was extended to specific policies that consortia might need to develop and implement for their particular intra-consortial arrangements, such as interlibrary loan. This service was also claimed by another interviewee as being impossible to implement because of a range of difficulties that would cause libraries to hesitate to engage in this form of cooperation.

> *Another point is that in our law, the sanctions are not strict enough. People are willing to pay 5-10 times as much to have a book [they borrowed from another library]. If it's a normal book, then it could make sense, but what if that's the only one left in Vietnam, 5-10 or even 100 times as much can't be equal to its value. That's why libraries are afraid of lending. . . The simplest cooperation can't be done, so why would managers invest money on other things.* (AM2)

As a result, current cooperative arrangements remain at a very basic social, with an emphasis on social rather than professional engagement. As one interviewee stated:

> *Recently, some library associations were set up but mainly as a place for gathering and having fun, nothing involved in professional work, or creating the necessary legal ground, or legal framework. . . It's obviously a general problem for Vietnamese libraries and currently we are trying to provide the legal framework for library development.* (AM2)

Most interviewees therefore pointed out the various legal and administrative obstacles to consortia, but proposed no particular solutions beyond hoping that the forthcoming library regulation may provide some clarity.

6.4.3. Weak culture of cooperation

The prevailingundeveloped state of the culture of cooperation in Vietnam generally, and libraries in particular, is another big obstacle about which most interviewees expressed their concern. The broad concept of cooperation was not well-received among academic libraries in Vietnam and this factor was acknowledged by a majority of the survey respondents as one of the most apparent reasons for a lack of consortial arrangements. In order to investigate the cooperative culture in greater depth and to understand the extent to which it could affect future consortia development in Vietnam, an interview question was designed to gain a relevant response from interviewees in both groups. All interviewees answered this question including the interviewee who chose not to answer several other questions he thought were not relevant to his position or field of interest. Interviewees were well aware of the weak culture of cooperation among libraries and were openly critical of the current lack of cooperation.

Almost all interviewees confirmed that there was currently little cooperation and that the culture of cooperation was at a low level among academic libraries in Vietnam. It was also acknowledged that this definitely affected the potential development of library consortia.

> *The culture of cooperation in Vietnam is a big issue. The sense of noncooperation will for sure have an impact on the organisation and arrangements of library consortia.* (LM1)

> *In Vietnam, the culture of cooperation is not high, not only in the library field but also in other areas.* (LM4)

> *I totally agree that the Vietnamese culture of cooperation in many libraries is of very low level though it has experienced some improvements in recent years. In the past few years, cooperation among university libraries and their awareness about cooperation have been considerably enhanced.* (LM2)

Interviewees also recounted various stories about the failure to develop a culture of cooperation within the broader Vietnamese society. Some proverbs and idioms were used to illustrate ideas that interviewees wished to convey as a means of illustrating this perceived shortcoming. One such common saying is that *'one Vietnamese is strong but three are not as strong'*, which LM4 used to express a belief that non-cooperation is an obstacle for consortial arrangements.

Another interviewee discussed the spirit of solidarity that *used* to be a source of pride for Vietnamese people in the past. He considers that it is difficult to explain why there is now such a difference in this regard. The interviewee did suggest that perhaps people only cooperate when they are in a dire situation, having to cooperate in order to save their country or their own life.

> *The solidarity of Vietnamese in facing foreign aggression was amazing – that spirit of "we'd rather die all than living alone". People were highly aware of the sovereignty of the national independence, but their spirit of solidarity was very poor in educational and cultural activities. Perhaps, all that tradition and survival energy was devoted to the Patriotic War, in protecting the nation, then not much energy was left for other causes.* (AM2)

Another interviewee discussed aspects of Vietnamese traditional life that were believed to have an influence on the population's thought and work, and therefore influenced their approach to cooperation between libraries. He emphasised that traditionally Vietnam has been regarded as having an economy based on small agricultural and family based holdings in villages or rural wards. This interviewee cited several popular idioms regarding individualism and localism to support his argument, and further noted that these characteristics had affected the VLA's activities and would definitely affect consortia arrangements between libraries.

> *The subjective reason is the main one, which originates from librarians themselves, as most of them came from rural areas. People in the North have a saying "just play your own drum and worship your own village's saint" or similarly "grow rice in your own field only", so there is no cooperation with each other. Since the old days people have had such a closed-door thought, and now this style is still applied in the workplace. . . . This characteristic is stronger amongst Northern people, and I can see that this characteristic is clearly reflected in the association's activities. It will inevitably affect activities in consortia, in sharing resources, in connecting information networks, in interlibrary loan, in exchanging experience and ideas, in purchasing electronic material, and even in gathering and networking among libraries in different regions of the country.* (AM1)

A dominant element in the responses with regard to cooperation was the strong sense of local autonomy and individualism that was identified by almost all interviewees. Several interviewees indicated that it underpinned the attitudes of library directors or other library staff at senior management levels.

> *A viewpoint of local autonomy is popular in Vietnam. Libraries operate separately, locally and keep their resources for their own use. It can be seen that in Vietnam, local interest or separate operation tend to be preferred.* (LM4)

> *I agree that the culture of cooperation is not popular in Vietnam, and this certainly affects a great deal regarding the establishment of library consortia.*

. . . Many library leaders still persist in private ownership keeping what they possess for themselves and don't want to share with the wider community. Such thought results in a very local approach to library services which only serve users from their home institution (LM6)

Some interviewees mentioned that government ministries only support their directly administered libraries and that there is almost no cooperation between the several relevant ministries. As libraries are not encouraged to contribute to common or shared activities, it would be quite difficult for libraries to get involved in an enhanced degree of cooperative arrangements, such as consortia, when administrative processes were not designed to support cooperation.

Every ministry will focus on their own libraries therefore it's difficult if we rely upon the ministry to provide support for a consortium. There is no such thing as making a contribution for shared or common use. Even within the Ministry of Education and Training, people may also encounter difficulties because there are many types of institutions, public, private, national, regional institutions, etc. The local autonomy at ministry and department level is quite highly valued which contributes to administrative obstacles. Libraries depend a great deal on their home ministry or department. . . . The current association or cooperation between libraries is mainly based on top-down administration so its effectiveness is rather limited. (AM2)

One of the difficult challenges was, as described previously, the current management and practice cultures that did not favour cooperation. As a result failings in the administrative relationships and processes could be another major issue to be faced when organising and managing consortia.

This association has to overcome administrative obstacle which is quite difficult within a ministry and even more difficult between ministries. The matter is how to overcome this inter-ministry [rivalry] so that libraries can cooperate. Every ministry will focus only on their own libraries; therefore it's difficult to develop consortia because there is no Ministry with overall responsibility. There is no such thing as making a contribution for shared or common use. (AM2)

Other interviewees expressed a similar view that there was a lack of cooperation between ministries which resulted in limited opportunitiesfor libraries to cooperate: *'At a senior level, there is no cooperation among the ministries, let alone the libraries'* (LM2). It was claimed that this situation is similar in some other areas: *'the culture of cooperation is not high, not only in the library field but also others. Even ministries' policies are not unified'* (LM4).

At the level of libraries the importance given to local autonomy was reflected in libraries electing to keep resources unshared, as was noted by LM1, LM4, LM7 and LM6:

> *It's really difficult to establish consortia because as I can see now everyone just wants to keep their resources for their own use.* (LM7)

> *Their sense of autonomy makes them independent, diligent and industrious that can be considered strong points of the Vietnamese, but at the same time it causes people to be locally focused. . . . Such thought results in a very local approach to library services which only serve users from their home institution.* (LM6)

> *Interlibrary loan, when discussed, provokes some disagreements. In the first place is the mechanism, which requires the Dean's approval. In fact, some books in the library are available for loan, but people just do not want to share.* (LM1)

LM2 expressed a similar idea and also described the careful guarding of locally held collections.

> *In Vietnam, if a library builds up its own collection, it is for sure that no one wants to share the full texts, maybe just the abstracts, as they just want to keep it for themselves. . . . Every library needs to change the perception of keeping resources for its own use to that of sharing.* (LM2)

LM6 confirmed that non-cooperation that results as librarians spurn opportunities for cooperation in favour of protecting their own resources.

> *Another obstacle is that there is no close cooperation among academic libraries. The sense of localism still exists among library leaders as does the lack of mutual trust between libraries with regard to information distribution.* (LM6)

This interviewee also argued that librarians were reluctant to enter into cooperative relationships that might result in their library contributing more than that provided by other libraries. She concluded that the emphasis on local interest was the principle obstacle for the initiation and maintenance of consortia.

> *In cooperative relationship, there remains a fear of inequality in sharing resources which comes from the local interests and possessive thinking. . . . The biggest obstacle that makes it difficult to maintain academic library consortia in Vietnam is the thought and the perception in favour of local interest that institution leaders and library managers happen to possess.* (LM6)

Interviewees also discussed particular characteristics and behaviours that were said to typify the poor culture of cooperation. They listed some negative traits that were embedded in daily Vietnamese life, including the workplace, particularly regarding some current relationships between libraries and the other members of professional

associations to which they belong. AM2, for example, pointed out the negative aspect of individualism and conceded that this as a common characteristic of many Vietnamese people today. It is interesting that not too far in the past, Vietnamese people usually spoke about collectivism as a philosophy associated with communism, but nowadays many people are in favour of a more individualistic approach to political, social and business relationships.

> *In Vietnam people just mind their own business. Our adaptability is amazing, but community cooperation is very poor. This is our national characteristic at the current time, so libraries are not an exception. People want to do their best individually to be recognised, not as part of a consortium or in a community.* (AM2)

Interviewees pointed to evidence indicating the current weaknesses in library cooperation were reflected in conflict and rivalry between individuals who were supposedly cooperating. They reported on the often individualistic approaches taken by librarians that they believe in turn influence the way institutions and libraries responded to cooperative initiatives. LM1 provided several examples about a conflict between two individuals from two organisations, or conflicts between some other people in the workplace, as examples of poor cooperation which was a result of negative traits such as envy, jealousy, arrogance or competitiveness.

> *We can easily find many people with that character in daily life. In fact, the lack of cooperation is due to many reasons. People want to control others, want to be the best or to be completely independent and rarely support someone else to be the leader. This stage [the conflict is ongoing] seriously reveals the lack of cooperation between the two. This is typical of the two agencies and the two managers and in the meantime this is particularly common in Vietnam because of the lack of cooperation and sense of community. In our two associations members are very often in conflict. Those conflicts are partly caused by certain characteristics, such as not being familiar with the concept of cooperation and, to be straightforward, by a certainenvy. This is apart from some larger libraries that are far more respected than others or those that are clearly at an advantage.* (LM1)

Another aspect that resulted in a weak culture of cooperation was that individuals are more likely to be in favour of private ownership, or attracted by personal benefits, without regard for the common or community benefit. Therefore, a collaborative arrangement will not be reached (or attempted) until such time as personal benefits are satisfied.

> *In Vietnam, people find it difficult to be unanimous on an issue when they enter discussion. Under discussion, it can be seen that cooperation brings a lot of benefits, but some still want to operate privately to gain their own benefits.*

> *People are attracted by the thought of private ownership which will involve the lure of money and promotion.* (AM1)

One interviewee expressed a different view by arguing that while cooperation was not popular or widely practiced among many institutions, libraries were often willing to cooperate. He asserted that in so far as they failed to cooperate it was because they lacked the authorisation from their parent institutions and did not know how to go about establishing cooperative relationships.

> *Libraries actually wish to cooperate. Libraries are more than willing to join consortia, but they are not authorised. The matter doesn't rest with libraries themselves but on the institution's leaders. It's likely that the institution's leaders are neither convinced nor understand the situation while libraries are willing to cooperate. However, libraries haven't figured out how to do it. They all want their libraries to have electronic resources but the implementation seems to fail due to lack of specific guidance and instruction. In every meeting, I can see that they are all keen to join in the consortium, shake hands and agree to cooperate and share the electronic information resources. They don't seem to know what to do with this though they just express it as a wish.* (LM5)

Interviewees cited a number of particular reasons that resulted in this lack of cooperation. These reasons might simply be, as described by LM6, that libraries are not willing to do more work or to serve more users if they were to join consortia.

> *The unpopularity of cooperation could be the fear of responsibility and work. Instead of being willing to offer service to more users, they don't want to do more work and serve those they are not required to.* (LM6)

Another interviewee described how the extent of cooperation varied from region to region in Vietnam because people in different regions had different characteristics, including different approaches to working cooperatively. According to this interviewee both historical circumstances and natural conditions had shaped regional characteristics that it turn were manifested in the way individuals related in the workplace.

> *I find that people in different regions have different characteristics, and those living in the South are quite different. I think the cooperation is quickly formed and more widely spread in the Southern region. The market mechanism appeared there earlier. Moreover, the need of exchange, which results from the natural condition with a lot of rivers and field land, makes people more dependent on each other than those in the North. In contrast, people in the North are less open to working together.* (AM1)

As these various responses indicate, the lack of a culture of cooperation was identified as one of the major obstacles that limited libraries from participating in consortia. It could be difficult and required considerable time and effort to overcome

this inherent constraint. Being aware of the issue, interviewees suggested some measures to improve the situation, such as the parent institutions intervening on behalf of their library and promoting the benefits of cooperation.

> *In order to improve the situation, it is necessary that the parent institutions are concerned and raise their voice.* (LM2)

After a lengthy discussion illustrated with several relevant stories about cooperative practices in Vietnam, LM1 concluded that the lack of cooperation 'remains an unsolved matter' for libraries and library consortia.

> *In brief, the culture of cooperation remains an unsolved matter. Not many universities have leaders who are concerned about their libraries. In order to set up some common activities, there should be at least a number of libraries participating because only a few cannot bring about any significant change.* (LM1)

Other suggestions for improving the culture of cooperation included raising librarians' awareness of the benefits of sharing, gaining further support from libraries' home institutions, and applying technologies to support cooperative library services.

> *In my opinion, a certain policy and a viable strategy made by the parent institutions are required in order to perform effective cooperation. Information technology can be applied to provide bettershared services. Every library needs to change the perception of keeping resources for its own use to that of a sharing spirit. . . Consortium members must have the spirit of cooperation and respectfulness.* (LM2)
>
> *Change the library leaders' perception and thinking by holding workshops to discuss such issues or organise study tours to visit advanced libraries in the country or abroad.* (LM6)

Unlike other interviewees who offered particular suggestions as part of their discussion on the issue of cooperation, one library manager admitted that she could not offer any means by which the current situation could be improved, but her comment was still a suggestion for additional cooperation.

> *I haven't figured out any solutions to improve such a situation. I myself alone can't make any difference. In my opinion, unless all the leaders of all libraries agree to get around a negotiating table, a solution won't come about. People have discussed about this for a long time. I have found myself helpless in such a situation.* (LM7)

6.4.4. Resource inequality between libraries

As noted in previous discussion, an endemic lack of resources was frequently noted as a difficulty that prevented libraries from taking part in consortia. A particular

aspect of this issue that was raised in the interviews was the degree of inequality that exists between libraries, as those libraries that have more resources will normally expect equitable expenditure in a cooperative relationship. It appears that when becoming involved in such partnerships librarians are well aware of matters of equality and equity with regard to the input of resources. LM6 noted that '*there remains a fear of inequality in sharing resources*', while LM5 expressed a similar view that indicated a hesitancy to enter partnerships with better resourced libraries.

> *The first difficulty is that my library has few institutional resources. The amount of allocated funds for my library is limited. This limits us in our cooperation with other libraries. For instance if we cooperate with you, I'm sure that you will ask what is it that I can offer.* (LM5)

As one library manager's response pointed out, it is a fact of developing countries that such development is spread unequally, and that there are significant disparities that exist between libraries that inhibit cooperation. More developed libraries may be seen to hindering their own further development if they commit resources to supporting those that are in a less fortunate situation.

> *It requires an equal level of development if libraries are to associate. It would be easier if libraries joining consortia are at the same level of development. Our libraries, on the contrary have various levels of development. Some are strongly developing; some are just beginning to develop, while others are much slower in getting started. It may be too difficult and overwhelming for a few stronger libraries to drag the whole system. This is the biggest problem in setting up library consortia for libraries in Vietnam.* (LM4)

Another interviewee, LM2, argued that the inequalities are an issue for development of consortia: 'Another issue that should be taken into account is the unequal level of development among libraries in terms of infrastructure, staff and application of standard'. The issue of inequalities between libraries was also raised by the survey respondents as a disincentive for library cooperation (Section 5.4.5, Chapter 5).

6.4.5. Lack of support from parent institutions and ministries

It is difficult to determine the precise level or nature of support librarians expect from the government and their parent institutions because although interviewees frequently raised the lack of governmental and institutional support as one of difficulties for libraries in general, their comments were often made without specific detail.

Interviewees raised a lack of support from parent institutions and ministries as one of difficulties that some academic libraries were facing. LM4 stated that *'not all university leaders are concerned about libraries'*. LM3 and LM6 shared a similar view.

> *Libraries have not received adequate concern from the government and leaders at upper levels.* (LM3)

> *Universities have different level of concern about library activities, not all institutions [libraries] receive proper concern from their leaders and managers.* (LM6)

As LM2 stated, the lack of support from home institutions or the fact that libraries have little or no influence over governmental agencies limited libraries in their desire to foster cooperation.

> *Our approach to governmental agencies has had no effect. There's inadequate support from the government or the parent institution.* (LM2)

One interviewee described the situation of Vietnamese academic libraries that were under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism but not their home ministry, the Ministry of Education and Training, and how this resulted in a perception of negligence on the part of both Ministries.

> *Lately, due to conditions within the ministry libraries weren't paid enough attention. But we see that the Ministry of Culture is still more suitable because the other ministries are overwhelmed at the moment . . . . Where academic libraries are administered by government is not as important as how they are administered. This is most important. If it is still under the control of the Ministry of Culture, then it requires much more attention.* (AM2)

The problems appeared to arise from the situation whereby college and university libraries received no attention or direct support from the parent ministry of their own institutions due to a lack of a properly responsible unit.

> *MOET is the most irresponsible ministry in regard to this issue [libraries]. . . . There has been no unit responsible for libraries and it was normally assigned to the publishing house which might act as both a player and a referee. It governs and does business at the same time. After that it was passed to the Department of Student Affairs and then to the Department of Properties and Equipment. It means the responsibility is continuously transferred from one place to another . . .* (AM1)

Another interviewee supported the argument that a lack of support from the parent institutions and ministries prevented or limited libraries from participating in consortia, arguing in effect that the necessary leadership was not being received from within government.

