Library cooperation in Zimbabwe: in search of a suitable model to underpin national development

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Abstract

Purpose – The paper explores library cooperation in Zimbabwe and gathers views from librarians on the need for a library consortium model to underpin national development. This study aims to investigate the development of library consortia in Zimbabwe and then propose a model that will both accelerate their development and support the country's national development agenda.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper opted for an investigative study using a multi-method research design. Data on existing library consortia, namely, Zimbabwe University Library Consortium (ZULC) and College and Research Library Consortium (CARLC), were collected through questionnaires and interviews. The data were complemented by documentary analysis including primary sources of information, for example, annual reports and brochures. Data were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively.

Findings – The paper provides empirical insights on how ZULC and CARLC are transforming the provision of library services in several ways, for example, providing for the dynamic needs of users and strategizing on overcoming rising costs of scholarly content through resource sharing. The proposed model effectively elevates the fundamental library consortium principles of cooperation and sharing onto the national development stage, and it is novel and pioneering. The gestures and general remarks made recently by Zimbabwe Library Association and some ZULC members about national development and ZIMASSET are given rigorous and scholarly expression in this model.

Research limitations/implications – Because of the chosen research approach, the research results may lack generalisability beyond Zimbabwe. It is therefore imperative for researchers to test the proposed propositions further.

Practical implications – The paper includes implications for the development of a library consortia model to underpin national development in Zimbabwe. The existing academic sector library consortium still excludes other types of libraries from participating in resource sharing and promoting access to information on a national development scale. The proposed library consortium model providing for nation-wide access to information is critical in realising national development goals in Zimbabwe. Currently, academic library consortia are contributing immensely through supporting learning, teaching and research in their respective institutions. Such benefits can also be extended to all institutions through a national library consortium to support development in Zimbabwe.

Originality/value – This paper fulfils an identified need to study how the development of a nation-wide library consortium model can be realised. There is relatively little researched information on library cooperation and library consortia and national development in Southern Africa with specific reference to Zimbabwe. The paper seeks to close the gap by providing information on library cooperation and library consortia and national development in Zimbabwe.

Keywords Zimbabwe, Resource sharing, Access to information, Library cooperation, National development

1. Introduction

The twenty-first century has seen libraries evolving new strategies to overcome numerous challenges, for example, underfunding and increasing costs of library resources

([Chisita, 2017](#)). The development of several models of library consortia in different parts of the world provides lessons for Zimbabwe on how to overcome challenges of accessing information to support learning, teaching and research. [Neal (2011)](#) describes "cooperation" as a part of research libraries' professional DNA which enable such institutions to adjust given the transition from knowledge scarcity over the centuries, to data and information overabundance in the twenty-first century. This statement suggests that library cooperation has been a constant for service, success and survival in the knowledge society. [Okeagu and Okeagu (2008)](#) state that library co-operation has to be based upon common will, common goals that are simple and convincing for paymasters and organizational structures which help in crossing organizational boundaries, as well as existence of an agreeable and efficient agent or agencies Also, it is apparent that increasing collaboration, partnerships, joint ventures and collectives of all types amongst different library entities will affect the national development and the future of library cooperation in Zimbabwe.

2. Statement of the problem
The development of library consortia is a universal trend and Zimbabwe is no exception. Library cooperation amongst some Zimbabwean libraries is characterised by basic inter-library loans (ILL) ([Chisita, 2017](#)). However, in the modern information and communication technology (ICT) era, Zimbabwean libraries should go beyond inter library loans by adapting cooperation models that bring economics of scale and support national development goals. Library consortia have the potential to contribute immensely to national development through providing access to information to users. Currently, in Zimbabwe, only academic libraries are organised into library consortia in Zimbabwe. The other types of libraries including school and public are not benefitting from consortial initiative when compared with those in South Africa, Kenya, Zambia and Ghana.