The Ministry of Education and Training is one example. There was only one time this ministry held a conference for the university libraries in 2003 and henceforth, no any other conference has been held though their common saying is 'library is the heart of the university'. . . I have attended several professional training courses held by the Vietnam Academic Library Association and the Ministry of Science and Technology, but seen no sign of something similar from the Ministry of Education and Training. How could we unite academic libraries together and call for cooperation while library associations were left alone to manage everything? They [MOET] didn't even come to sit in the meetings they are invited to. . . . Libraries wish to join [consortia] but they may give up because their parent institution doesn't support them. (LM2)

LM2's comments draw attention to the fact that the line of authority for academic libraries is potentially confusing for libraries and users alike, with the Ministry of Culture, Sport and Tourism being the ministry with direct authority over libraries, while MOET has responsibility for institutions of higher education.

Another interviewee shared similar views with LM2 and AM1 about the MOET's responses to library activities, also pointing out as LM2 had their failure to attend important meetings.

Take the case of the Northern Academic Library Association which was established by the Ministry of Education and Training; however, they [MOET] paid no attention to this organisation since no departments are responsible for managing it. When they were invited to meetings, they even did not attend. Everyone just complained with one another that they were not concerned at all. They didn't know who we were. (LM1)

The reason for this situation might be explained as academic libraries were not included as an area of responsibilities assigned in the missions and functions of the MOET but under the control of the MCST as AM2 described earlier in this section.

Several interviewees conceded that the dependent status of libraries within larger institutions disadvantages them when it comes to participating in consortia.

It's difficult to start a consortium directly with libraries because they are not decision makers. I am not the person who can decide whether or not to join a consortium. I am only responsible for my immediate professional area. Permission has to be given by my higher management levels. (LM5)

Libraries wish to join [consortia] but they may give up because their parent institution doesn't support them. (LM2)

6.4.6. Further disincentives to joining library consortia

Although all interviewees confirmed the positive impacts of consortia, a number also noted some drawbacks associated with disadvantages for libraries that were apparent

from the experience of knowledge of the current consortium. In particular it was suggested that the products acquired by the current consortium, databases of academic content in languages other than Vietnamese, were not currently in high demand. Interviewees claimed that the usage of databases purchased by the current consortium was not high, as English is the heavily dominant language of the databases.

> *[My library] has been taking part in the consortium, but it has achieved few benefits and it participates in them with little hope. . . . It would be more practical if we had used that sum of money to buy print documents or domestic materials. When we ask some people to know why such a situation exists, they frankly say that the language barrier is the main cause of the problem.* (AM1)

> *Databases are mainly in English, and there are almost no databases in Vietnamese to provide for teachers, and they have a low level of proficiency in English.* (LM2)

In addition to the predominance of English, other reasons given for low usage of databases included that users were not sufficiently familiar with databases and have little or no time to do research, or even have no need for scholarly materials of the type provided. For those reasons, libraries preferred to purchase print materials that are in Vietnamese.

> *We buy books, not the databases [electronic resources] because our student's and staff's English level is not good enough to use the databases. . . . Yet in other universities, even their top researchers rarely use them due to many reasons, including their level of English and being too occupied with their own business. Not everyone has the conditions to invest their time and money into research because this requires a stable financial situation and other factors or at least they are engaging in some topic. In other cases, those who lead a normal life like a teacher or even a professor does not have the demand for such type of materials.* (LM1)

> *Our leader will definitely question who and how many people can use such database as it's in English. Mainly teachers can use it while the proportion of library users is that 90% are students, and teachers account for only 10%. The number of teachers visiting the library only made up 20- 30% in the whole university. Whereas, students facing a language [English] barrier might not be able to use this database, and as a result, databases in English language won't be considered as a priority.* (LM5)

It is obviously a challenging situation as libraries are participating in a consortium and finding it ineffective. Clearly this would provide little incentive for exploring the possibility for joining other consortia, or for recommending consortia to colleagues. Several interviewees went so far as to assert that the purchased databases were rarely useful and even '*considered to be decoration*'.

There would be insufficient [content] if we stop buying online databases, but this current buying on the contrary results in too much and it may not be used. Resources in the latter case are considered to be decoration and are not having much impact. (LM1)

One interviewee even made an interesting comparison of the current situation of libraries that purchase an online database with an ancient Vietnamese fable of Quynh which is similar to the classic tale of "The Emperor's New Clothes" by Hans Christian Andersen.

This case is similar to Quynh showing off his new clothes. Since the reason for our case is that we have already bought the materials and this is somehow beneficial in terms of the library's materials and spirit, and it is financially supported by the state so people all praise such a purchase. But when I asked those who praised the purchase, they all admit that in their case they receive very little direct benefit. Even at a place of high reading level like this, that still happens. So the same situation must exist at other institutions having lower reading level. (AM1)

As with other issues raised in the interviews, one participant pointed out a difficulty facing the implementation of consortial arrangements as being associated with the characteristics of the Vietnamese people.

One of the characteristics of Vietnamese is to wait and see. Our inertness is very heavy. For example, in a ballroom usually our Vietnamese just like to watch first. The first reason is that we don't dance. The second is that we didn't learn dancing methodically, so we are afraid of taking the first step to the stage. This characteristic also applies to this case of consortia. People will wait to see whether the others contribute or not. And, practically they will have a long time to come to terms with issues regarding money. (AM2)

Interviewees viewed it a disadvantage of consortia that consortial activities were simply not attractive to their members as LM2 noted '*The low level of cooperation is partially because of no innovative activity*'. And, as another interviewee claimed, even when libraries have joined the current consortium they have often done so without a clear sense of purpose or motivation, but simply because it is available.

The activities of the current consortium are not effective, so participants simply follow the trend without expectation of specific benefits or any knowledge or understanding of consortia. They just followed purposelessly. (LM4)

A final disincentive that was noted was the lack of information about and experience in organising and participating in consortia.

Besides, I think that a reason that leads to failure of consortia can be a lack of information and experience make libraries reluctant or hesitate to participate. They may not be aware of the benefits and responsibilities of being a member of consortia. (LM6)

6.5.   Success factors of future library consortia

The final interview question was intended to seek ideas regarding factors influencing the success or failure of future library consortia. The interviewees were asked whether they thought that academic library consortia would be successfully established in Vietnam. The question also sought interviewees' thoughts on what they perceived to be the most important factors for the success (or non-success) of consortia.

The nine interviewees responded to the question with quite diverse views regarding the possibilities for the successful development and implementation of academic library consortia in the country. Apart from one interviewee, who did not advocate the establishment of academic library consortia, all other interviewees discussed the possibilities regarding the future for Vietnamese consortia. Interviewees also suggested some solutions for libraries to overcome the potential obstacles. The suggestions focused primarily on raising awareness of library cooperation and consortia; gaining more support from libraries' parent institutions and ministries; seeking external support in terms of finance, and organising more practical activities.

6.5.1. Delivery of practical benefits to libraries

The interviewees placed great emphasis on the benefits that consortia need to be able to deliver for members. They stressed that these benefits should be practical if they were to provide sufficient justification for the existence of consortia.

One interviewee stated that consortial arrangements for academic libraries would be an inevitable development reflecting the international trend whereby libraries collaborated for the benefit of both libraries and their users.

> *In the not too distant future, a consortium of academic libraries in Vietnam is an inevitable trend in order to deal with the difficulties and challenges in fulfilling the customers' demand for information, whereas libraries do not have the potential to do this by themselves. Many countries all over the world have successfully organised and proved the advantages of creating such library consortia and the individual participants benefit as well.* (LM3)

A number of interviewees expressed a belief that successful consortial arrangements were possible once members achieved benefits by focusing on and delivering practical outcomes.

I am sure that library consortia in Vietnam will be successful if and only if they are built on mutual benefits, responsibilities and specific implementation plans. They can't just exist in theory, where we get together to talk about some topics and then go back to our own way of operation. Libraries should undertake practical cooperation. . . . That's the way to make them [consortia] work properly. Don't just sit and talk. Only practical actions make success. (LM4)

In discussions regarding factors impacting upon the success or lack of success of consortia, interviewees expressed both their concerns about the factors that were currently preventing the development of consortia, while also suggesting several measures that would assist future consortia. It appeared that impressing potential members with the likely benefits to be derived from consortia was the most important factor that would influence the future uptake of membership, with seven out of nine interviewees mentioning the matter in some form. For example, as AM2 commented:

The reason why the existing consortium attracted much attention was due to the benefits it may bring. Once people can see the benefit they will join. There are groups of people with the same interests, who will experience the same benefit from working together in the long term. . . . Everyone likes to benefit. (AM2)

LM1 expressed a similar view, arguing that librarians would participate in consortia only if they could receive particular and quantifiable benefits in return for their investment.

That so-called dedication must be accompanied with real benefits. Without clear benefits, it may interest no one. . . . When they join the consortium which can be a bit time-consuming and they have to pay a fee, but at least it brings them some benefits after all. Without that, the consortium will collapse. (LM1*)*

It was argued that appreciation of benefits will be made obvious by the direct observation of libraries that are members of existing consortia.

They [potential members] need to see the effectiveness. That's necessary, and there's no better way to do that but let them see actual libraries [in consortia]. It is like you recommend a certain site where people can see how effectively group purchasing resources or service provision partnerships could work and then invite other libraries to come and witness the results. I think it will be very effective if you do it that way. (AM1)

LM2 also asserted that consortia would be successfully established once they actually delivered observable benefits to their members.

The reason for success lies in the fact that it [the consortium] brings benefits to individual libraries. (LM2)

LM4's comments emphasised the significance of the benefit factor as he discussed the need to clearly determine what advantages consortia members would receive.

> *The core importance is how to highlight the benefit participants will receive, and how this benefit is gained from their responsibilities and duties within the consortia. . . . Generally, roles and duties should be clearly assigned so as to see mutual benefits of participation. . . . The matter is we should help people to realise the benefit of participating and for them being a responsible member. Even if we can call on their participation, the consortium would turn out to be not effective if the duties, activities, and benefits are not clearly defined.* (LM4)

Expressing a similar view to that of other interviewees, LM5 discussed how the benefits of consortia should be impressed upon senior managers and staff at institutional levels as well.

> *First of all, we need to understand what benefits it [a consortium] will bring for its participants. . . . Rectors and managing boards will need to see the benefits before making up their mind on whether to take part in consortia. . . . Responsibility sharing in a consortium should be designed to bring the most benefit, at least a financial benefit. This factor is the most important. Secondly, it's supposed to serve a large number of users. These benefits for the users should be listed specifically.* (LM5*)*

It appeared that future consortia would need to provide very specific, practical benefits to their members so that they could attract libraries to participate, or as LM6 stated '*Once people can perceive these benefits, they will take part without hesitation*'.

An interviewee who supported the idea of establishing consortia for academic libraries also identified the potential to build consortia with partners from outside academic libraries. According to AM2, there were sufficient common interests that libraries share that meant they could benefit from collaborating outside the academic or tertiary education sector.

> *I think it's a good idea to establish consortia for groups of academic libraries having similar subjects or demand. . . . It's not necessary to set up an academic library consortium. It can be different types of libraries with common interests.* (AM2)

6.5.2. Qualified leaders and skilled and supportive staff

Another factor raised by a number of interviewees regarding the future arrangements for consortia was the importance of the role played by the leaders or managers. Two

interviewees (AM1 and LM7) expressed a very similar view in arguing that dedicated and effective leadership was critical for effective consortia.

> *However, whether a consortium can be maintained or not depends on the leader. He must put his devotion to it, and care for it.* (AM1)

> *Being successful or not depends on a consortium's leadership board who should be able to draw up specific implementation plans, activities, and guidelines on how to perform efficiently.* (LM7)

AM2 specifically discussed the important role played by the consortia leader in negotiating with government to underwrite the costs associated with consortia.

> *At the moment, we need to convince the Ministry [of Science and Technology] that there needs to be a key unit covering a major part of the shared cost of operating the consortium.* (AM2)

Library directors are usually committed to leadership roles and unable to personally handle the daily tasks associated with consortia activity, and therefore they need to appoint qualified staff to do these tasks. However, as LM1 claimed, this would be a difficult matter as few suitable staff are available to take on such tasks due to the inadequate resourcing for emerging professional roles.

> *Directors don't do the tasks alone. They are dependent on their staff because contacting with libraries is a time-consuming process. How people work together is another matter. . . . In summary, human resources are the most difficult problem. There are no permanent staffs because no one provides a salary for them.* (LM1)

An interviewee from a private institution again took up the subject of leadership in the context of initiation, suggesting that consortia could only be established if there was an initiator prepared to take the lead role, and if support staff were available to prioritise the work of the consortium. This interviewee also suggested that it was important for consortia to arrange for proper planning and reporting mechanisms.

> *It's possible. Start from the easiest and assign some leading libraries to initiate consortia, organise regular reports and define clearly the plans, rights and responsibilities of all parties. Working for the consortium should be a full-time job but not a part time one.* (LM5)

It was also pointed out that the support of librarians generally was important to maintaining consortia, and that enthusiastic staff were needed to promote consortial activity to both institutions and library users.

> *It can't be denied that some of library staffsare not proactive enough to introduce consortial activities to library users. When users are not well-informed about what library has, they can't use library resources effectively. If libraries and their users find that library services are not improved or*

> *libraries resources do not meet their needs they will gradually leave consortia. This is a common situation in most universities not only our own library.* (LM6)

It should also be noted that unlike other forms of cooperation such as library associations which might depend to some extent on voluntary labour (such as that provided by retired librarians) a consortium is fully dependent on staff time and expertise provided by currently employed staff.

6.5.3. Increased awareness of consortia

In the current situation in Vietnam where there is a perceived (and real) lack of cooperative arrangements, it is important to improve each individual's perception of consortia. Several interviewees reported that it was necessary to raise people's awareness in order to change their attitude towards cooperation and consortia.

In order to gain an insight into particular approaches that several current organisations had experienced, the two association managers were separately asked what issues they had faced in organising and managing an association or consortium. Both interviewees shared their perceived success stories while noting that they had to surmount various obstacles on the way to achieving eventual success. AM2 described various difficulties in initiating an association, and one of those was encouraging participants to have adequate awareness and take responsibility for common arrangements.

> *It can be said that the first steps are always difficult. Behind the process is our long term effort. It's hard to get people's recognition for the benefit of participation. . . . The second is to make a start. Just getting started in the Vietnamese way is quite difficult.* (AM2)

AM2 also suggested that '*in order to improve the situation, we need to work on people's awareness*' in general, while a library manager interviewee was more specific with her related suggestion that:

> *Our leaders need to change their thinking, outlook and perception about service provision. Their service should be open for other libraries in the community.* (LM6)

The other interviewee in the association manager group, AM1 provided a similar view on the current lack of awareness.

The difficulty we are facing up to now is people's awareness. After participating in the association, they still do not know what it is about and what it does. (AM1)

AM1 strongly asserted that the best approach to furthering the cause of cooperation was to raise librarian's levels of awareness. This interviewee illustrated his belief in people's willingness to associate with each other by drawing an analogy with the connections between computers, although also highlighting a difference in that humans have a choice in the matter, but one that is currently being exercised without enthusiasm.

There's no better way to promote cooperation than to raise people's awareness, but how? As far as I know, the best response we are getting now is that people do not object to cooperation. If computers can connect with each other, human beings certainly can do that. They do not object to cooperating, but they need to see the effectiveness. (AM1)

6.5.4. Strategic plans and procedures

Three interviewees expressed similar views on the possibilities for successful consortia if they were well organised with specific plans and effective actions.

I am sure that library consortia in Vietnam will be successful if and only if they are built on mutual benefits, responsibilities and specific implementation plans. (LM4)

Start from the easiest . . . organise regular reports and define clearly the plans, rights and responsibilities of all parties. (LM5)

Being successful or not depends on a consortium's leader and board who should be able to draw a specific implementation plans, activities, and how to perform efficiently. (LM7)

However, this final interviewee warned that it was a difficult process in Vietnam for people to cooperate to this extent and to accept that they can learn from others.

I think it can be successful. Currently there are many people working in the library field who are fully capable of doing this; however, only the enthusiast can make success. . . . I think it's a good idea [to form consortia]; we can learn and share our experience. However, in Vietnam, sitting together and learning from one another can be quite hard. I think it's quite difficult. (LM7)

Another interviewee who has extensive experience participating in different professional associations listed a range of issues that consortia would need to consider in order to ensure they were supported. For this interviewee, however, underlying many of the more technical and organisational issues, there also remained a fundamental matter of attitude, whereby participants remained committed to local interests and priorities ahead of the interests of the consortium.

First of all, there need to be legal documents which define clearly all participants' rights, obligations, responsibilities and level of cooperation. Secondly, our leaders need to change their thinking, outlook and perspective on service, their service should be open for the community.

[Thirdly], it's also important to have a stable and adequate budget, sufficient facilities, and online databases to ensure their participation. (LM6)

LM4 expressed some optimism that libraries were just beginning to appreciate the benefits of consortia and would implement them accordingly, but they would also need to find a way of improving the benefits delivered by the current consortium.

Everything has a process that needs to be followed, and developed countries are not exceptions. They must have passed through this process and faced the same difficulties along the way. Vietnam is now on its way, following the process, and gradually forming its library consortia. In my opinion, it's just the beginning. (LM4)

6.6. Possibilities of success for future library consortia

Although most interviewees were generally positive, they also expressed different views on the likely success of future library consortia. Their answers reveal a belief that the success of future consortia would be dependent on certain conditions.

I think it's possible to establish and maintain library consortia; however, maintenance of such consortia is not easy at all. It will depend on many conditions and needs to overcome both quantitative and qualitative obstacles. (LM6)

It's possible. Start from the easiest and assign some leading libraries to initiate this consortium, organise regular reports and define clearly the plans, rights and responsibilities of all parties. (LM5)

I am sure that the library consortia in Vietnam will be successful if and only if they are built on mutual benefits, responsibilities and specific implementation plans. (LM4)

Another interviewee commented that it would be possible to set up consortia and achieve success, but also raised questions about the extent of that success.

Organising a consortium is possible and there has been one already. . . . I believe that we can establish consortia successfully, but to a certain extent. (LM1)

This interviewee went on to discuss the poor economic conditions as being an obstacle that would prevent libraries from becoming involved in consortia even though some other factors might be favourable for their establishment.