The problem is that without a suitable model for nation-wide access to electronic scholarly content, the realisation of national development goals as spelt out in the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio Economic Transformation [[Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET), 2013-2018](#)] economic blue print will be unachievable. As a result, the lack of a harmonised national library consortia system and model will affect the success of national development plans, as access to information underpins all the clusters of Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZIMASSET) ([Chisita, 2017](#)). Zimbabwe desperately needs a library consortium model with capacity to provide for nation-wide access to information for sustainable development.

The proposed library consortium model resonates well with the country's ZIMASSET blueprint with regard to providing access to learning, teaching and research. The academic libraries are critical to the realisation of ZIMASSET objectives and sustainable development goals. Access to high-quality information by researchers and scholars is critical component for national development, hence the need for a vibrant national library consortium ([Chisita, 2017](#)). The success of ZIMASSET cannot be accomplished without a high-quality human capital base and hence the need for research on innovative academic library services.

This research study aimed to examine library cooperation in Zimbabwe and recommend a suitable model for national development. The research study also proposes practical ways to improve the services of library consortia. There were some limitations to this study, for example, although the findings and conclusions of the study may be useful to other countries, they cannot be generalised as being valid for them. Zimbabwe has its own unique socio-economic and political environment which contrasts sharply with any other country in the world.

3. Literature review

Ngozi (2010) explains how ICTs have precipitated a paradigm shift in the provision of library services. Libraries have moved from owning specific physical information items to providing access to many information sources, regardless of their format and location. The author states that the shift from ownership to access and from depositories to repositories appears to be a force that promotes consortia building. The formation of library consortia at national and international levels has grown because of the information explosion, user-need diversity, financial constraints and inability to maintain current services (Kaur, 2013). Consortia partners gain monetary and non-monetary benefits through leveraging their power as a group, not only for costing but also for licensing rights.

Annasi and Hussaini (2011, p. 1) observed how the digital age has had a profound impact on the nature, volume and variety of information resources, such that no single library can provide all the resources for effective service delivery. Chisita and Chiparaushe (2016) state that the twenty-first century has witnessed a heightened increase in the development of library consortia in Africa. This development has triggered a fundamental re-think and innovation amongst academic librarians to chart the way forward in a wired and networked technology-driven twenty-first century. Annasi and Hussaini (2011, p. 1) note that collaboration and resource sharing is now a global phenomenon that university libraries will ignore at their peril.

An overabundance of information necessitates libraries using the most efficient technologies to manage operations and optimize resource usage. ICT use in libraries is evidenced *inter alia* by "integrated library systems", library Web servers, digital libraries, knowledge portals, "institutional repositories" (IRs) and general communications hardware and software (Asamoah-Hassan, 2012). Mapulanga (2013) states that ICTs are improving the use of specialised and non-specialised search technologies to facilitate federated searches of e-resources and retrieval.

The twenty-first century has seen libraries evolving new strategies to overcome numerous challenges, for example, underfunding and increasing costs of library resources. The development of several models of library consortia in different parts of the world is a direct response to the need to overcome challenges emanating from dynamic and complex user needs. A number of regional consortia have emerged in recent years collaborating in sharing resources and attempting to overcome the legacy of a skewed and fragmented system of higher education (Reddy, 2000).

It is important for libraries to collaborate to share resources, but understanding the complex nature of library consortia models is equally important to ensure that the right decisions for the benefit of users will be made (Chisita, 2017). Technical, social, economic and political challenges emanating from inter-library cooperation can be overcome if due consideration is given to the characteristics and choice of an appropriate model to adopt to improve resource sharing (Chisita, 2017).

Inter-organisational cooperation provides the context for library cooperation and library consortia. Katsirikou (2012, p. 338) defines inter-organizational systems as networks of company systems that permit institutions to share information and interact electronically irrespective of time and space barriers.

Wolf and Bloss (2000) state that the history of cooperation can be traced to the nineteenth century as reflected by cooperation between American and European higher education libraries. Cooperation amongst libraries takes many forms depending on purpose or function of library consortia. Academic libraries have over decades developed important forums for cooperation, for example, shared cataloguing, inter-library loan and document

delivery, off-site shelving facilities, joint licensing of electronic content and many similar activities (Neal, 2012).

Lal (2012) states that the primary purpose for establishing a consortium was to share physical resources, but this mode of cooperation has undergone transformation because of the proliferation of e-resources. Naggy (2006) argues that there is a need to conduct research on relationship characteristics such as power, trust, commitment and sustainability among other factors to understand IOS adoption. There are numerous benefits that can be derived from membership of library consortia, as outlined next.

Cooperation is central to inter-organisational systems because it can make or break partnerships. Cooperation is critical for the survival of academic libraries in the knowledge age but its success hinges on the commitment of members to a common cause.

Successful cooperation is dependent upon a number of factors, for example, inter-organizational trust, common objectives to participate in the group, uniformity of the group members, cooperation of the group members, planning, consistency, focus and engagement of stakeholders (Bakker *et. al.*, 2006). Library cooperation should be viewed in local and global contexts, and planning should consider the interests and aspirations of key stakeholders (Chisita, 2017).

The success of library consortia is underpinned by the commitment of members who share and envisage a future based on mutual reciprocity. Molefe (2003) views library cooperation as a series of long-term activities that needs proper planning to ensure future sustainability. He states that participants in any cooperative initiative must appreciate the need and advantages of such cooperation and that key stakeholders including participating librarians, parent organisations and primary clients should have a clear perspective of the operations of the cooperation to ensure the success of the partnership.

It should be noted that goals and mission statements are central in giving direction to library consortium. Library consortium goals are premised on providing unlimited access to e-resources, organisational restructuring, identifying new services and striving for cost-effective ways to provide service (Guzzy, 2010). The future trajectory of library consortia is dependent upon defined goals, a vision and a mission. Goals, mission, vision and core values are critical elements of an organization strategic plan. Library consortia exist to realise shared goals even though such goals vary depending on types of consortia.

3.1 Consortia models

Globally, different library consortia models have emerged as a result of factors such as mission, sources of funding and participants' affiliation, among others. Hormia-Poutanen *et al.* (2006) state that there are numerous models in developed countries for consortia. Library consortia progress from one model to another as members strengthen their association through a common agenda and a desire to widen participation in consortia activities. It is important to note that models are designed to suit local realities with regard to the needs of users and availability of resources. The following sections will focus on various consortia models.

Library consortia models have their merits and demerits, as well as their differences and similarities. Ghosh (2006), after studying library consortia in India, concluded that each model has its advantages and disadvantages. They noted that there was no single best model for a consortium but recommended developing eclectic models. The models compared here are potentially suitable for Zimbabwe, but only deeper investigation will reveal the most appropriate candidate.

The loosely knit model is a local or regional consortium formed at the basic level of any organisation or community (Allen and Hirshon, 1998). Such a model develops from

cooperation with regard to ILL, or reciprocal borrowing and automated library and information services. The loosely knit model is a foundation for member libraries to strengthen their relationships or partnerships by entering into more complex and innovative activities for the benefit of all participating members (Chisita, 2015).

The loosely knit federation operates without central staff and central funding. Such a consortium can be very flexible and incurs low overheads and generates a low-level of return. This model does not have a structure, other than an understanding between the members to work together (Andrews, 2007).

This is a traditional model of library consortium characterised by a membership consisting of a minimum of two libraries. Examples of such models include bilateral exchange, pooling, dual service and service-centre models. Guzzy (2010) notes that in the USA, there are library consortia that initially developed without recognizable membership levels, for example, the Missouri Bibliographic Information User System and the Community College Library Consortium. However, over time, these consortia evolved into formal entities with permanent structures. This library consortia model can be used perhaps as a point of departure basis for Zimbabwe.

The multi-type library consortia model differs from the loosely knit federation, in that it receives funding from a central authority, as well as from government and other sources. Examples of the multi-type consortia include the Louisiana Library Network (LOUIS) in the USA, which is self-funded even though it receives grants from government. A multi-type model unites different types of libraries. The other advantage of such a model is that it integrates information resources of all types of libraries. Such models are useful for Zimbabwe because the existing consortia only provide for the needs of academic and research libraries (Ghosh *et al.*, 2006).