I think that with our current conditions it is quite difficult to have a consortium. It might be necessary, but getting the resources to organise and

successfully run it is an uphill task. Even if there is one qualified person with a high reputation taking the role as a leader, will he have enough time to concentrate on this? Life is full of hardship in Vietnam. If they can put aside their concerns about food and clothing, I think people will make efforts to do such great things for the society or in their own professional interest. However, they are always under pressure because life is so hard and people will therefore rarely do something for the community without gaining any practical benefits for themselves. I think the economic condition is one of the decisive factors in Vietnam. It is not because people do not know how to work together, but it doesn't happen because of the difficulties. (LM1)

LM2 held different opinions from those offered by other interviewees, suggesting that new consortia, if they are established, should be placed under the direction of the Vietnamese Library Association. Her view on this issue was not in favour of the establishment of independent consortia which she argued might contribute further to the current situation whereby there aremany independent libraries that fail to cooperate.

It will be very difficult if we establish small consortia and therefore should instead set up chapters to join the Vietnamese Library Association. Hence, it is better to have branches under the Vietnamese Library Association of Southern Academic Libraries so that our voice is more likely to be heard and it is easier to attract foreign sponsorships. . . . If each region has its own consortium working separately, there will be no relation and unity among one another at all. In Vietnam, the awareness of the benefits of cooperation is at a very low level. We had better not to set up any new consortia although they are very popular in other countries. (LM2)

Although most of interviewees claimed that it would be possible to establish and maintain consortia, behind their discussions there was an acknowledgement of the range of difficulties that were faced in a developing country without an established tradition of cross-institutional collaboration. One interviewee who has experience as both a library manager and association director concluded that libraries will face different challenges depending on their local circumstances.

It is the fact that different places may have their own different drawbacks. I understand the real situation as I am in fact the one who has been working with the [library] association continuously and for quite a long time. (LM1)

One interviewee from the group of association managers who was experiencing, or at least witnessing, various kinds of hardship in the establishment and operation of current professional associations, affirmed his belief in the possibilities that library consortia could be formed successfully. He added suggestions for changing the structure and expanding the scope of future consortia beyond the focus on the

cooperative acquisition of electronic databases that dominated the work of the current consortium.

> *I believe we can [develop consortia] and it is a must that we do so. Yet, the expansion is not limited to consortium for purchasing electronic resources. And, the way of organisation should be changed, similarly to the current chapters of the association [VLA].* (AM1)

AM1 called upon his own experience in establishing a professional association in order to refer to the extent of the challenges in creating successful cooperative endeavours between and for Vietnamese librarians.

> *VLA is the one that was established as a mark and with my great passion. I myself had to experience all kinds of hardships to set up this association.* (AM1)

AM1 also concluded that consortia could be created in Vietnam if there was a firm commitment and decisive action.

> *We could not have one [a consortium] if we don't take strong actions. We are completely able to set one up.* (AM1)

Another association manager, AM2 did not offer a direct comment on whether future library consortia would succeed or not, but also related the experience of an unsuccessful consortium that suffered from a failure of leadership and funding.

> *There was a consortium in Vietnam – the Consortium for Economics Libraries – which was unsuccessful. In a magazine of the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications, there is a report of this consortium. But currently this consortium is not operating any longer because it didn't have a leader or contributors. This was built by a library provider to sell their database. When there are funded projects, it is supported by database providers; if it is not funded, then it will collapse, and as a result, the Consortium couldn't be maintained.* (AM2)

Both association managers therefore shared their practical experience gained from the process of establishing and managing the current associations, and their opinions appear to reflect some concern that the establishment of consortia focused on the joint licensing of digital content may impact negatively on the future of those associations.

Although most of interviewees claimed that it would be possible to establish and maintain library consortia, behind their discussions there was an acknowledgement of the range of difficulties that were faced in a developing country that lacks an established tradition of cross-institutional collaboration or broadly-based cooperative endeavour.

6.7. Chapter summary

This chapter draws together a variety of aspects regarding library cooperation and consortia from the viewpoints of Vietnamese academic librarians. The chapter has found that libraries value the impacts of library cooperation and consortia. Libraries are concerned about a number of potential issues regarding consortial arrangements that include the roles and qualifications of library consortia initiators and leaders; the importance of adequate financing; establishment of a reliable legal basis for the development and implementation of library consortia; a democratic and respectful environment for consortia members; a sense of equity and equality among members; and a reconciliation between responsibilities and benefits for members. Librarians also recognise a number of obstacles for library cooperation and consortia that consist of the current shortfalls in library budgets; a weak culture of cooperation; the failure to develop a supportive administrative and legal environment; a dearth of potential initiators and leaders who can commit to consortia; and the unequal level of development among libraries.

The findings also suggest there are a number of additional factors that will be important for future library consortia. These include: ensuring there are sufficient practical benefits; ensuring consortia are supported by qualified, experienced leaders and skilled and supportive staff; adequate knowledge and information regarding the wider adoption of consortia as a standard means of libraries doing business; and stable and sufficient budgets that are efficiently administered .

Interviewees indicated a generally positive attitude towards library consortia, and expressed a belief that they have an important part to play in the future development of the Vietnamese higher education and research sectors if the above conditions are met and perceived obstacles are overcome.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1. Introduction

This study has been conducted in order to address the primary research question: Are library consortia suited as a means of cooperation by Vietnamese academic libraries, and if so, how can they be successfully developed and implemented?

The purpose of this Chapter is to discuss the major findings of this study in the light of that research question, and based upon the evidence gathered and presented in the preceding chapters. In doing so it discusses potential issues for the adoption of library consortia in the context of Vietnamese academic libraries and offers a number of recommendations for the successful development and implementation of consortia in Vietnam.

The discussion and recommendations in this Chapter also addresses the sub-questions that shaped the research: What does the current state of library cooperation and consortia among academic libraries in Vietnam suggest for an adoption of library consortia within this community? How can libraries overcome potential obstacles for consortia arrangements?

Underpinning the research was a belief that Vietnamese academic libraries have not as yet managed to adopt consortial activities as a necessary and standard means of operating in the contemporary scholarly information environment to the same extent as other countries, and that as a result their success in delivering high-quality and cost-effective academic library collections and services has been hindered. In response to the research sub-question, the survey results have confirmed the current cooperative and consortia arrangements among academic libraries and revealed that consortia can be a suitable means of cooperation by Vietnamese academic libraries. These results also suggest there are strong possibilities for future development of academic library consortia in Vietnam.

The development and implementation of future library consortia for and by Vietnamese academic libraries depend to a great extent upon how libraries can surmount various major obstacles and difficulties that have been identified through the findings of the interviews in this research. A number of the recommendations focus specifically on the key obstacles and suggest ways in which the Vietnamese library profession can work with related organisations and government agencies to provide an effective environment for consortia to flourish. Figure 7.1 attached at the end of this Chapter describes in diagrammatic form how the research question and sub-questions are addressed.

While the recommendations that are included in this Chapter have been specifically based on the Vietnamese data and circumstances, it is not claimed that Vietnam is alone in this regard. Many developing countries, supported by emerging economies and with higher education systems that are still in a comparatively early stage of transition and development, face similar challenges in accessing the technologies and infrastructure that are necessary for the highly developed forms of cooperation that underpin consortia-based library services. Therefore in addressing this issue with regard to Vietnam, and in attempting to create solutions that can resolve key problems, this research is also devising responses that may well have application in other developing countries. The findings of this study provide some evidence to consider whether or not the use of consortia by academic libraries could be a suitable means of cooperation and how consortia can be developed and implemented successfully. The recommendations made in this Chapter therefore focus on enabling the successful development and implementation of consortia.

7.2. Adoption of library consortia among Vietnamese academic libraries

Library consortia can be considered as a means of cooperation by Vietnamese academic libraries because the stakeholders have indicated their general awareness of, and described their current and likely future participation in, this, type of professional engagement. The current state of cooperative arrangements among Vietnamese academic libraries which was determined by the results of the survey indicate that while there is a perceived lack of current consortia arrangements, academic libraries nonetheless undertake cooperative activities in the form of

professional associations and societies. The survey results reveal that there is a positive association between the level of participation in professional associations and the level of indicated activity that libraries may perform in future consortia (see Table 5.35, Section 5.7). This is not a surprising result, as indicated by the other results of the survey that Vietnamese librarians perceive both the economic and psycho-social benefits of consortia membership (see Figure 5.9, Section 5.5.3 and Table 5.24, Section 5.5.6). The interview findings also consistently support the proposition that bringing benefits to libraries is the reason for consortia to exist (see Section 6.3.4, Chapter 6).

The practice of the Vietnamese Library Consortium (formerly the CPER) has established that academic libraries can potentially play an important role in consortia by providing the basis for membership and making a considerable contribution to the cost sharing among members. Of the 27 current members of VLC, 20 are academic (college or university) libraries (Vietnam Library Consortium, 2014). The interview data confirms that academic libraries, in particular several of the larger ones, are the key members of the VLC in terms of their active engagement with the management of the consortia and their contribution to the cost sharing. Vietnamese academic libraries have made the decision to join this consortium that is available to all libraries, but have not as yet moved to initiate consortia designed to cater specifically for the needs of the academic library sector, which provides highly specialised and targeted collections and services for all types of institutions serving the Vietnamese higher education system.

However, in providing for scholarly communities that require diverse, in-depth and multi-disciplinary information resources and services, it is no longer feasible that a single library serving a college or a university, no matter in whatever country it is located, will be able to meet all their users' needs. For this reason, academic libraries across the world have increasingly relied upon various forms of cooperation and collaboration. These cooperative efforts have increasingly extended beyond loosely affiliated networking or professional associations, and included the implementation of formalised consortia in their various manifestations as described in Chapter 3. Consortia have developed rapidly in many countries to meet the specific needs of academic libraries and a rapidly transforming scholarly publishing environment (Chapter 3, Section 3.3). As Allen and Hirshon acknowledged at the end of the

1990s, 'the most important development for academic libraries during the current decade has been the move from organisational self-sufficiency to a collaborative survival mode as personified by the growth of library consortia.' (1998, p. 36). Gorman and Cullen asserted at the same time, however, the failure of consortia to be implemented in developing Asian countries was threatening to hold back the quality of library services in those countries, and indeed the development of the professionalism of libraries more generally:

> Co-operation is an essential facet of modern library management in most Western countries, although as yet libraries in most Asian countries have not accepted it as normative. That this sort of activity has come of age in the West. . . . It is part of what constitutes the professionalism of librarianship: 'that libraries should be able to work co-operatively to find access to information in distant collections which is not available locally is a deeply rooted concept in librarianship'. (2000, p. 373)

Having lagged far behind libraries in many other countries, Vietnamese academic libraries may not devise any better form of cooperation than adopting and modifying practices that have been successful elsewhere, including consortia. Over a decade after Gorman & Cullen's comment, however, there is little indication that there has been widespread acceptance by Vietnamese academic librarians of consortia as they have been implemented in many other countries. A need for cooperation in purchasing foreign materials; building a full text database of Vietnamese documents, and acquiring scientific and technological documents and textbooks has been addressed by some Vietnamese librarians. Pham and Le (2006) have described in their paper titled 'Improving cooperation activities among library and information organisations', which was based on suggestions collected from the five libraries that responded to an official letter from the National Library of Vietnam calling for a conference on the matter. It has been almost ten years since this paper was published, in which time a limited cooperative arrangement for purchasing digital content has been provided by the VLC and a full text database of Vietnamese theses and dissertations has been promoted and implemented by the National Library of Vietnam. Other than these examples however, cooperation in the form of consortia to provide for the specific needs and interests of academic libraries has not eventuated. The findings of this study suggest, however, that there are nonetheless real possibilities for the implementation of consortia among Vietnamese academic libraries to make the use of benefits that consortia can bring to members.

Recommendation 1: Vietnamese academic libraries should form consortia in order to meet their shared interests, in particular the need to maximise library resources and content.

The evidence from the literature review (Section 3.6, Chapter 3), the survey (Table 5.20 and Table 5.24) and the interviews (Section 6.2) confirms that the respondents' and interviewees' appreciation of both the psycho-social benefits and the economic benefits of library consortia. In order to enable the development of this form of cooperation, academic libraries need to take some approaches that will probably require substantial vision and effort. As an interviewee from the group of association managers asserted:

> *It can be said that the first steps are always difficult ... Behind the process is our long term effort. It's hard to get people's recognition for the benefit of participation ... The second is to make a start. Just getting started in the Vietnamese way is quite difficult.* (AM2)

While cooperation in general, and consortia in particular, can be used to provide a range of services, the current transformation to a digital information economy is increasingly putting the emphasis on cost-effective licensing and acquisition of digital content. Consortia have emerged internationally as a preferred model for 'doing business' in the digital information economy in order for libraries to maximise content and minimise cost. While this issue of acquiring scholarly information is certainly not straightforward for developing countries, particularly those such as Vietnam that still depend heavily on non-English languages, it is nonetheless recommended that developing consortia with a focus on the joint acquisition of digital content is in the best interests of future learning and research in the Vietnamese higher education sector.

The reasons for Vietnamese academic libraries to join library consortia indicated by the survey results (see Table 5.26, Chapter 5) are similar to those which motivated libraries in other countries to form their consortia as the reviews of literature presented (see Section 3.5, Chapter 3).

The findings of this study also indicate a number of issues that need to be considered in order to successfully develop and implement consortia.

7.2.1. Improving awareness of library consortia

While there was a perceived lack of consortial activity for and by academic libraries in Vietnam, the country's academic libraries have made some efforts to become involved in networking activities and other cooperative arrangements in the form of professional associations. This apparent openness to cooperation has not, however, been matched by a commitment to the forms of 'deep cooperation' that are practiced by consortia, and for at least some of the interviewees there was an apparent lack of knowledge regarding the forms of consortia that are commonly used in other countries, the types of content and services they deliver, or the savings they can potentially provide.

There is evidence from the current research that Vietnamese academic librarians are widely and acutely aware of the potential importance of consortia, but they have struggled to directly articulate those means of cooperation that will best suit their circumstances. Interviewees often pointed out a general belief that there are benefits to be had in consortia, and could describe the nature of those benefits in general terms (see Section 6.2, Chapter 6), but they did not indicate any real sense of urgency in the matter or describe either how their own library might become involved in consortia, or how Vietnamese academic libraries in general could best achieve this form of enhanced cooperation.

It is therefore, necessary to start improving professional awareness of the role and benefits of library consortia as they are now provided internationally. Several interviewees described the need to increase awareness of consortia as *'it is not just an issue of jointly buying material, but also the issue of raising awareness [of consortia activities]'* (LM2) and affirmed a belief that cooperation and consortia can be promoted by raising awareness of both the phenomenon of consortia and their associated benefits: '*There's no better way to promote cooperation than to raise people's awareness, but how? If computers can connect with each other, human beings certainly can do that'* (AM1).

Recommendation 2: Key professional associations should raise the awareness and recognition of the practical importance of library consortia in order to encourage academic libraries to confidently initiate and join consortia.

The VLC and the relevant professional associations can help improve awareness of consortia using multiple channels of communication such as conferences and workshops, websites and professional development events. This can be best achieved through a planned program of targeted communication and promotion rather than an occasional or sporadic usage of established communication channels.

The survey findings suggest that a lack of information is one of the reasons for the perceived lack of engagement in consortia by academic libraries in Vietnam (see Table 5.21 and Figure 5.11, Chapter 5). This issue was further raised by the survey respondents as one of the matters of concern in their suggestions for future development of academic libraries (see Table 5.32).

The interview data is consistent with the questionnaire data on this point, with both LM4 and LM6 from the group of seven library managers, advising that academic libraries need to be better informed about consortia if they are to be attracted to membership of future consortia. The interviewees described the lack of information and poor communication about consortial arrangements, with LM4 arguing that it resulted in little recognition of the achievements of the VLC, and LM6 claiming that if allowed to continue, this situation would contribute to the failure of future consortia (see Section 6.4.6). Another interviewee from the group of association managers asserted that *'after participating in the association, they still do not know what it is about and what it does'* (AM1) which implies that many association members might have little knowledge of their own association's activities (see Section 6.5.3).

Other evidence indicates that some respondents associate cooperative activities and benefits such as *Resource Sharing* and *Saving cost in purchasing*, and which in most countries would be the domain of consortia, as being associated in Vietnam with professional associations rather than consortia. This suggests there is confusion or lack of knowledge with some respondents regarding the different roles commonly undertaken by professional associations and consortia in other countries, and is also an indication of the extent to which professional associations in Vietnam have undertaken activities to remedy the lack of consortia. Therefore, further information about library consortia such as their roles, functions and benefits should be provided in order to establish a basis for future decision making.

Vietnamese academic libraries are unlikely to fully embrace contemporary forms of consortia until such time as library and information professionals can clearly distinguish the functions of professional associations from those of consortia, and the onus is on professional associations to promote consortia at the same time as they consolidate the forms of cooperation that are rightfully theirs.

7.2.2. Clarification of the concept of library consortia

The need to provide additional information about the concept and benefits of contemporary library consortia also raises the issue of the terminology used to identify consortia as a concept fundamentally different from other forms of library cooperation. As consortia have not been widely used in Vietnam, it has been speculated in previous discussion that the concept itself might not be familiar to many librarians, albeit the survey results indicated that 96% (see Section 5.5.1) of respondents reported their familiarity with the concept of '*library consortium'*. At least some of these 96% of respondents, however, apparently did not understand the concept or term correctly as expressed in the question, as other data in the survey revealed this confusion regarding the concept. For instance, more than a half (18 out of 35) of respondents claimed membership of consortia other than the VLC (Table 5.19, Section 5.5.2), but the names of the consortia they provided are in fact not consortia (in the sense that the term is now widely used and was intended to be understood for the purpose of the survey) but rather library and information professional associations or societies.

The respondents' confusion on this important point can be explained in part by the general lack of familiarity and experience with consortia in Vietnam, and in some cases by professional associations attempting to at least partly address the 'gap' left by the paucity of consortia. It is the case that Vietnamese academic libraries have not organised consortia (or a consortium) to meet the needs of this sector of the profession, but have joined instead the Vietnamese Library Consortium, a stand-alone consortium that serves all types of libraries (AM2, LM1 & LM6). The only major cooperative arrangements dedicated to academic libraries is in the form of two professional associations, the Northern Academic Library Association andthe Vietnamese Library Association for Southern Academic Libraries. Although these two associations are subsidiaries of the Vietnamese Library Association, an

association representing all types of libraries at the national level (Vietnam Library Association, 2014), they were established at least five years before the establishment of the VLA in 2006. Given the lack of consortia these professional associations had attempted (albeit without limited success) to establish basic cooperative functions that might in other countries be dealt with by consortia, such as group purchasing of print material or licensing of electronic products. Therefore due to this 'overlap' the distinction in the Vietnamese context between consortia and professional associations is not always clear-cut.

In addition, however, the use of the same Vietnamese term (*liên hiệp*) for both 'association' and 'consortium' has also very likely contributed to this confusion about the nature and the functions of associations and consortia, and to the confusion expressed by respondents to the survey. The use of this term to identify a consortium is not linguistically incorrect, as, the two terms *liên hiệp* and *liên hợp* have evolved to express almost identical meanings. One of the most commonly used dictionaries of the Vietnamese language defines the two terms differently but at the same time provides *liên hợp* as a synonym for *liên hiệp* when being used as verbs (N. Y. Nguyen, 1999). People are likely to use the two terms interchangeably in many cases; for example the phrases *Liên hiệp quốc* or *Liên hợp quốc* can both be used to describe a cooperative such as the United Nations. In the practice of Vietnamese libraries, formerly the term *liên hợp* was conventionally used in the case of *Liên hợp bổ sung nguồn tin điện tử* (Consortium for Purchasing Electronic Resources), and the term *liên hiệp* has been being used for the two current academic library associations – the *Liên hiệp Thư viện các trường Đại học phía Bắc* (the Northern Academic Library Association) and the *Liên hiệp Thư viện các trường đại học phía Nam* (the Federation of Southern Academic Library Association, which recently changed its English form to the Vietnamese Library Association of Southern Academic Libraries and changed its Vietnamese name to *Liên chi hội Thư viện đại học phía Nam* to indicate that it is a chapter under the VLA). In addition the Vietnamese name of the VLC was recently changed to *Liên hiệp thư viện Việt Nam về nguồn tin điện tử* (Liên hiệp Thư viện Việt Nam [VLC], 2015), substituting the term *liên hiệp* for *liên hợp*. In some official correspondence of the VLC, the two terms were also being used interchangeably. Therefore it is likely that the practice of using these two terms

without distinction has caused confusion not only amongst survey respondents, but indeed the library profession more generally.

Recommendation 3: A distinctively identifying word or phrase should be developed to indicate the concept of consortia and distinguish it from other forms of library cooperation.

Library professional associations and a current consortium may organise a forum for committee members of major professional associations and the VLC to discuss and select an appropriate term to uniquely identify the phenomenon of contemporary library consortia. Some experts in the field of librarianship may suggest ideas on the meaning and the use of the term (Section 6.2.1).

7.2.3. Responses to obstacles and difficulties

The findings of this study reveal that librarians were well aware of a number of obstacles that Vietnamese academic libraries are facing which are believed to explain the perceived lack of engagement in consortia and cooperation more generally (see Section 6.4). Some of these obstacles are similar to those confirmed by the survey respondents as major reasons for the lack of engagement in consortia (Table 5.21, Section 5.5.4). Although requested to indicate how they can overcome the responding obstacles, interviewees tended to describe various obstacles or difficulties their libraries are facing without being able to offer detailed thoughts with regard to solutions to overcome problems or improve their situation.

These difficulties can be ongoing obstacles that hinder the development of, or may indeed become motivators for, their participation in future consortial arrangements. There is a strong case to say that libraries need to be more proactive and more collegial if they are to devise feasible solutions to surmount the common obstacles that many of them face in forming consortia. From the point of view of academic libraries it is also important that they adopt a 'whole of sector' approach. This is important in both devising solutions to the various challenges they face, plus in presenting a unified voice when approaching government, higher education institutions, and other funding agencies, for support.

Recommendation 4: That the relevant professional associations and the current consortium (VLC) representing Vietnamese academic libraries create a forum for the discussion and promotion of consortia as an advanced form of cooperation between libraries, with a view to identifying, amongst other priorities, a unified response to the challenges faced by consortia.

Libraries having similar difficulties will learn and benefit from joint consideration of those difficulties and the search for viable solutions. They can also learn from the way in which libraries in other countries have addressed similar problems. As discussed in Chapter 3 a considerable body of literature has described various obstacles or barriers to consortia in other countries, some of which may be similar to the situation of Vietnamese academic libraries. While differences in economic, socio-cultural and legal circumstances may dictate that solutions used elsewhere will not necessarily be suitable in Vietnam, there is little doubt that the many lessons learnt in other countries will nonetheless be informative for local decision making.

7.3. Implementation of library consortia among Vietnamese academic libraries

Findings of this study demonstrate that academic librarians are supportive of the types of services that are potentially offered by consortia, and results also indicate that these librarians perceive a number of particular obstacles that might prevent libraries from becoming involved in this form of cooperation. Encouraging and enabling the establishment of academic library consortia in Vietnam requires the convergence of a number of essential pre-conditions and overcoming potential obstacles. While Recommendation 4 above is designed to provide a forum by which the profession can identify and respond to the range of obstacles, there are a number of key issues related to the establishment and viability of future consortia that can be readily indicated on the basis of the current research. These are the subject of Recommendations 5.

7.3.1. Consortia governance and leadership

Library consortia cannot operate properly without adequate governance, which commonly includes an effective Management Committee, and an Executive Board (Bostick, 2001; Guzzy, 2010; Potter, 1997), as well as with the need for support by

appropriately skilled staff. An appropriate governance structure underpinned by high-quality leadership is essential to effective consortia.

Identifying suitable individuals or organisations to lead and inspire consortia was an essential matter of concern for academic libraries reflected in both the questionnaire and interview results. The findings from the interviews indicate that strong leadership is understood to be an important factor for successful consortia. One interviewee shared the view that, '*I personally believe that positive impact of library consortia on the library system should be as a whole so the initiator that sets up the consortia should be able to have certain influence over the whole system*' (LM4). Interviewees affirmed a significant role for consortia initiators with characteristics of strong leadership: '*The first and also the most important is having an agency or an organisation which has credibility, authority, functions and management capacity to initiate the establishment of consortia*' (LM6). Other interviewees also acknowledged the importance of key libraries that might have influence or be able to play a critical leadership role in future consortia, such as the role played by NASATI in the current consortium. This circumstance was described by an interviewee (AM2) who focused on the financial aspect of consortial arrangements, noting that, '*there needs to be a key unit covering a major part of sharing the cost of operating the consortium*'. Certainly institutions are more likely to be able to provide leadership to future consortia if they are well established and adequately resourced, although leaders with the right personal skill-set may also be found in smaller and less financially secure libraries. As interviewee LM6 stated there is currently a '*lack of an institution that is sufficiently respected and competent to gather other academic libraries*,' and in these circumstances it may be individuals rather than libraries that emerge as the key to consortium initiation. Tran (2014) recommended that the largest libraries could be initiator of consortia (Section 3.8, Chapter 3). This recommendation is close to the findings of the current study; however, in the current situation in Vietnam, it is difficult to find organisations or individuals who are willing and able to take the roles as initiators or leaders of consortia.

The survey results (see Table 5.30) suggest that some organisations including the *VLA*, the *MOET* and *Large or leading universities* can be key bodiesin the initiation of future consortia, among which *VLA* was nominated as the most relevant organisation that can play a key role in organising academic library consortia. One

interviewee (LM2) suggested if future consortia are established they should be organised as branches or chapters of the VLA (see Section 6.3.7) but it is worth arguing that the VLA is a professional association representing all types of libraries, academic libraries may rely upon its influence and support but it may not be appropriate to use it as an umbrella organisation catering for sector specific consortia. Evidence in Table 5.30, indicating the lowest rating score (Mean = 5.73 in a 1-10 rating scale) received for *Groups of libraries* reveals that respondents believe that libraries, even working in cooperation, are less likely to take an active role in the initiation of consortia.

It is apparent, however, that poorly-funded libraries or libraries that receive little support from their home institutions are highly likely to rely on other, perhaps larger libraries to initiate cooperation rather than to perform as a leading (or even equal member) of a consortium. In view of the current situation of colleges and universities in Vietnam generally, there are very few individual libraries that have the financial capacity to play a role as the initiator and leader of a large consortium, such as the role performed by NASATI in the VLC.

It is therefore the case that if academic libraries are to benefit in the short-term from consortia then they need to find another mechanism for setting up consortia for themselves rather than to totally rely on some external agency for initiation, and therefore they would benefit from some academic library-based forum that could act to provide ongoing management of targeted acquisition and licensing of digital content in the form of databases.

Recommendation 5: A consortium should be formed through a committee of the Vietnamese Academic Librarians, charged with the tasks of attracting, promoting and managing joint subscriptions for digital database acquisition and licensing and associated tasks on behalf of consortium members.

There are a number of models for this type of consortia available, including the CEIRC consortium in Australia that acts as a committee of the Council of Australian University Librarians, and structures the selection, acquisition and licensing of digital content on an 'opt in / opt out' basis. In this sort of arrangement the 'consortium' is in effect a coordinating committee that acts as a conduit for the various quasi-consortia that form for the period that is negotiated for each license,

and costs for each participating member are calculated according to an agreed and transparent principle (for example student FTE).

At the present time, Vietnamese academic libraries lack a representative body to express and advocate on their behalf to government authorities and to offer guidance and assistance to individual academic libraries. The two relevant associations, the NALA and the VILASAL are primarily catering for personal and professional networking rather than serving as a legal and administrative representative for member libraries to undertake collaborative selection and acquisition of digital content. Furthermore, as noted in Chapter 2, membership of these organisations has been open to libraries other than colleges and universities, therefore their remit and interests are wider than academic libraries. The following recommendation is offered in conjunction with Recommendation 5.

Recommendation 6: A committee of academic librarians should be established under the auspices of MOET to provide advice on the legal foundations and regulation required by Vietnamese academic libraries, with a view to advancing cooperation including consortia.

MOET is at present the government Ministry most suited to providing legal and administrative support to academic libraries. A committee of academic librarians in turn can provide consultancy regarding library issues to the Ministry. The survey results and interview findings are consistent in nominating MOET as a relevant body (Table 5.30, Section 5.5.10) that can strongly influence higher education institutions and their libraries in terms of providing legal and administrative support (see Section 6.3.3).

If recommendations 5 and 6 are adopted, they will significantly contribute to resolving the problems of consortia governance and leadership.

Consortia members need to cover various costs associated with consortial activities. It is believed that the more rational, equitable and transparent a cost sharing model is the more satisfied consortia members will be. It is necessary to have equitable and transparent distribution of costs so that members have confidence that their contributions are being determined in accordance with the needs of the consortium as

a whole, and individual libraries can calculate the financial benefits they receive from membership.

It is also the case that the 'best' model will be determined by the particular circumstances and context in which a consortium operates. Based on the pricing models of specific resources or actual arrangements agreed by members for purchasing resources, consortia can decide different cost-sharing schemes and formulae accordingly. The cost sharing model currently employed by the VLC has its own advantages and disadvantages according to its leader and members.

Determining suitable schemes or formulae for cost sharing should be left for Vietnamese academic libraries and their future consortia to decide, and this study only suggests this is one of the important factors for consideration in the establishment and maintenance of successful consortia.

Whatever formula is devised it is critically important that in order to meet the tests of equity that a cost sharing model that allow for the divergence in library sizes and budgets is devised and maintained. Recommended principles of equity should include: 1) A distribution of costs that supports weaker libraries; 2) An equal sharing of costs among libraries with similar financial capacity.

The literature provides examples of a number of models and formulae for cost sharing that have been applied successfully in developed countries (see Section 3.9.4, Chapter 3), that could be considered for use in Vietnam. The cost sharing schemes should be formulated and clearly stated in the promotion of consortia.

Joint subscription and licenses that are negotiated by the recommended committee might be in the form of a 'national site license' that applies to all academic libraries, or a license that is limited to the self-nominating members that require and pay for access to a single database (or even suite of databases) only. The implementation of a nation-wide consortium such as the one described above would not prevent other multi-lateral associations of libraries (either between academic libraries, or between academic libraries and other types of libraries) being formed for the purpose of jointly acquiring digital content.

7.3.2. Government regulation and legal infrastructure

Findings of the study reveal that consortia may need a number of revised legal and administrative frameworks in order to enable their efficient operation, among which some may be developed by consortia themselves but others, particularly those establishing the basic legal structures, need to developed and promulgated by relevant government authorities.

Thesurvey results in Table 5.29 showed that 59.3% of respondents are seeking legal support to enable them to participate in consortia. Data from the questionnaire also suggests that the issues related to *Legal grounds, policies or regulations* for consortia are identified as a major concern by the survey respondents, especially those working in libraries in private institutions (70.6% of cases). The interview data also indicate issues related to the current legal and administrative basis, or similar recognition by government that could provide the basis for library cooperation in general and consortia in particular (see Section 6.4.2).

Recommendation 7: The current review of the Library Ordinance and other associated legal documents should give particular attention to the regulatory infrastructure needed to support and enable cooperation and consortia involving libraries. This should 1) Encourage government and institutional investment in library cooperative programs; and 2) Pay particular attention to the needs of academic libraries and the reality of scholarly information services that are increasingly based around consortia licensing of large scale databases of digital content, including the need to enable the shared payment for non-physical (digital) assets.

It was noted that other than the Library Ordinance promulgated 14 years ago, there are no other documents of equivalent status available, and that the extant regulations were not designed with the intention of supporting consortia, or indeed cooperation more broadly. The Library Ordinance offers only scant acknowledgement of the prospect of formal cooperation in article 13, item 5, which states the profession's tasks as including; 'to effect the interrelationship among domestic libraries; to promote cooperation and exchange of documents and join foreign information-library networks according to the Government's regulations' (Vietnam. National Assembly, 2000). At ministry level, in 2007 the Ministry of Culture and Information

(now the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) issued the Master Plan of Vietnamese Library Development until 2010 and Visions to 2020 (Vietnam. MCI, 2007), the scope of which includes both academic libraries and professional associations, and particularly notes the prospect of cooperation among academic libraries and collaboration in purchasing foreign publications. A Sample By-Law of Organisation and Operation of Academic Libraries issued in 2008 had a direct focus on academic libraries (MCST, 2008). Article 3, item 3a declares that academic libraries;

> … have the rights to participate in professional associations and local or international workshops and conferences on library and information; associate, cooperate with libraries, organisations and individuals local and abroad to receive sponsorships, donation, to exchange information resources, experience, join information networks in accordance to institution's regulations and the existing legislation. (p. 3)

In a broader context, academic libraries were included in the Regulations on Universities issued by the Prime Minister of Vietnam as one of the facilities serving a university's learning and teaching missions (Vietnam. Prime Minister, 2010). Therefore, it can be said that although the recognition of academic libraries and library consortia was not sufficiently detailed in the Library Ordinance, academic libraries do have recourse to some other legal documents that at least acknowledge the principle of cooperation. It istherefore the case that while academic libraries may not enjoy the full regulatory conditions to optimise consortia, there is a sufficient basis on which to initially promote cooperative activities including consortia.

In current circumstances libraries may encounter some difficulties regarding the administrative structure necessary for consortia. The two documents issued by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism could be seen as an attempt by the Ministry to provide guidance to academic libraries as a part of its functions assigned by the Government in the Decree numbered 76/2013/NĐ-CP issued in 2013 (Vietnam. Government, 2013). However, the implementation of these documents might not achieve the desired impact due to confusion regarding the administrative oversight of libraries. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism has oversight of all types of libraries in Vietnam including academic libraries, but it is not the ministry responsibility for the higher education sector served by academic libraries. In such a circumstance, it might not be feasible for academic libraries to

acquire the necessary support from one ministry in order to achieve political goals set by a second ministry.

It is necessary to note that the current legal framework does not specifically prohibit academic libraries' activities regarding cooperation and consortia, but neither does it have the effect of encouraging or easily enabling consortial initiatives. It is apparent that academic libraries require more explicit government approbation and support than the current legal infrastructure delivers. Some legal documents include the concept of library cooperation but do not sufficiently describe the actual roles, functions and structure of consortia. Therefore, as interviewee AM2 argued, there is a need for the concept of 'library consortium' to be reflected in the current legal documents: *Actually, 'library cooperation' which is usually called 'cooperation' in Vietnamese way is not the term we need. What we are doing now is 'library consortium'.*

It is worth noting that shortly after the interviews for this study were conducted, this situation regarding the legal basis for cooperation was improved further. The Decree 11/2014/NĐ-CP regarding activities in the field of science and technology information was issued, replacing the previous document (159/2004/NĐ-CP dated 31/08/2004), and to take effect from April 2014. This document confirms the position of the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) as the governmental agency responsible for organising and coordinating activities related to science and technology information through a specified consortium (Vietnam. Government, 2014). Although the coverage of information resources in this document is focused on science and technology, it can be a useful reference point for library consortia in promoting their role and carrying out their functions. It is suggested that any changes to the Library Ordinance enacted in accordance with Recommendation 7 or particular legal documents should allow for academic libraries: 1) Obtaining and committing funds for consortia activities; 2) Entering into legal arrangements for consortial licensing and purchasing with or without tender; 3) Having specific guidelines and approved and standard processes for the payment and clearance of digital content purchases; 4) Libraries need to argue for these outcomes to relevant government departments with support from their home institutions and professional associations in order to ensure that the appropriate legal basis exists to enable cooperative activities in the contemporary digital information environment and economy.

It was reported by interviewees that academic libraries encounter difficulties associated with an unnecessarily complex administrative system. Obtaining funds to cover the sharing of costs is complicated for libraries as they are required to deal with burdensome approval and payment processes across two or more institutions. In particular, deficient or unclear procedures in the approval and payment processes relating to non-physical assets such as digital content present significant difficulties. One interviewee from the group of library managers described the situation as follows.

> *They have to prove that the databases they want to acquire are online and that they will lose access to them after one year if they will not continue the subscription. . . . A money transferring process is still complicated and delicate.* (LM1*)*

These administrative and compliance obstacles deter the development of consortia as consortial arrangements would be challenged by a complex system of payment involving multiple libraries, when it is easier to acquire content for an individual institution. The problem, as described by LM1, is that a cost sharing amount for each consortia member needs to be '*lower than 100 million VND since a larger amount would provoke a tender'.* This threshold is difficult for libraries to deal with while a consortium's legal status does not allow it to invite tenders on the rights of groups to engage in a tender (on behalf of their member libraries).

In the current circumstances, the VLC chose to avoid tenders to member libraries by reducing the amount of contribution allocated to individual libraries to below the limit of tender. However, limiting contribution of each library to an amount of less than 4,500 USD is obviously restricting the capacity of a library consortium to arrange for large joint purchases, and therefore has the effect of limiting the extent and scale of consortial arrangements Therefore, for a long term arrangements, individual libraries and consortia need to seek the necessary legal and administrative support so that consortia are able to undertake a tender on behalf of their members.