Member libraries can benefit from central staff and voluntary cooperation among members. This model caters for members consisting of different types of libraries to achieve a common goal and vision. However, the challenge will be to reconcile the divergent information needs of the different types of libraries. This model can work for Zimbabwe because the two sector-specific consortia can provide direction to other libraries that are left out and connect them to the goal of supporting the national development agenda. This model usually exists as a legal entity, making it ideal for Zimbabwe where legitimacy and legal status will benefit the purpose of extending the consortium across the country's libraries.

In Europe, Asia and some parts of Africa, the national centralized library consortia models are quite common. Such consortia are funded from membership, local and central government. Centrally funded, state-wide consortia usually have a sponsoring agency and probably a separate source of funds.

National library consortia models go beyond traditional roles such as resource sharing and collaboration for mutual benefit into digital storage, access and preservation, acquisition and sharing e-journals, cooperative processing of information, capacity building, negotiating licenses, negotiations for online access, metadata management, resource sharing networks, Institutional repositories, database licensing, management of electronic thesis and dissertations and courier services. They can address larger matters of national importance given their countrywide presence and their ability to connect with other national and international organisations. Such a model would be most suitable to support national development.

Regional library consortia may not be useful for Zimbabwe, as libraries are concentrated in the capital cities of the provinces of Harare, Bulawayo and the Midlands. Such a model

would mostly benefit regions that are already resource-endowed, or those with a higher concentration of industry, commerce and education in Zimbabwe.

The single-type library consortium model provides for the needs of a specific or unique group of libraries. Zimbabwe already has this type of library consortium with Zimbabwe University Library Consortium (ZULC) and College and Research Library Consortium (CARLC). This model is not ideal for countries like Zimbabwe because it excludes other libraries and provides primarily for sector-specific interests. In academic libraries, single-type library consortia models are ICT-driven with WiFi, high bandwidth, common integrated library management systems, bibliographic standards, open data, cloud storage, metadata harvesting and open access initiatives (Taole, 2008). The single-type library consortium is not ideal for Zimbabwe because it will result in duplication of effort and a waste of resources. Zimbabwe needs a library consortium model that can accelerate the growth of other types of libraries and that can support the national development trajectory as set out in ZIMASSET (Chisita, 2017). Such a model has the potential to bring together all types of libraries.

4. Research design

The researcher used a mixed method approach consisting of qualitative and quantitative. The researcher derived answers to the main research question from the data generated through quantitative and qualitative investigation. Berg (2001) distinguished between qualitative and quantitative research, arguing that qualitative research referred to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things, while quantitative dealt with measurements. The researcher used the two approaches to produce statistical and descriptive data. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a better understanding of a research problem than either research approach on its own (Berg, 2001; Creswell, 2007; Fidel, 2008).

The "mixed methods' combine quantitative and qualitative techniques (Creswell, 2013; Fidel, 2008; Creswell, 2007). Mixed methods research can also help bridge the schism between quantitative and qualitative research (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2004). The researcher chose this strategy, as it combines the strength of the two research approaches. It integrates quantitative and qualitative research methods in one study.

The researcher used this approach because it enabled a comprehensive evaluation of Zimbabwe's library consortia with regard to their special challenges and potential to contribute to national development. Data were collected from academic libraries subscribing to the ZULC and the CARLC. Brief elaborations of these approaches follow next.

4.1 Research sites and sampling techniques

The research sites for this study are academic libraries subscribing to the ZULC and the CARLC. The researcher selected ten members from ZULC and five members from CARLC as research sites (Tables I and II). ZULC was established in 2001, and in 2015, it had 15 member institutions (ZULC, 2015). Its work revolves around resource sharing, networking and advocacy to support national development.

CARLC was established in 2000 to support libraries in polytechnics and teachers' colleges to access electronic resources. Its main objectives are to improve library services to support learning, teaching and research in tertiary institutions.

The research sites for this study were identified through contacts made during participation in the annual Zimbabwe Library Association (ZIMLA) conferences and through purposive sampling techniques. These two steps provided the basis for selecting the research sites. The main aim of sampling is to get a representative sample.

The sampling size affects the generalizability of the research (Connaway and Powell, 2010). The sampling procedure for the research study was guided by the basic characteristics of a population, objectives of the study and data analysis and credibility. Sample design helped the researcher to choose part of the population to be the target population. The researcher drew samples from the research population, which comprises the entire group of persons or set of objects and events the researcher intends to study.

Purposive sampling is one technique often used in qualitative investigation. The researcher chose a purposive non-random sample because the number of people interviewed is less important than the criteria used to select them. The researcher used the characteristics of individuals as the basis of selection. The selection used ensured that the most often chosen to reflect the diversity and breadth of the sample population.

4.2 Target groups
This study aimed at a sample group of 31 librarians to examine the development of library consortia in Zimbabwe, as well as challenges and opportunities. The sample came from ten institutions from ZULC and five institutions from CARLC.

4.2.1 Zimbabwe University Library Consortium library staff. A total of 22 librarians were drawn from the ten ZULC institutions. The reasons for selecting these respondents were as follows:

- level of involvement in the activities of the consortium;
- longstanding experience with the library consortium;
- library staff who represent the university at ZULC meetings and also participate in ZULC activities, for example, working groups; and
- providing information and share experiences on the activities of ZULC.

4.2.2 College and Research Library Consortium library staff. The researcher chose library staff from selected libraries of the CARLC. This group included assistant librarians. This target population consisting of nine respondents from the five institutions were chosen because of:

- uniqueness of CARLC membership, which differs from ZULC;
- requirement to learn more about their experiences with library consortia; and
- level of involvement with CARLC activities since its inception.

The ways in which the data were collected from these target groups are explained below.

5. Data collection instruments
The method for this study, which combines the quantitative and qualitative approaches explained above, is the survey method. The researcher relied on interviews, questionnaires and document analysis as data collection tools. Questionnaires and interviews are often used together, as the former provide evidence of patterns amongst large populations, and the latter produced in-depth insights on participant attitudes, thoughts and actions (Kendall, 2008). The researcher chose these data collection techniques because they are efficient, practical, feasible and allow for in-depth investigation.

5.1 Analysis and interpretation of data

The researcher administered 31 questionnaires to 31 respondents. The respondents, located at 15 academic libraries, consisted of ten from ZULC and five from CARLC. The purposive sample was drawn from academic libraries located in the ten provinces of Zimbabwe.

5.1.1 Location and number of responses. The researcher distributed nine questionnaires to five CARLC member institutions of which three are located in Harare, one in Mutare and one in the Midlands. Academic institutions subscribing to CARLC focus on technical and vocational education. The institutions offer tertiary courses in various disciplines. Although CARLC members are located in the ten provinces of Zimbabwe, there are more in Harare province because it is the capital city and has a higher concentration of tertiary education institutions.

Figure 1 illustrates the percentages of participants from CARLC who responded to the questionnaire.

The researcher also distributed questionnaires to 22 librarians at ten ZULC member institutions, and all (100 per cent) questionnaires were returned. The contribution varies from, for example, 18.2 per cent, $n = 4$ for the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), to 13.6 per cent, $n = 3$ for the National University of Science and Technology and 4.5 per cent, $n = 1$ for the reformed UZ.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires to ZULC member institutions in seven of the ten provinces of Zimbabwe. Harare province has more consortium activity and membership. The five universities in Harare are Harare Institute of Technology (HIT), University of Zimbabwe (UZ), Women's University of Africa (WUA), Catholic University and the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). The University of Zimbabwe (UZ) and the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) are among the original members of ZULC, while the rest joined between 2002 and 2015. The ZOU was established in 1999, and it is the only open distance learning institution in Zimbabwe.