The survey data in Table 5.32 and the interview data in Section 6.4.2 also suggest that specific policies and plans are needed to develop and implement intra-consortial arrangements. Once specific guidelines are available in the form of sympathetic policies or legal grounds it will help resolve the difficulties individual libraries and consortia are encountering when they request payment and clearance for purchases of

digital products or when they jointly purchase high cost products that exceed the tender limit.

7.3.3. Funding issues of library consortia

Future academic library consortia will need to have initial funding (start-up capital) and sustainable sources of operating funds to initiate and maintain their services. Funding for the essential operations of library consortia in other countries is typically obtained from membership fees (Wiser, 2012), and as a result these consortia have independent budgets (Davis, 2007). This outcome will, however, be difficult for Vietnamese consortia to achieve because Vietnamese academic libraries are continually facing financial difficulties at various levels, including a lack of funds to develop library collections, especially to independently subscribe to electronic resources. As suggested by both the questionnaire respondents and the interviewees, the financial constraints confronting academic libraries are a deep-seated and major obstacle preventing the development of a number of avenues for collection and service improvement, including the implementation of consortia.

Almost all the questionnaire respondents, 93% of cases, indicate that their libraries would need to seek additional *financial* support to participate in future consortia (Table 5.29). The interview data also confirmed limited funding is a major issue preventing enhanced cooperation. Identifying sources of funds for consortia can therefore be daunting given that financial shortfalls for even basic expenditure are such a major problem for Vietnamese academic libraries as described by a number of library manager interviewees (LM1, LM2, LM3, LM5 and LM6), and professional association managers (AM1 and AM2), as quoted in Section 6.4.1.

Libraries' financial shortages extend to a lack of funds to pay for the shared costs if they are to join other libraries in acquiring resources as part of a consortium. In many cases it also includes the incapacity to pay for even the most preliminary forms of cooperation, such as joining professional associations, as indicated by the interview data in Section 6.4.1.

As noted in Chapter 3, evidence from the literature indicates that in order to acquire the cost-effectiveness benefits of cooperatively acquiring digital content consortia members need firstly to contribute financially. As Williams (2000) argues: 'Good

results require resources and effort, and if I want cooperation to work, I must invest in the effort, submit to the common will, and be determined to do what I must to make the network succeed. Networks can leverage our investments, but they cannot succeed without something to leverage' (p. 15).

It is a paradox in the practice of library cooperation in Vietnam that budgetary constraints provide both a reason for academic libraries to become involved in consortia, and also an obstacle for them to join consortia or to participate in specific cooperative arrangements. System-wide investment is therefore an essential pre-requisite for establishing successful consortia.

Recommendation 8: Each academic library should dedicate a pre-determined percentage of its annual budget for consortia activities, with the primary goal of that activity being the joint acquisition of digital content.

As one library manager interviewee (LM6) argued, 'in order to share electronic databases, which are often very expensive, we need a considerable budget without which we can't cooperate with other libraries' (see Section 6.4.1, Chapter 6). Libraries joining a consortium have to be able to ensure the long-term financial viability of the consortium itself, in addition to affording their contribution to the shared acquisition of licensed content.

Consortia would incur not only start-up expenditure but also unspecified (at the point of initiation) operating costs. Library consortia would be unlikely to providesufficient support for consortia based acquisition of digital content from within their existing budgets. It is also the case that revenues from membership fees may also be limited or even negligible, as many libraries simply have no capacity to incur costs beyond those associated with providing existing rudimentary levels of services and collections.Libraries and their institutions therefore need to call for allocated funding from the government, relying upon the structures outlined in Recommendations 4, 5 and 6.

Recommendation 9: The government should make available targeted funding to support the development of consortia as a means of leveraging the economies of scale that are important in order to minimise the cost of acquiring and licensing digital content.

This centralised funding arrangement may result in a national site license ensuring a minimum level of digital content is provided to all Vietnamese academic institutions through their library service. If this is the case, libraries and relevant government departments should go through a strict selection process to ensure the acquired content is suitable to the needs of the libraries' users. A development of this type, a kind of centrally funded nation-wide consortia (Allen & Hirshon, 1998) would not diminish the need for a more focused form of consortia serving the needs of academic libraries in order to provide content to sub-groups of academic libraries, such as that described in Recommendation 5.

When libraries are constantly dealing with financial shortfalls it becomes harder for consortia to seek funding support from their member libraries where libraries with inadequate budget from their own institutions will often seek financial support from elsewhere.For the situation of Vietnamese academic libraries, seeking external or international sponsorship (see Section 6.5.4, Chapter 6) or relying on aid projects is often an option, as a number of interviewees suggested. However, this approach cannot be a sustainable, long-term solution, as it is often in the nature of such funds that they are provided for specific, 'one off' expenditure or initiatives. These sources of funding are therefore not suitable as a long-term approach for successful maintenance of consortia.

7.3.4. Types and services of library consortia

In order to encourage future participation of Vietnamese academic libraries in consortia, it is important to determine what types and models of consortia can bring most benefits to these libraries. Chapter 3 drew upon the previous literature to identify a number of different consortia types and describe the various services they might possibly provide. The findings of this study have identified a range of benefits consortia could deliver from the perspective of Vietnamese librarians, and that are related to relevant types of consortia and to particular services they might provide.

Based on the benefits that the respondents who reported membership of a current library consortium indicated as the most desirable including, *Saving cost in purchasing library materials* − 93.8% of responses, *Saving cost and efforts in cataloguing* − 50% of responses, and *Solving technological issues* − 43.8% of

responses (Table 5.20, Section 5.5.3) or *Resource sharing* − 75.9% of responses (Table 5.24, Section 5.5.6), it is apparent that there is scope for both consortia formed specifically to support and enable the purchase of library materialsand digital content; plus multi-purpose consortia providing a range of service options.

The interview results also suggest the possibility of several types of consortia, in terms of the focus of the activities interviewees believed would be beneficial to their libraries. The types of consortia that were specifically mentioned included: consortia for purchasing electronic resources (AM2, LM2, LM3, LM5 and LM6); multi-purposeor multi-function consortia (LM4) that might provide services such as building and sharing catalogues (LM1 and LM6), and reference services (AM2, LM5 and LM6); consortia for purchasing and sharing resources formed by groups of libraries with similar disciplinary affiliations (AM2, LM1, LM3, LM6) or by region (AM1 and LM2); and consortia for developing and sharing institutional repositories (AM1, LM2, LM4, LM5 and LM6).

In the future, as consortia become more widely used in Vietnam, academic libraries may choose to develop different types of consortia to meet their individual or shared needs. At the current time, however, in consideration of conditions such as financial shortages (that may not allow libraries to join various consortia); unequal levels of development between libraries (that expose differences in demand for different types of services and support); and various expectations of libraries about consortial arrangements, academic libraries require consortia that service their basic needs and thereby help reduce the gap between 'information rich' and 'information poor' libraries. In order to attract more libraries at different levels of development that may have unequal financial capacity, academic libraries in Vietnam may elect to implement a kind of multi-purpose consortia that will appeal to a diverse membership.

The services provided by this type of consortia would be likely to include licensing digital content; developing and sharing institutional collections in digital form, and sharing an integrated library system (ILS). Resources to share may include electronic resources purchased as perpetual licenses; institutional resources in digital form; staff time and expertise in developing digital collections; shared costs in purchasing

electronic resources purchased as annual subscriptions, and shared costs and staff time in the implementation of a jointly owned integrated library system.

Within a multi-purpose consortium, members having particular interests may band together as sub-groups, such as a group of multi-disciplinary university libraries, usually large libraries jointly purchase more intensive databases; group of libraries that need to undertake automation programs may join to negotiate the licensing of a library software; group of libraries interested in developing and sharing institutionally-sourced digital content may develop a joint program and share staff time and costs of implementation.

Library consortia created for the purpose of acquiring digital content may also offer associated services, such as a distributed reference service, in order to assist their member libraries' users to utilise the acquired content more effectively. Because consortia member libraries have access to the same resources, it will be more convenient if their users seek assistance from staff at any member library if they encounter difficulties in using these resources.

This type of consortia includes the two principal types of consortia reported by a wide range of literature on library cooperation and consortia. These consist of consortia for purchasing resources and consortia for sharing resources, which may facilitate the following services: sharing an online union catalogue; sharing online research databases; full-text retrieval services; interlibrary lending and document delivery services; and the use of integrated library software.

Not all consortia services described in the literature are relevant to Vietnamese academic libraries, and some services of consortia suggested by the survey respondents and the interviewees may not be necessary to organise. Data from the questionnaire suggest that libraries (59.8% of responses) are able to provide interlibrary loan services to other members of future consortia, whereas a number of interviewees (AM2, LM1, LM4 and LM5) argued strongly that it would not be feasible to implement efficient interlibrary loan services in Vietnam for various reasons. These reasons included the deep-seated fear of losing library materials; the high cost and unreliability of postal services, and the unclear and ineffective scheme of sanctions in the current policies of most libraries. A proposal to create an interlibrary loan service along with building a union catalogue for Vietnamese library

holdings was put forward in the 1970s by Toan Anh (1971), a well-known Vietnamese writer and researcher in literary and cultural studies and for several years a librarian at the Ministry of Information. This type of services has never come to fruition, so a form of library cooperation that is considered fundamental in other countries has never been implemented in Vietnam.

The absence of an effective interlibrary lending scheme in Vietnam has also meant that collaborative collection development of print resources, another type of cooperative arrangement that has emerged in other countries would not be viable, as this shared (or 'distributed') purchasing model relies upon an efficient interlibrary lending and document delivery services in order to enable rapid transfer of items between participating libraries.

It is arguable, however, that the period for the implementation of a 'traditional' inter library lending service is now past, as the shift to instantly transferable digital content may make the development of a traditional interlibrary lending service redundant. The use of local or national union catalogues is also becoming less beneficial given the shift towards internationalised catalogues describing global holdings, such as OCLC's WorldCat. In other words the technological leap has been such that it is possible to conceive of developing countries, with the proper financial support, staff expertise and technological infrastructure, being able to 'leap-frog' several generations of library cooperation.

Establishing consortia for sharing digitised institutional repositories would be another feasible and practical approach for Vietnamese academic libraries wishing to leverage the benefits of consortia styled cooperation. As with academic libraries in other countries, Vietnamese academic libraries hold a range of unique institutional resources. These collections are often in the Vietnamese language and represent local knowledge, learning and history that in many cases will not be replicated in the English language sources that constitute the bulk of commercially available databases. A coordinated, consortia-styled approach to making such materials available under standard open-access conditions could provide a significant resource for Vietnamese scholars, while also raising the international profile of Vietnamese research.

Recommendation 10: Vietnamese academic libraries should implement a single, coordinated open-access repository of Vietnamese language research as a component of future consortia planning. It is suggested that this open-access repository should be a priority outcome of the administrative bodies created as a result of the implementation of Recommendations 4, 5 and 6.

This recommendation is made based on the findings of this study and considerations of other aspects including the real demand for content in local, regional or national languages that is not duplicated in the large-scale databases that are dominated by English and form the basis of current international scholarly communication and research.

7.3.5. Establishment of a culture of cooperation

The findings of this study have confirmed the current existence of an inadequate cooperation between Vietnamese academic libraries, and provided evidence of a weak culture of cooperation among both individuals and libraries. It is one of the major obstacles inhibiting future consortial arrangements for the country's academic libraries. Among the reasons indicated by the questionnaire respondents for failure to implement consortia, the weak culture of cooperation produced the highest level of agreement (Table 5.21, Section 5.5.4), and the factor was also described by interview participants as a major obstacle to academic library consortia (Section 6.4.3).

It is not intended to discuss in-depth the 'drivers' of the existing resistance to cooperative ventures within the Vietnamese people or their apparent preference for independence and autonomy, although some of the relevant matters were discussed in Chapter 2. Rather, it is important to focus on how this identified resistance to cooperation might impact upon the implementation of academic library consortia. Although this weak culture of cooperation among academic libraries can be explained by Vietnam's historical and geographical circumstances, at the level of library cooperation it is specifically related to a system long adapted to coping with shortages and therefore instinctively 'protective' of what it does own, or the fear of doing something that is thought will not bring any direct and immediate benefits to users or the parent institution (see Section 6.4.3). While the implementation of other Recommendations in the Chapter would support the development of a culture of

cooperation, it is also necessary that specifically targeted activity be implemented in order to indicate to the network of academic libraries and librarians that cooperation is a mutually beneficial means of doing business in a digital context.

Recommendation 11: Library associations and major academic libraries proactively support an enhanced culture of cooperation as a foundation for the implementation of various forms of formal and informal cooperation, including consortia.

Effective cooperation relies to a great extent on participants learning the correct protocols and behaviours that are required of cooperation. Vietnamese academic librarians and libraries, having become fully adjusted over many years to operating in an environment of paucity and deficit, have adopted attitudes and practices that focus on local needs and priorities rather than on making contributions to a wider system of academic libraries and their users. The twenty-first century, however, has delivered to teachers, learners and researchers an environment of information abundance supported by business models that encourage and reward multi-institutional access to large-scale databases of digital content. For a developing country such as Vietnam to adjust to this new content environment for academic libraries requires not only a change of practice, but also a change of mind-set.

While several interviewees did state that they joined the VLC because of their responsibility to the library community, rather than the direct benefits their library would receive from the consortium (LM1), this is an attitude that is currently confined to a small number of larger libraries. The habit of cooperation will very likely help produce improved attitudes, as the benefits of cooperation become increasingly apparent and as the practice of cooperation become normalised, particularly with the implementation of formalised consortia developed with the goal of delivering both local and system-wide benefits. In the meantime, however, a leap of faith is required: a change of attitude that accepts the evidence that cooperation in the form of consortia has the potential to deliver significant benefits not only to the network of academic libraries, but also individual benefits for all participating member libraries.

7.3.6. Additional issues for future consortia activities

The interview findings in Chapter 6 bring attention to a number of additional important issues that are not directly addressed by the Recommendations in this Chapter. These matters include the balance between responsibilities and benefits for consortia members (Section 6.3.4); the matter of issue fees and the need for trust and transparency in the management of consortia (Section 6.3.4); the practice of democratic values and mutual respect between consortia leaders and members (Section 6.3.5); and issues of equity and equality between members (Section 6.3.6). Each of these issues certainly influences the level of performance, commitment and satisfaction of member libraries with regard to their chosen consortia. It is therefore of major importance that Vietnamese academic library consortia develop plans, policies and procedures that clarify and give effect to the goals of each consortium. These policies should clearly state the responsibilities and privileges of members. If there are different types of members categorised by levels of contribution, clear statements of relevant responsibilities and privileges should be included. Member libraries should be consulted and invited to offer suggestions to develop and revise all relevant plans and policies, and these should be made widely and publicly available.

7.4. Chapter summary

It is apparent from the various Recommendation presented above that there are a number of issues to be addressed in order to create an environment that is conducive to the development and implementation of consortia serving the needs of Vietnamese academic libraries. It is believed, however, that if the Recommendations were to be adopted, then there would be a rapid improvement in the operating conditions for academic library consortia with immediate and important benefits for higher education and research in Vietnam.

The findings of this research confirm that consortia can be a suitable means of cooperation for academic libraries in Vietnam, because a majority of Vietnamese academic librarians (and very likely libraries) recognise the general benefits of cooperation and have a desire to work more cooperatively including becoming involved in consortial arrangements. While there exist a number of obstacles that libraries will need to overcome, it is not impossible for them to do so when consortia

in other countries have also addressed numerous obstacles since the first consortia were established in the 1930s. Vietnamese academic libraries can certainly learn from the experiences of libraries in other countries, while keeping in mind that consortia will be most successful when they can devise solutions and structures which are responsive to the particular history and circumstances that prevail in Vietnam. In consideration of the current circumstances, libraries lack some essential pre-conditions to ensure successful implementation and maintenance of library consortia, but with appropriate solutions Vietnamese academic libraries can consider and plan for the establishment of consortia as well as any other forms of cooperation that will help to optimise their contribution to teaching, learning and research. The recommendations presented in this Chapter are intended to provide some guidance as to how Vietnamese academic libraries might best position themselves to take advantage of the benefits that consortia can provide.

Above all, Vietnamese academic libraries need to make well-informed and strategic choices, because while it is difficult for them to overcome key obstacles or barriers to enhanced cooperation and consortia due to their constantly inadequate funding, the opportunities for libraries to enhance services and collections by working together are substantial and only likely to increase as the country improves its technological infrastructure, its research capacity, and extends its embrace of digital content as the cornerstone of twenty-first century higher education.

Figure 7.1: *How the research question was addressed*
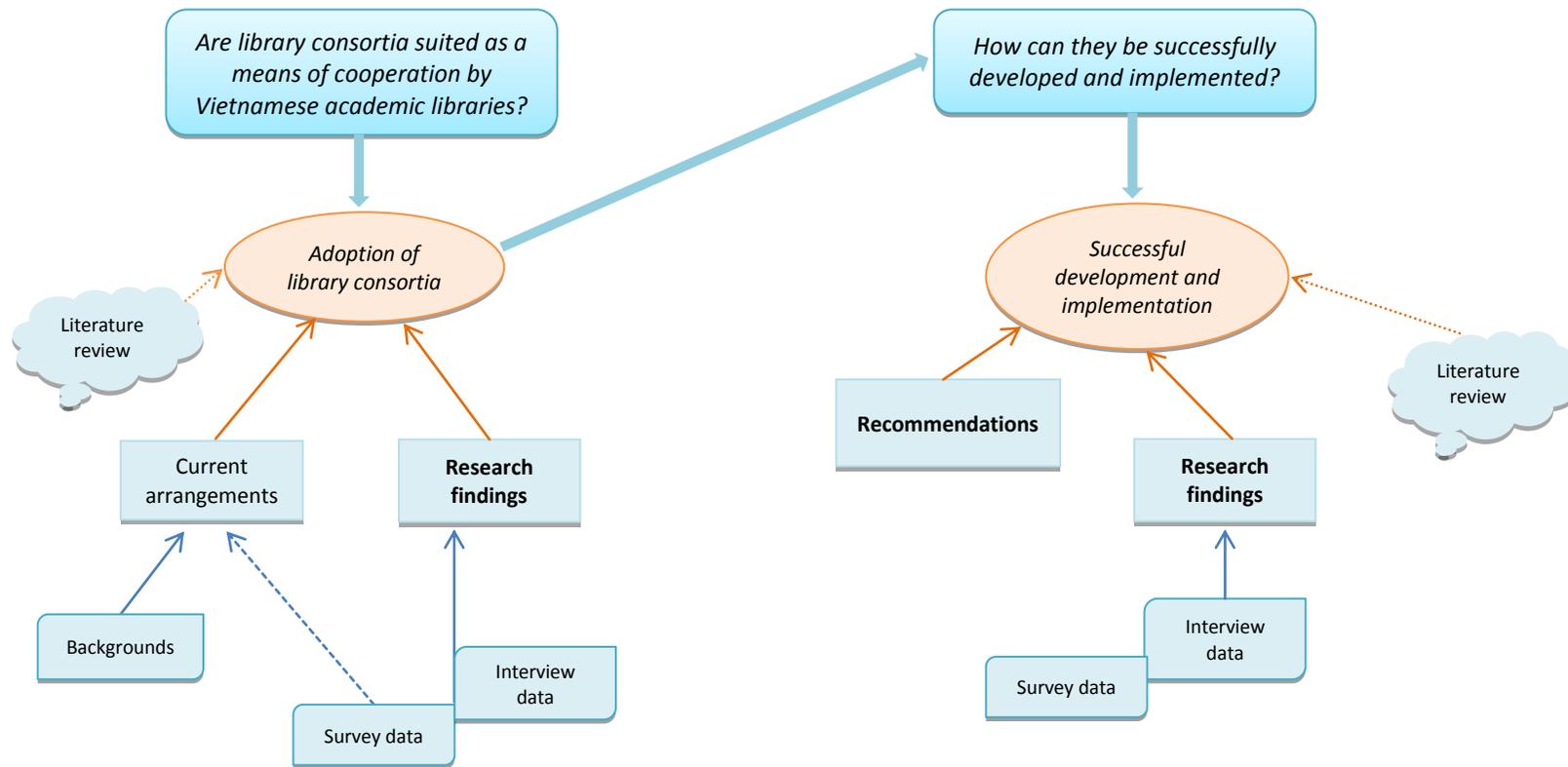
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION

Driven by an urgent need to improve the quality of the learning, teaching and research taking place in Vietnamese colleges and universities during the current period of higher education reform in Vietnam, academic libraries are actively seeking and finding ways of developing and implementing high-quality collections and services. In doing so they are enhancing their contribution to the achievements of their parent colleges and universities in particular, and to Vietnamese higher education in general.

With the revolution in information technologies and the explosion in digital content and services, coupled with the growing expectations of library users, libraries are no longer being valued solely as information reservoirs to be judged by the amount of 'information' they contain. In the situation of a developing country such as Vietnam, where the lack of investment capital is an ongoing barrier to bridging the gap by which individual libraries fall well short of the international 'standards', there is an imperative for libraries to leverage every advantage provided by digital technologies to be bold and innovative in devising solutions to otherwise entrenched problems.

This research has been conducted in an effort to assist Vietnamese academic libraries to determine whether a consortia-based approach is a viable means of improving library resources and services at low cost - or at least within existing budget constraints - and to enable the future successful development and implementation of this enhanced form of library cooperation

The primary research question '*Are library consortia suited as a means of cooperation by Vietnamese academic libraries, and if so, how can they be successfully developed and implemented?*' was designed to guide this research and two sub-questions were used to shape the data collection: '*What does the current state of library cooperation and consortia among academic libraries in Vietnam suggest for an adoption of library consortia within this community?*'; and '*How can Vietnamese libraries overcome potential obstacles for consortia arrangements?*'

The initial phase of this research, by establishing some background (Chapter 2) and reviewing the literature (Chapter 3), determined that notwithstanding being aware of

the roles and the benefits of consortia in optimising collections and services, Vietnamese academic libraries were very late in adoption of this type of professional engagement. Libraries first participated in a significant consortium in 2004, very late by international standards, and have not as yet initiated consortia to meet the specific needs of the academic library sector. Consortia activities in other countries such as the United States date back as far as the 1930s, and even other developing countries commenced several decades ago. It was argued that the development of Vietnamese libraries in general and academic libraries in particular has not lent itself to the use of forms of library cooperation, including consortia, which are common international professional practice. As a result it was further indicated that adopting and (if necessary) modifying practices that have been successful elsewhere may well be an approach that could serve Vietnamese academic libraries. In learning from their counterparts in other countries, particularly those with a longer tradition of professional library practice and fully developed higher education systems, Vietnamese academic libraries can move towards world's best practice and fundamentally transform the practice of librarianship in the country.

By reviewing a substantial corpus of previous research literature and commentary, Chapter 3 provided an overview of the development of library consortia around the world, and gave attention to the types of problems and challenges that libraries are able to address through the use of consortia. Chapter 3 also surveyed evidence describing the various types and models of consortia and governance that Vietnamese libraries can apply when seeking examples relevant to their particular situations. Both the absence of literature on the practices of Vietnamese library cooperation and consortial arrangements and the comparatively small amount of available literature describing some negative aspects (Lam, 1999; Pham & Le, 2006) confirmed a lack of the practice of consortia by Vietnamese libraries.

In consideration of the need to obtain comprehensive data relevant to the context of Vietnamese academic libraries and their use (or otherwise) of consortia, a research approach that allows a researcher to obtain broadly based opinion and data from a larger population supplemented by more in-depth, qualitative information from selected samples, has been employed. Chapter 4 described in detail the mixed methods research with a sequential explanatory research design for two phases of data collection that consisted of a questionnaire in phase 1 and interviews in phases

2. The findings of the quantitative and qualitative data from the survey and the interviews were presented in Chapters 5 and 6, and Chapter 7 specifically addressed the research questions based on the data and evidence compiled in all of the preceding Chapters.

The focus of the recommendations presented in Chapter 7 is on creating an environment and the conditions that will pave the way for consortia to be an integral part of the environment in which academic libraries go about building their services and collections for the benefit of the country's higher education and research sectors. It is not claimed that this task will be easy or straightforward. Future academic library consortia can only be successfully implemented if libraries are able to deal with the various obstacles and disincentives that have been identified in this research in a way that eventually produces a more positive practical outcome from the opportunities offered by cooperation. It is certainly the case that any attempts to change or to improve the current approach to cooperation will require considerable, sustained and focused effort. However, the outcomes provided by carefully developed consortia can and will produce not only measurable gains but also positively influence a much healthier and stronger culture of cooperation among Vietnamese academic libraries.

As has been recognised, Vietnamese academic libraries have been faced by such an array of vexing challenges that they been caught in a treacherously difficult situation, as described by Nguyen (2005):

> Vietnamese academic libraries are caught in a vicious circle of difficulties which are related to each other. These problems are entwined with each other in a way that they seemingly cancel out the possibility of escape from the dilemma to such an extent that we almost do not know from where we can start in order to be able to develop Vietnamese libraries in response to the urgent needs of the current time. (Nguyen, 2005, p.176; translated from Vietnamese by the researcher)

A decade on from this plea by Nguyen, the obstacles and challenges, whether they be the inadequate level of funding, the poor state of the legal and administrative infrastructure, or the generally weak culture of cooperation, remain both real and urgent. Academic libraries have yet to find the strategies that can draw them out of their perilous situation, and while government rhetoric and policy remains supportive of higher education, libraries continue to struggle for recognition and support. It seems, however, that there may be no better way for Vietnamese academic libraries

to start improving their resources and services within existing budgets than to adopt similar forms of cooperation to those that have been successful for libraries in many other countries. As the Recommendations in Chapter 7 hopefully make clear, this requires immediate action to be led by the academic libraries and their relevant professional associations. In so far as government and institutional support are necessary and achievable, they are only likely to be forthcoming when the library sector can demonstrate their value, speak with a united voice, and effectively advocate on their own behalf.

Limitations of this research

This research was conducted in the understanding that consortia have not been popular or widely utilised in Vietnam. There is therefore a lack of information and literature on the subject and a corresponding shortage of professional knowledge among Vietnamese librarians that might lead to certain challenges with the research. The findings depend greatly on the responses and the viewpoints of the participants (survey respondents and interviewees), and they are to be thanked for their willingness to cooperate and share their opinions. The apparent openness they expressed towards the prospect for change and improved cooperation is encouraging and suggests that despite the numerous problems that were discussed in this thesis, that there is (in the great tradition of Vietnamese agriculture) fertile ground to be sown.

The research has not been without problems and possible shortcomings in design and execution. The survey was intended to obtain a number of opinion-based responses so it was designed with some open-ended questions and the 'Others' category attached to some of the closed-ended questions. The data obtained from these questions were diverse but they made the coding and the data analysis process difficult to manage. In retrospect a shorter and more focused questionnaire may have produced greater clarity with regard to some issues. The problem of some possible confusion in the use of terms, particularly to those applied to 'consortia' and 'associations' has been discussed, and unfortunately was not resolved at the pre-testing phase of the questionnaire. Some opportunity to resolve this resulting lack of clarity by additional explanation in the questionnaire would have in all likelihood improved the outcome from several questions.

Future research

As noted at several points in this thesis, Vietnam has not produced a large body of research or commentary on its libraries, and a culture of improvement requires a willingness to rigorously and objectively interrogate current practice. It is hoped that this research project will not only go some way to addressing that paucity of research, but also form the basis for future related research and publishing. Indeed based on the strengths, weakness and outcomes of this current project, ongoing research is necessary in order to understand the constantly changing impact of new information and communication technologies on libraries and their business practices. Future investigation centered on the effectiveness of consortia is essential in order to provide an evidence base for further investment by government and/or institutions.

Useful research may include further surveys of all Vietnamese academic libraries in order to assess their future engagement in consortia, with a focus on the level of satisfaction of consortia members and any measureable improvements to their content and services. Future research should also investigate the impact of cooperation and consortia both on the effectiveness of individual libraries and on the academic sector as a whole. This may include testing the effectiveness of specific models of consortia governance or cost sharing models.

And finally …

This study has undertaken extensive research and determined that consortia can be a means by which Vietnamese academic libraries can begin to address the many challenges they currently face.It is hoped that the findings and the set of recommendations reported in the preceding chapters can provide solutions for future development and implementation of consortia as an important contribution to the development of Vietnamese academic libraries and the nation's higher education sector.

It is almost certain that this is the first intensive research that provides a clear picture of the state of library cooperation and consortia among academic libraries in Vietnam. This thesis itself is a contribution to the copious body of literature on library cooperation and consortia which hitherto has been conspicuous in its lack of coverage of Vietnamese practices. It is hoped that this research, its findings and its

recommendations will contribute to increasing the awareness of libraries, institutions, government agencies and decision makers regarding the potentially hugely beneficial impact of library consortia. The findings provide a full understanding about practical issues regarding library cooperation and consortia that Vietnamese academic libraries are concerned about and dealing with. The Recommendations offered in Chapter 7 provide some guidance on the important steps that need to be taken as Vietnamese academic libraries look to normalise the practice of consortia.

Library consortia can be suited as a means of cooperation by Vietnamese academic libraries because the nature and the importance of consortia can prove to be a vehicle for libraries to synchronise their strengths. Although a culture of cooperation has not been strong among Vietnamese academic libraries, there is hope that some of the entrenched reliance on autonomy and self-reliance can be overcome. An old Vietnamese saying asserts that, 'One tree cannot create a hill; three trees can create a mountain' (translated from Vietnamese by the researcher), which finds equivalence in the English expression, 'United we stand; divided we fall'. Carried into the world of librarianship, it is an attitude that was recently reflected by Horton (2012) when she argued that: 'the future of libraries is at stake and collaboration is critical countermeasure… the depth of a library's success rests upon the depth of their collaboration …Consortia are all about collaboration'(p. 38).

Once Vietnamese academic libraries increase their willingness to cooperate, and to formalise and optimise that cooperation in the form of consortia, they will be far better placed to strive for world's best practice at a time when the Vietnamese government and the country's universities should be expecting nothing less. Consortia based on the delivery of digital content and associated services can help to radically reduce the gaps between the information rich and information poor in a scholarly context, and propel the libraries and the higher education sector they support to new levels of service. It is hoped that the Vietnamese academic library sector can make their best efforts to deliver the full benefits of twenty-first century technologies and their associated business practices in support of rapidly improving higher education and research outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey on library cooperation and consortia in Vietnam (Vietnamese version)

KHẢO SÁT VỀ HỢP TÁC VÀ LIÊN HỢP THƯ VIỆN Ở VIỆT NAM

Để thực hiện đề tài nghiên cứu, tôi tiến hành khảo sát hiện trạng hợp tác thư viện ở Việt Nam cũng như tập hợp những ý kiến của các đồng nghiệp quan tâm đến việc phát triển thư viện và sẵn sàng chia sẻ những ý tưởng về liên hợp thư viện đại học. Tôi rất trân trọng các ý tưởng của các quý đồng nghiệp đã hoặc đang công tác tại các thư viện đại học trong cả nước và xem đây là đóng góp quan trọng của các quý đồng nghiệp cho nghiên cứu của tôi.

THÔNG TIN CHUNG:

1. Thư viện của Anh/Chị thuộc trường đại học khối nào?

    ☐ Đại học công lập

    ☐ Đại học Dân lập/Tư thục

    ☐ Đại học vùng

2. Anh/Chị đang làm việc ở bộ phận nào trong thư viện?

    ☐ Phục vụ độc giả;

    ☐ Nghiệp vụ;

    ☐ Công nghệ thông tin;

    ☐ Hành chính;

    ☐ Khác, xin vui lòng cho biết cụ thể:

3. Anh/Chị đang đảm trách vị trí công tác nào trong thư viện?

    ☐ Giám đốc hoặc Phó Giám đốc thư viện;

    ☐ Trưởng phòng/bộ phận hoặc tương đương;

    ☐ Cán bộ có trình độ chuyên môn từ thạc sĩ trở lên;

    ☐ Khác, xin vui lòng cho biết cụ thể:

CÁC HOẠT ĐỘNG KẾT NỐI

4. Trong vòng năm năm trở lại đây, Anh/Chị có thường xuyên tham dự các hội thảo hoặc hội nghị chuyên môn được tổ chức tại Việt Nam?

    ☐ Không có

    ☐ Một lần trong năm

    ☐ 2 - 5 lần một năm

    ☐ Trên 5 lần một năm

    ☐ Không xác định (vô chừng)

5. Trong vòng năm năm trở lại đây, Anh/Chị có thường xuyên tham dự các hội thảo hoặc hội nghị chuyên môn quốc tế?

    ☐ Không có

    ☐ Một lần trong năm

    ☐ 2 - 5 lần một năm

    ☐ Trên 5 lần một năm

    ☐ Không xác định (vô chừng)

6. Nếu Anh/Chị có tham dự các hội thảo/hội nghị chuyên môn như đã đề cập ở câu hỏi 4 và 5, xin vui lòng cho biết các Anh/Chị nhận đượckinh phí tham dự từ nguồn nào?

☐ Nhà nước

☐ Cơ quan chủ quản

☐ Các nhà tài trợ nước ngoài

☐ Các nhà cung cấp sản phẩm thư viện

☐ Cá nhân tự lo

☐ Miễn phí

7. Anh/Chị vui lòng xếp mức độ quan trọng từ thấp đến cao các yếu tố sau đây đối với việc tham dự các hội nghị / hội thảo nói trên.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ítquan trọng									Rất quan trọng

_____ Nâng cao kiến thức / trình độ chuyên môn

_____ Nâng cao các kỹ năng thực tiễn

_____ Kết nối hệ thống

Khác, xin cho biết cụ thể và xếp mức độ:

HIỆN TRẠNG CÁC HOẠT ĐỘNG HỢP TÁC THƯ VIỆN Ở VIỆT NAM:

Hợp tác thư viện trong bảng hỏi này được hiểu là các hình thức hợp tác ở mức độ chung chung, không ràng buộc như tham gia các hội, hiệp hội hoặc câu lạc bộ v.v...

8. Hiện tại thư viện của Anh/Chị có đang hoặc đã từng là thành viên của một hội/hiệp hội/liên hiệp thư viện nào không?

☐ Không (Vui lòng chuyển sang câu hỏi số 11)

☐ Có

9. Thư việc của Anh/Chịbắt đầu tham gia các tổ chức sau đây từ năm nào?

Hội Thư viện Việt Nam (VLA):

☐ 2006 (thành viên sáng lập)   Từ   Đến

☐ 2007 trở về sau, vui lòng cho biết năm cụ thể: Từ   Đến

Liên hiệp Thư viện các trường Đại học phía Bắc (NALA)

☐ 1998 (thành viên sáng lập)   Từ   Đến

☐ 1999 trở về sau, vui lòng cho biết năm cụ thể: Từ   Đến

Liên hiệp Thư viện các trường Đại học phía Nam (FESAL/VILASAL):

☐ 2001 (thành viên sáng lập)   Từ   Đến

☐ 2002 trở về sau, vui lòng cho biết năm cụ thể: Từ   Đến

Câu lạc bộ Thư viện

☐ 1998 (thành viên sáng lập)   Từ   Đến

☐ 1999 trở về sau, vui lòng cho biết năm cụ thể: Từ   Đến

Các tổ chức tương tự khác, vui lòng cho biết tên tổ chức và năm thư viện của các Anh/Chị bắt đầu là thành viên:

Năm:

Năm:

10. Nếu thư viện của Anh/Chị có tham gia các tổ chức được đề cập trong câu hỏi 9, xin vui lòng:

- Liệt kê các hoạt động kết nối hoặc hợp tác chính mà thư viện của Anh/Chị đã tham gia:

- Đánh dấu vào các ô thích hợp nói lên lý do để thư viện của Anh/Chị tham gia vào các hoạt động hợp tác (Anh/Chị có thể chọn nhiều lý do):

  ☐ Bởi vì các thư viện khác tham gia (Theo phong trào)
  ☐ Có cơ hội gặp gỡ với các đồng nghiệp thư viện
  ☐ Có cơ hội tham quan các thư viện ở các miền đất nước
  ☐ Những lý do khác (vui lòng cho biết cụ thể):

- Nêu những lợi ích của việc tham gia các hoạt động hợp tác nói trên:

- Nêu những điểm bất lợi:

11. Thư viện của Anh/Chị đã tham gia những hoạt động hợp tác nào dưới đây?

  ☐ Mục lục trực tuyến
  ☐ Mượn Liên thư viện
  ☐ Cùng chia sẻ bổ sung tài liệu điện tử
  ☐ Cùng chia sẻ bổ sung tài liệu bản in
  Khác (xin vui lòng nêu cụ thể):

  ☐
  ☐
  ☐ Không có hoạt động

12. Xin vui lòng cho biết quan điểm của thư viện của Anh/Chị về vấn đề hợp tác thư viện.

THỰC TIỄN HOẠT ĐỘNG VÀ KHẢ NĂNG XÂY DỰNG CÁC LIÊN HỢP THƯ VIỆN ĐẠI HỌC Ở VIỆT NAM:

Liên hợp thư viện là tổ chức được thành lập bởi các thư viện muốn hợp tác để chia sẻ những lợi ích chung. Các hoạt động liên hợp có tính chính thống và gắn liền với các thỏa thuận mang tính pháp lý được ký bởi các thư viện thành viên.

13. Anh/Chị đã từng nghe nói đến khái niệm 'Liên hợp thư viện'?

☐ Có

☐ Không (Xin chuyển sang câu hỏi số15)

14. Anh/Chị có được thông tin về liên hợp thư viện từ nguồn nào? (Có thể chọn tất cả các nguồn thích hợp)

☐ Tài liệu / Các phương tiện truyền thông

☐ Internet / Trang web của các thư viện

☐ Hội nghị/Hội thảo

☐ Đồng nghiệp hoặc bạn bè

☐ Khác (Xin cho biết cụ thể):

15. Thư viện của Anh/Chị có ban hành hoặc nhận được thư từ, công văn liên quan đến liên hợp thư viện?

☐ Có. Xin vui lòng cho biết số lượng:

☐ Không

☐ Không nắm rõ

16. Thư viện của Anh/Chị có đang là thành viên của liên hợp thư viện nào không?

☐ Không, vui lòng chuyển sang câu hỏi số 18

☐ Liên hợp bổ sung nguồn tin điện tử (CPER)

    ☐ 2003 (thành viên khởi xướng)

    ☐ Khác, vui lòng cho biết năm cụ thể:

☐ Các liên hợp khác:

1 Tên liên hợp:

Thư viện Anh/Chị tham gia khi nào?

2 Tên liên hợp:

Thư viện Anh/Chị tham gia khi nào?

17. Những lợi ích của liên hợp thư viện đã được nói đến trong các tài liệu xuất bản. Những lợi ích nào sau đây được xem là quan trọng nhất đối với thư việncủa Anh/Chị? (Anh/Chị có thể chọn nhiều yếu tố).

☐ Tiết kiệm chi phí mua tài liệu

☐ Giải quyết các vấn đề về công nghệ

☐ Tiết kiệm thời gian và chi phí biên mục tài liệu

☐ Tinh thần chia sẻ và hợp tác

☐ Khác (ý kiến riêng của Anh/Chị):

18. Vui lòng đánh dấu vào ô thích hợp thể hiện mức độ đồng ý của Anh/Chị đối với từng ý sau đây được cho là lý do của sự thiếu các tổ chức liên hợp thư viện ở Việt Nam.

	Hoàn toàn không đồng ý	Không đồng ý	Trung lập	Đồng ý	Hoàn toàn đồng ý
1. Thiếu thông tin về các liên hợp thư viện.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Văn hóa hợp tác chưa được phổ biến ở các thư viện đại học Việt Nam	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Tham gia liên hợp không đem lại lợi ích cho thư viện của tôi	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Thư viện tôi có những khó khăn về hành chính và pháp lý.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Có sự không bình đẳng trong việc chia sẻ quyền lợi và trách nhiệm giữa các thành viên.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Khác, xin vui lòng nêu chi tiết:					
6.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. Anh/Chị có ủng hộ việc thành lập các liên hợp thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam?

      ☐ Có

      ☐ Không

20. Nếu các liên hợp này được thành lập thì thư viện của Anh/Chị có tham gia không?

      ☐ Có

      ☐ Không

21. Anh/Chị có thể cho biết mức độ tích cực của thư viện của Anh/Chị trong việc tham gia các hoạt động hợp tác sẽ triển khai?

      ☐ Rất tích cực

      ☐ Tích cực

      ☐ Chỉ tham gia cho có

      ☐ Không tham gia

22. Những lợi ích nào được mong đợi từ việc tham gia các liên hợp thư viện?

23. Anh/Chị hãy xếp các lý do sau đây từ mức độ ít quan trọng đến quan trọng nhất đối với việc tham gia làm thành viên của các liên hợp thư viện trong tương lai:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ít quan trọng									Quan trọng nhất

      Tiết kiệm chi phí bổ sung tài liệu điện tử

      Tiết kiệm chi phí mua tài liệu bản in

      Tiết kiệm chi phí và công sức biên mục tài liệu

      Nâng cao chất lượng dịch vụ đáp ứng nhu cầu của độc giả

      Nâng cao kỹ năng cán bộ thư viện

      Kết nối mạng lưới

      Khác (Hãy nêu lý do và xếp mức độ)

24. Thư viện của Anh/Chị có thể tự quyết định việc tham gia liên hợp thư viện hay Anh/Chị phải xin ý kiến của đơn vị chủ quản?

☐ Có, chúng tôi có thể quyết định

☐ Không, chúng tôi cần phải xin phép

25. Ai sẽ là người quyết định việc thư viện tham gia hay không tham gia liên hợp thư viện?

☐ Hiệu trưởng /Giám đốc Đại học Quốc gia, Đại học Vùng

☐ Cấp trên trực tiếp của thư viện

☐ Giám đốc thư viện

☐ Khác, vui lòng cho biết:

26. Thư viện của Anh/Chị có cần phải tìm sự hỗ trợ của cơ quan chủ quản, Nhà nước, các tổ chức quốc tế v.v… để có thể tham gia các liên hợp thư viện?

☐ Có

☐ Không (xin chuyển sang câu hỏi số 29)

27. Nếu Anh/Chị trả lời 'Có' đối với câu hỏi số 26, thư viện của Anh/Chị cần những hỗ trợ gì?

☐ Tài chính

☐ Chuyên môn

☐ Pháp lý

☐ Sự khuyến khích đối với việc chia sẻ, hợp tác

☐ Khác, xin nêu cụ thể:

28. Trong trường hợp không tìm được sự hỗ trợ, Thư viện của Anh/Chị vẫn sẵn sàng tham gia liên hợp thư viện không?

☐ Có

☐ Không

29. Những nhân tố nào sau đây theo Anh/Chị sẽ đóng vai trò quan trọng trong việc tổ chức các liên hợp cho thư viện đại học Việt Nam? Xin vui lòng xếp mức độ từ ít phù hợp cho đến phù hợp nhất.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ít phù hợp									Phù hợp nhất

_____ Bộ Giáo dục và Đào tạo;

_____ Bộ Văn hóa, Thể thao và Du lịch;

_____ Hội Thư viện Việt Nam;

_____ Thư viện Quốc gia Việt Nam;

_____ Các trường đại học lớn, đại học vùng;

_____ Từng nhóm các thư viện tự tổ chức;

Khác, xin nêu tên và xếp mức độ:

30. Những dịch vụ nào thư viện của Anh/Chị thực sự có thể cung cấp cho các thành viên liên hợp hoặc theo Anh/Chị thư viện có thể đóng góp gì cho liên hợp?

☐ Dịch vụ tham khảo và/hoặc tham khảo ảo

☐ Chia sẻ công việc biên mục

☐ Mượn Liên thư viện

☐ Xây dựng kế hoạch phát triển nguồn tài nguyên và bổ sung vốn tài liệu

☐ Phối hợp tổ chức các chương trình tập huấn cho cán bộ thư viện

☐ Chia sẻ các bộ sưu tập tài liệu nội sinh được số hóa

☐ Ý tưởng khác:

31. Quan tâm đến vị trí, vai trò và tương lai phát triển của thư viện đại học Việt Nam, Anh/Chị có đề nghị gì cho hoạt động liên hợp góp phần phát triển thư viện?

Chân thành cám ơn sự hợp tác của Anh/Chị.

Appendix B: Survey on library cooperation and consortia in Vietnam (English version)

SURVEY ON LIBRARY COOPERATION AND CONSORTIA IN VIETNAM

As a part of my research, this survey is seeking for facts and data on current state of cooperative arrangements for libraries in Vietnam as well as obtaining opinions from my respected colleagues who are concerned about the future development of our libraries and are willing to share their ideas on the issues of consortia. I highly appreciate sincere cooperation of colleagues in academic libraries throughout/across the country and value their thoughts as important contributions to my research.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What type of institution does your library belong to?

   ☐ Public

   ☐ Private

   ☐ Regional

2. In which department do you work at your library?

   ☐ Public Services

   ☐ Technical Services

   ☐ Information Technology

   ☐ Administration

   ☐ Other, please describe:

3. What level of appointment do you hold in your library?

   ☐ Director or Deputy Director of Library

   ☐ Head of department or equivalent

   ☐ Qualified librarian (master degree or upper)

   ☐ Other, please specify:

NETWORKING

4. In the last five years, how often have you attended professional workshops or conferences organised in Vietnam?

   ☐ Never

   ☐ Once a year

   ☐ 2 - 5 times a year

   ☐ Over 5 times a year

   ☐ Unspecified (ad hoc)

5. In the last five years, how often have you attended international workshops or conferences?

   ☐ Never

   ☐ Once a year

   ☐ 2 - 5 times a year

   ☐ Over 5 times a year

   ☐ Unspecified (ad hoc)

6. If you have attended events like those described in Q.4 & Q.5, where did you get the funds from to attend the workshops and conferences you just mentioned above?

☐ Parent institution

☐ Government

☐ International sponsors

☐ Library suppliers

☐ Personal (self-cover)

☐ Free of charge

7. Please rank the level of importance from least important to most important to you, your reasons for attending a workshop or conference.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Least important									Most important

Improving knowledge / profession

Improving practical skills

Networking

Other(s), please name and range:

CURRENT STATE OF COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS IN VIETNAM

Library cooperation refers to arrangements at a loose or general level of partnership such as joining societies, associations or clubs, etc.

8. Is your library currently a member of a library association/society/federation or did it used to hold its membership of any other organisations?

☐ No (Please go to Q. 11)

☐ Yes

9. In what year did your library commence its membership of the following organisations?

1. Vietnamese Library Association (VLA):

☐ 2006 (founding member)

☐ 2007 forward, please specify the year:

2. Northern Academic Library Association (NALA)

☐ 1999 (founding member)

☐ 2000 forward, please specify the year: From   To

3. Federation of Southern Academic Libraries(FESAL)

☐ 2001 (founding member)

☐ 2002 forward, please specify the year: From   To

4. Library Club (in the South)

☐ 1998 (founding member)

☐ 1999 forward, please specify the year: From   To

5. Other similar associations, please provide the name of organisations and the year your library commenced its membership:

Year:

Year:

Year:

10. If your library has engaged in any organisations as described in Q.9, please:

- List the main networking or/and cooperative activities your library has undertaken:

- Tick the appropriate boxes to describe the reasons for your library to participate in cooperative arrangements?

  ☐ Follow other libraries

  ☐ Meet with other colleagues

  ☐ Visit libraries in other parts of the country

  ☐ Other reasons:

- Describe the benefits your library has obtained from joining these activities

- List any disadvantages.

11. Does your library participate in any of these cooperative activities? You may choose more than one.

  ☐ Online Catalogues

  ☐ Interlibrary Loan

  ☐ Group purchasing electronic resources

  ☐ Group purchasing print materials

  Other activities, please describe:

  ☐

  ☐

  ☐ None

12. Does your library have any official view towards cooperative practices like these? Please describe.

CONSORTIAL PRACTICE AND POSSIBILITIES FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY CONSORTIA IN VIETNAM

Consortia are organisations formed by libraries that collaborate on specific programs to share common benefits. Consortial arrangements are formally involved in legal agreements signed by member libraries.

13. Have you ever heard/learned about the concept of 'library consortium'?

☐ Yes

☐ No (Please go to Q.15)

14. Where did you find the information on library consortium/consortia from? (select all that apply)

☐ The Literature / In the media

☐ On the Internet / Library Websites

☐ Conference/Workshop

☐ Colleagues, friends

☐ Other (please specify):

15. Are there any official or unofficial documents regarding library cooperation or consortia that have been issued by or received by your library?

☐ Yes. Please state how many:

☐ No

☐ Not sure.

16. Is your library currently a member of a consortium or consortia?

☐ No, please go to Q. 18

☐ Consortium for Purchasing Electronic Resources (CPER)

　　☐ 2003 (initial member)

　　☐ Other, please specify the year:

☐ Other consortia:

　1　Please name:

　　When did your library join?

　2　Please name:

　　When did your library join?

17. The literature describes benefits that library consortia have brought to academic libraries. Which of the following benefits would your library value the best? (You may choose more than one).

☐ Saving cost in purchasing materials

☐ Solving technological issues

☐ Saving cost and time in cataloguing

☐ Spirit of cooperation and sharing

☐ Other(s) (your own thoughts):

18. For each of the following statements, please tick the appropriate box to indicate your level of agreement on possible reasons for a perceived lack of engagement in library consortia in Vietnam.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. There is a lack of information about consortia.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Cooperation culture has not been popular among academic libraries in Vietnam.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Joining consortia is not beneficial to my library.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. My library has difficulties in terms of in-house legislation and administrative requirements	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. There is a belief of unequal sharing of responsibilities or interests.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Others, please describe:					
6.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. Do you support the initiation of consortia for Vietnamese academic libraries?

☐ Yes

☐ No

20. Would your library join consortia if they were established in Vietnam?

☐ Yes

☐ No

21. How would you rate the level of activity that your library might have in these potential arrangements?

☐ Very active

☐ Active

☐ Just participate

☐ No participation

22. What benefits would you expect if your library joins consortia?

23. Please rank, in order of importance from least important to most important the following reasons for becoming a member of future consortia:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Least important									Most important

Saving cost in purchasing electronic resources

Saving cost in purchasing print materials

Saving cost and efforts in cataloguing

Improving library services to users

Improving staff skills

Networking

Other(s). Please name and range:

24. Is your library able to decide to join a certain consortium or do you need to ask for permission from your parent institution?

☐ Yes, we can decide

☐ No, we need to seek permission

25. Who would decide whether or not to join a consortium?

☐ The Rector / President

☐ A direct superior of the library

☐ The Library Director

☐ Other, please describe:

26. Would your library be seeking for support from the Vietnamese Government, parent institution, international organisations and others if it was to engage in consortia?

☐ Yes

☐ No (please go to Q.29)

27. If you answered *yes* to Q.26, what kinds of support would your library seek for?

☐ Financial

☐ Professional

☐ Legal

☐ Encouragement for cooperation and sharing

☐ Other(s), please describe:

28. In the situation that you could not get any support, would your library still be willing to join consortia?

☐ Yes

☐ No

29. Which of the following do you think would play a key role in organising consortia for academic libraries in Vietnam? Please rank from the least relevant to the most relevant using this scale.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Least relevant									Most relevant

The Ministry of Education and Training

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism

The Vietnamese Library Society

The National Library of Vietnam

Large universities and regional universities

Groups of libraries by themselves

Other(s), please name and range:

30. What services could your library actually provide to consortia members or what do you think your library would do to contribute to consortia agreement/s?

- ☐ Reference and/or virtual reference
- ☐ Cataloguing
- ☐ Interlibrary Loan
- ☐ Collection development
- ☐ Staff training programs
- ☐ Sharing digitised institutional repository collections
- ☐ Other(s), please describe:

31. Concerning about the position/role and future development of Vietnamese academic libraries, would you have any additional suggestions for the development of academic library consortia as a contributing factor to library development?

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix C: Participant information sheet for the survey questionnaire (Vietnamese version)

THÔNG TIN CUNG CẤP CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Ngày: 10/01/2012

Kính gởi các Anh/Chị,

V/V: KHẢO SÁT VỀ HỢP TÁC VÀ LIÊN HỢP THƯ VIỆN ĐẠI HỌC Ở VIỆT NAM

Là một phần trong đề tài *'Liên hợp thư viện đại học Việt Nam: Bối cảnh lịch sử, hiện trạng và khả năng phát triển'* của chương trình Tiến sĩ mà tôi đang nghiên cứu tại trường Đại học Curtin, tôi tiến hành khảo sát về *'Hợp tác và liên hợp thư viện Đại học Việt Nam'* tại khoảng 300 thư viện đại học tại Việt Nam.

Mục tiêu của việc khảo sát là để có được những đề xuất cho việc phát triển thành công các liên hợp thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam và thư viện đại học sẽ đi tiên phong như là minh chứng cho tinh thần hợp tác và phối hợp trong cộng đồng thư viện.

Tôi rất mong nhận được sự hỗ trợ và phản hồi của Anh/Chị cho Bảng câu hỏi khảo sát khoảng 30' này. Các ý kiến của Anh/Chị sẽ được giữ kín và các thông tin nhận diện cá nhân sẽ không được sử dụng trong các tài liệu được xuất bản. Việc tham gia trả lời câu hỏi khảo sát này là hoàn toàn tự nguyện và Anh/Chị có thể quyền rút lui bất kỳ lúc nào mà không bị thành kiến hoặc có thái độ tiêu cực. Sẽ không có bất kỳ rủi ro nào cho việc tham gia nghiên cứu của Anh/Chị. Xin vui lòng tham điền đầy đủ bảng hỏi đính kèm.Chương trình nghiên cứu này đã được Hội đồng khoa học thẩm định về đạo đức trong nghiên cứu thông qua với mã số MCCA-16-11.

Thông tin liên hệ của tôi:

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PGS. Kerry Smith
Khoa Thông tin học,
Trường Truyền thông, Văn hóa và Nghệ thuật, Đại học Curtin
GPO Box U1987
Perth WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6845
Phone: 61 8 9266 7217
Fax: 61 8 9266 3152
Email: K.Smith@curtin.edu.au

Nếu Anh/Chị có phàn nàn khảo sát này về phương diện đạo đức, xin vui lòng gởi văn bản tới Thư ký Hội đồng Khoa học thẩm định về Đạo đức trong nghiên cứu của trường Đại học Curtin.

Xin cám ơn sự hỗ trợ của Anh/Chị đối với nghiên cứu của tôi.

Hoang Thi Thuc

Appendix D: Participant information sheet for the survey questionnaire (English version)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

DATE

Dear Participant,

RE: SURVEY ON LIBRARY COOPERATION AND CONSORTIA IN VIETNAM

As part of my study for a PhD thesis *'Academic library consortia in Vietnam: Historical context, current state and the prospect for development'* with the Department of Information Studies at Curtin University, I am conducting a survey on *'Library cooperation and consortia in Vietnam'* in over 300 academic libraries in Vietnam.

The aim of the project is to find recommendations for the successful development of academic library consortia in Vietnam and an underlying aim is to foster a culture of cooperation among library communities in Vietnam, with academic libraries adopting a leadership role.

I am seeking your response to a survey questionnaire which should take about 30 minutes of your time. Your replies will be treated in confidence and information which might potentially identify youself will not be used in published material. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw from it at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. You participate in the study outlined to you by completing the questionnaire and there is no risk to you as a participant. The project has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee approval number MCCA-16-11.

Contact information:

Hoang Thi Thuc
Address: 16a Garvey Street, Waterford, Western Australia 6152
Phone: 61 450 566 856
Email: thuc.hoangthi@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

Associate Professor Kerry Smith
Department of Information Studies, School of Media, Culture & Creative Arts
Curtin University of Technology
GPO Box U1987
Perth WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6845
Phone: 61 8 9266 7217
Fax: 61 8 9266 3152
Email: K.Smith@curtin.edu.au
Should you wish to make a complaint regarding this case study on ethical grounds, then please submit this in writing to the Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee of Curtin University of Technology.

Thank you in anticipation of your assistance with my work

Hoang Thi Thuc

Appendix E: Interview protocols for library managers (Vietnamese version)

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CHƯƠNG TRÌNH PHỎNG VẤN

(Các câu hỏi phỏng vấn dành cho lãnh đạo thư viện)

</div>

1. Anh/Chị có nghĩ rằng hoạt động liên hợp thư viện có thể tác động đến việc cung cấp dịch vụ và sự phát triển của các thư viện đại học không? Nếu có, xin Anh/Chị vui lòng cho biết các vấn đề đó là gì?

2. Anh/Chị có đề nghị gì về các vấn đề như: người khởi xướng, nguồn tài chính, pháp lý, các bước triển khai, trách nhiệm và lợi ích và các vấn đề khác cho việc thành lập các liên hợp thư viện?

3. Kết quả khảo sát cho thấy đa số các ý kiến trả lời đồng ý và hoàn toàn đồng ý với ý kiến cho rằng văn hóa hợp tác chưa phổ biến trong các thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam. Anh/Chị có nghĩ rằng yếu tố này đã ảnh hưởng đến việc tổ chức các hoạt động liên hợp thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam không? Nếu có, Anh/Chị có đề nghị gì để cải thiện tình hình?

4. Anh/Chị có những khó khăn cụ thể gì trong việc tham gia các liên hợp thư viện? Anh/Chị sẽ giải quyết những khó khăn đó như thế nào?

5. Những loại hình liên hợp thư viện nào các Anh/Chị nghĩ rằng sẽ đem lại lợi ích nhiều nhất cho các thư viện đại học Việt Nam? Loại hình nào được xem là phù hợp nhất đối với thư viện của Anh/Chị?

6. Theo ý của Anh/Chị, các liên hợp thư viện đại học cần tổ chức những dịch vụ và hoạt động gì? Thư viện của Anh/Chị có tham gia vào nhóm này không? Các loại hình dịch vụ nào có thể cần phải quan tâm tổ chức trong hoạt động của liên hợp?

7. Theo nhận định của Anh/Chị, có thể tổ chức và duy trì các liên hợp thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam một cách thành công hay không? Những yếu tố nào là quan trọng nhất cho sự thành công đó? Những lý do nào có thể dẫn đến sự không thành công của tổ chức liên hợp?

Appendix F: Interview protocols for library managers (English version)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(Interview questions for library managers)

1. Do you think consortial activity might have impact on service provision and the development of academic libraries? If this is the case please describe what some of the issues might be.

2. What would you suggest for consortial establishment in terms of initiators, financial sources, legislation, implementation process, responsibilities and benefits?

3. The survey results indicated that a culture of cooperation was not popular among academic libraries in Vietnam. Do you think this factor has affected consortial arrangements for academic libraries in Vietnam? If so what would you suggest to improve the situation?

4. Does your library encounter any obstacles in participating in library consortia? What are they and how would you do to overcome?

5. What types of consortia do you think best benefit academic libraries in Vietnam? Which types best benefit your library?

6. What services and activities do you think academic library consortia should organise? Did your library join group purchasing of electronic and print library materials?

7. Do you think academic library consortia will be successfully developed and implemented in Vietnam? What would be the most important factors for their success? What might be possible failure factors?

Appendix G: Interview protocols for senior managers of association or consortium (Vietnamese version)

CHƯƠNG TRÌNH PHỎNG VẤN

(Các câu hỏi phỏng vấn dành cho lãnh đạo Hiệp hội/Liên hợp thư viện)

1. Theo Anh/Chị, hoạt động liên hợp thư viện có thể tác động đến việc cung cấp dịch vụ và phát triển các thư viện đại học hay không? Nếu có xin vui lòng chia sẻ các vấn đề đó là gì?

2. Anh/Chị sẽ đề nghị gì về các vấn đề như: người khởi xướng, nguồn tài chính, pháp lý, các bước triển khai, trách nhiệm và lợi ích và các vấn đề khác cho việc thành lập các liên hợp thư viện?

3. Kết quả khảo sát cho thấy đa số các ý kiến trả lời đồng ý và hoàn toàn đồng ý với ý kiến cho rằng văn hóa hợp tác chưa phổ biến trong các thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam. Anh/Chị có nghĩ rằng yếu tố này đã ảnh hưởng đến việc tổ chức các hoạt động liên hợp thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam không? Nếu có, Anh/Chị có đề nghị gì để cải thiện tình hình?

4. Theo Anh/Chị các thư viện đại học Việt Nam đang gặp phải những khó khăn gì trong việc tham gia các liên hợp thư viện? Anh/Chị có đề nghị gì để giải quyết những khó khăn đó?

5. Loại hình nào được xem là có lợi nhất đối với thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam?

6. Theo ý của Anh/Chị, các liên hợp thư viện đại học nên tổ chức những dịch vụ và hoạt động nào?

7. Theo nhận định của Anh/Chị, có thể tổ chức được và duy trì các liên hợp thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam một cách thành công hay không? Những yếu tố nào là quan trọng nhất cho sự thành công đó? Những lý do nào có thể dẫn đến sự không thành công của tổ chức liên hợp?

8. Anh/Chị có thể vui lòng chia sẻ những vấn đề đã gặp phải trong quá trình tổ chức và quản lý Hội/Liên hợp?

Appendix H: Interview protocols for senior managers of association or consortium (English version)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(Interview questions for senior association and consortium managers)

1. Do you think consortial activity might have impact on service provision and the development of academic libraries? If this is the case please describe what some of the issues might be.

 1. What would you suggest for consortial establishment in terms of initiators, finance (sources of funds), legislation, implementation process, responsibilities and benefits?

 2. The survey results indicated that a culture of cooperation was not popular among academic libraries in Vietnam. Do you think this factor has affected consortial arrangements for academic libraries in Vietnam? If so what would you suggest to improve the situation?

 3. What obstacles or difficutlies do you think academic libraries in Vietnam are encountering in participating in library consortia? What are your suggestions for overcoming these obstacles?

 4. What types of consortia do you think best benefit academic libraries in Vietnam?

 5. What services and activities do you think Vietnamese academic library consortia should organise?

 6. Do you think academic library consortia will be successfully developed and implemented in Vietnam? What would be the most important factors for their success? What might be possible failure factors?

 7. What recent issues have you faced in organising and managing the association/consortium?

Appendix I: The letter of permission (Vietnamese version)

Faculty of Humanities

Ngày 3/12/2012

Về: Luận văn "Liên hợp thư viện đại học in Việt Nam: Bối cảnh lịch sử, thực trạng và khả năng phát triển"

Kính gởi: Lãnh đạo Thư viện / Hiệp Hội Thư viện,

Trước hết tôi xin trân trọng cám ơn các đồng nghiệp đã trả lời bảng câu hỏi khảo sát về *Hợp tác và liên hợp thư viện đại học Việt Nam* vào tháng 1 năm 2012.

Trên cơ sở các phản hồi thu thập được từ đợt khảo sát nói trên và theo kế hoạch nghiên cứu, tôi rất mong anh/chị chấp thuận cho tôi được tiến hành việc phỏng vấn với giám đốc hoặc phó giám đốc thư viện. Buổi phỏng vấn dự kiến khoảng 45 phút tiến hành tại nơi làm việc của anh/chị vào tháng 1 năm 2013. Nội dung của cuộc phỏng vấn sẽ được giữ kín và những thông tin có tính chất nhận diện cá nhân sẽ không được sử dụng trong các tài liệu được xuất bản. Ngoài việc phỏng vấn, tôi mong muốn được tham khảo một số tài liệu là những công văn hành chính liên quan đến vấn đề liên hợp thư viện được lưu trữ tại đơn vị của anh/chị.

Việc tham gia trả lời phỏng vấn là hoàn toàn tự nguyện và Anh/Chị có thể rút lui bất kỳ lúc nào mà không gặp phải sự thành kiến hoặc thái độ tiêu cực.Sẽ không có bất kỳ rủi ro nào cho việc tham gia của Anh/Chị.

Tôi hy vọng anh/chị sẽ hỗ trợ cho nghiên cứu của tôi.Rất mong nhận được phúc đáp của anh/chị.

Chân thành cám ơn anh/chị,

Hoàng Thị Thục

Nghiên cứu sinh, Khoa Thông tin học,
Trường Truyền thông đa phương tiện, Văn hóa và Nghệ thuật.
Email: thuc.hoangthi@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

Appendix J: The letter of permission (English version)

Faculty of Humanities

School of Media, Culture and
Creative Arts

GPO Box U1987
Perth Western Australia 6845

Telephone: +61 8 92667211
Facsimile: +61 8 9266 3152
CRICOS Provider Code 00301J

Date

RE: PhD thesis "Academic library consortia in Vietnam: Historical context, current state and the prospect for development".

Dear participant,

First of all, I would like to thank those of you who completed the survey on *Library cooperation and consortia in Vietnam* in January 2012.

Based on the results of this survey and as my research design, I am conducting follow up interviews with library managers and association senior managers in January 2013. I would like to invite you to participate in a 45 minutes interview session supposed to be conducted at your office. The interviews will be treated in confidence and information which might potentially identify any staff will not be used in published material. I may also need to seek information from some of your administrative documents and would seek permission to do this at the time.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw from it at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. There is no risk to you as a participant.

I do hope that you are willing to support my request and look forward to your approval for my visit.

Sincerely yours,

Hoang Thi Thuc

PhD Student, Department of Information Studies,
School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts.
Email: thuc.hoangthi@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

Appendix K: Participant information sheet for the Interviews (Vietnamese version)

THÔNG TIN CUNG CẤP CHO NGƯỜI THAM GIA NGHIÊN CỨU

Ngày: 7/01/2013

Kính gởi các Anh/Chị,

V/v: *Liên hợp thư viện đại học ở Việt Nam: Bối cảnh lịch sử, thực trạng và khả năng phát triển.*

Chương trình phỏng vấn là một phần trong luận văn Tiến sĩ mà tôi đang thực hiện tại trường Đại học Curtin. Mục tiêu của việc nghiên cứu là xem xét các vấn đề thư viện đại học Việt Nam gặp phải trong quá trình thành lập và triển khai các liên hợp thư viện để có được những đề xuất cho việc phát triển thành công các liên hợp thư viện trong tương lai với vai trò tiên phong của các thư viện đại học sẽ là minh chứng cho tinh thần hợp tác giữa các thư viện.

Từ kết quả của đợt khảo sát này, tôi cần thực hiện việc phỏng vấn một số thư viện để tìm hiểu vấn đề sâu hơn như tôi đã giải thích trong thư xin phép được gởi đến Anh/Chị gần đây. Phần trả lời phỏng vấn của Anh/Chị sẽ được giữ kín và các thông tin mang tính chất xác định danh tính của Anh/Chị sẽ không được sử dụng trong các tài liệu xuất bản. Sẽ không có bất kỳ rủi ro nào cho việc tham gia nghiên cứu của Anh/Chị. Việc tham gia trả lời phỏng vấn là hoàn toàn tự nguyện và Anh/Chị có thể rút lui bất kỳ lúc nào mà không gặp phải sự thành kiến hoặc thái độ tiêu cực. Để tránh bị gián đoạn do việc ghi chép, tôi xin phép được ghi âm lại toàn bộ từ đầu đến cuối phiên phỏng vấn. Anh/Chị có thể cho dừng việc ghi âm vào bất kỳ thời điểm nào trong thời gian phỏng vấn.

Nếu Anh/Chị đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu, xin vui lòng ký và gởi lại Thư Chấp thuận đính kèm với bản Thông tịn cung cấp cho người tham gia nghiên cứu này.

Chương trình nghiên cứu này đã được Hội đồng khoa học thẩm định về đạo đức trong nghiên cứu thông qua với mã số MCCA-17-12. Nếu cần xác minh có thể liên hệ bằng văn bản với Hội đồng khoa học thẩm định về đạo đức trong nghiên cứu, Phòng Nghiên cứu và Phát triển, Đại học Curtin, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845, hoặc gọi điện thoại số 9266 2784 hoặc hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Nếu Anh/Chị yêu cầu thông tin thêm về nghiên cứu này hoặc về chương trình phỏng vấn, xin vui lòng liên hệ tôi hoặc giáo sư hướng dẫn của tôi theo địa chỉ dưới đây.

Hoàng Thị Thục
Địa chỉ: 16a Garvey Street, Waterford, Western Australia 6152
Điện thoại: 61 450 566 856
Email: thuc.hoangthi@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

Phó Giáo sư Kerry Smith
Khoa Thông tin học; Trường Truyền thông, Văn hóa và Nghệ thuật, Đại học Curtin
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Email: K.Smith@curtin.edu.au

Chân thành cám ơn sự tham gia và hỗ trợ của Anh/Chị.

Hoàng Thị Thục

Appendix L: Participant information sheet for the Interviews (English version)

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

DATE

Dear participant,

RE: Academic library consortia in Vietnam: Historical context, current state and the prospect for development

As part of my study for a PhD thesis with the Department of Information Studies at Curtin University, I am conducting a research project on the above topic of academic library consortia. The aim of the project is to consider the issues facing the establishment and implementation of library consortia in Vietnam and arrive at some recommendations for the successful development of academic library consortia as well as to foster a culture of cooperation among Vietnamese libraries, with academic libraries adopting a leadership role.

I would like to conduct interviews to have a more in depth insight into the issues as I have explained in my recent letter to seeking permission to meet with you. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw from it at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. In order to avoid distraction of note taking, the interview session will be recorded. You may require stop recording at any time during the interview. There is no risk to you as a participant. Your replies will be treated in confidence and information which might potentially identify yourself will not be used in published materials.

If you agree to participate in this research, please sign and return the Consent Form enclosed.

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, C/ - Office of Research and Development, Curtin University. GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845, or by telephoning 9266 2784 or hrec@curtin.edu.au.

If you require further information about this research or the interview procedure, you are welcome to contact me or my supervisor by our contact details.

Hoang Thi Thuc
Address: 16a Garvey Street, Waterford, Western Australia 6152
Phone: 61 450 566 856
Email: thuc.hoangthi@postgrad.curtin.edu.au

Associate Professor Kerry Smith
Department of Information Studies, School of Media, Culture & Creative Arts
Curtin University of Technology
GPO Box U1987; Perth WESTERN AUSTRALIA 6845
Phone: 61 8 9266 7217; Fax: 61 8 9266 3152
Email: K.Smith@curtin.edu.au

Thank you in anticipation of your assistance with my work.

Hoang Thi Thuc

Curtin University

THƯ CHẤP THUẬN

Khoa Thông tin học; Trường Truyền thông, Văn hóa và Nghệ thuật

Đề tài: *Liên hợp thư viện đại học việt nam: Bối cảnh lịch sử, thực trạng và khả năng phát triển.*

Nghiên cứu sinh: Hoàng Thị Thục

Tôi tên: _____

Tôi đồng ý tham gia nghiên cứu và xác nhận rằng:

- Tôi đã được thông tin và hiểu mục đích của nghiên cứu này là tìm ra các đề xuất cho việc phát triển thành công các liên hiệp thư viện đại học Việt Nam với mục tiêu cơ bản là các thư viện đại học đi tiên phong thúc đẩy tinh thần hợp tác và phối hợp giữa các thư viện.

- Tôi đã được cung cấp tờ Thông tin cho người tham gia nghiên cứu.

- Tôi được có cơ hội để đặt các câu hỏi.

- Tôi hiểu rằng việc tham gia có thể không mang lại lợi ích cho tôi.

- Tôi hiểu rằng việc tham gia của tôi là tự nguyện và tôi có thể rút lui bất kỳ lúc nào mà không gặp phải sự thành kiến.

- Tôi hiểu rằng bất kỳ thông tin nào mang tính chất xác định danh tính tôi sẽ không được sử dụng trong các tài liệu xuất bản.

- Tôi hiểu rằng tôi có thể cung cấp cho người nghiên cứu một số tài liệu phù hợp, trả lời các câu hỏi phỏng vấn và có toàn quyền đặt các câu hỏi.

- Tôi hiểu rằng phiên phỏng vấn sẽ được ghi âm để người nghiên cứu sử dụng sau đó.

- Tôi đồng ý tham gia vào nghiên cứu đã được mô tả bằng cách nhận trả lời phỏng vấn.

Họ và tên:

Chữ ký:

Ngày:

Curtin University
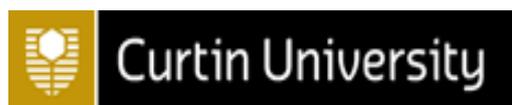
CONSENT FORM

Department of Information Studies, School of Media, Culture and Creative Arts

Title of project: *Academic library consortia in Vietnam: Historical context, current state and the prospect for development.*

Researcher: Hoang Thi Thuc

My name: _____

I agree to participate in this research and confirm that:

- I have been informed of and understand the purposes of the study that is to find recommendations for the successful development of academic library consortia in Vietnam and foster a culture of cooperation among Vietnamese library community, with academic libraries adopting a leadership role.

- I have been provided with the participant information sheet.

- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions.

- I understand that the procedure itself may not benefit me.

- I understand that my involvement is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time without prejudice.

- I understand that any information which might potentially identify me will not be used in published material.

- I understand that I may provide the researcher with some relevant documents, answer interview questions and have all right to ask questions.

- I understand that the interview session will be recorded for later use by the researcher.

- I agree to participate in the study outlined to me by hosting the interview.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

Please sign and return this consent form to:

Investigator: Hoang Thi Thuc

Signature:

This study has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee. If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, c/- Office of Research and Development, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth, 6845 or by telephoning 61 8 9266 2784.