5.1.2 Which library consortia models are suitable for Zimbabwe? Zimbabwe currently has a sectoral (academic) consortia model, and this question sought to discover the
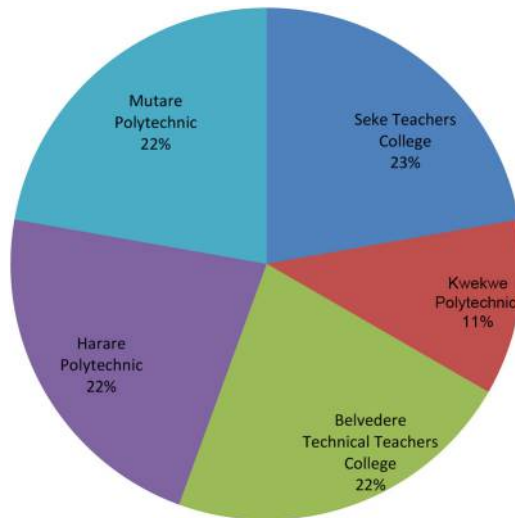

Figure 1. CARLC responses to questionnaire

respondents' level of understanding about the kinds of models, as well as the level of consensus on which model is the most suitable for the future of Zimbabwe. Respondents from ZULC chose several consortium models. In total, 2.7 per cent ($n = 5$) indicated preferences for the multi-type model, 36.3 per cent ($n = 8$) indicated a preference for the sectoral model, 9.01 per cent ($n = 2$) preferred regional, 22.7 per cent ($n = 5$) preferred national, 9.09 per cent ($n = 2$) preferred all of the above except regional and there was 0 per cent for others. High percentages of respondents (22.7 per cent, $n = 5$ and 22.7 per cent, $n = 5$) indicated that they preferred a multi-type and national library consortium models implying some level of understanding that Zimbabwe's different types of libraries would benefit from a comprehensive model, and that this would assume a national scope. At the same time, they probably did not understand the differences between national and regional models, for which there is an equal number of responses. Respondents explained during interviews that a multi-type library consortium through collaboration would best suit and fulfil the interests of all the libraries in Zimbabwe and contribute to the country's national development programmes.

A total of 36.3 per cent ($n = 8$) ZULC respondents indicated they preferred a sectoral library consortium model. Responses from interviews highlighted the urgent need for the different types of libraries including school and public libraries to organise themselves into sectoral consortia, this could be a basis for developing a national library consortium. This reflects confusion about the multi-type, sectoral and national models. A total of 9.09 per cent ($n = 2$) stated that Zimbabwe needed all the models, namely, multi-type, sectoral, regional and national library consortia. It is clear that there is a concurrence that all types of libraries should benefit from resource sharing, but this is not given the clearest expression in the choice of consortium model to achieve this goal.

Unsurprisingly, a similar pattern of responses was found in the CARLC responses (Figure 4). In total, 22.2 per cent ($n = 2$) indicated the multi-type model as the preferred choice, as it would focus more on the interests of different stakeholders; 5.5 per cent ($n = 5$) indicated a preference for a sectoral library consortia model and 22.2 per cent ($n = 2$) indicated a preference for a national library consortia model. Figure 2 indicates the ZULC responses.

Figure 3 illustrates responses on models to support library consortia development.

6. Library consortium model for Zimbabwe
The following figure represents the model to accelerate the development of library consortia in Zimbabwe. The model depicts the various features, which include communities, libraries, other library consortia, service provision, levels of operation, infrastructure, protocols and standards, access points, networks and IRs. The model will be anchored on five critical pillars namely: finance, structure, governance, functions and special features. This model is ideal for Zimbabwe because it builds on the lessons learned from consortia in other countries, and the strengths of already-existing structures and systems of library consortia established through ZULC, CARLC, as well as regional and international organisations. It will bear some similarities with the ecosystem model advocated in South Africa's LIS Transformation Charter with regard to stronger LIS sub-sectors assisting weaker sub-sectors to the mutual benefit of the entire LIS sector in the interest of national imperatives. The model will also rely strongly on state support and alternative sources of funding.
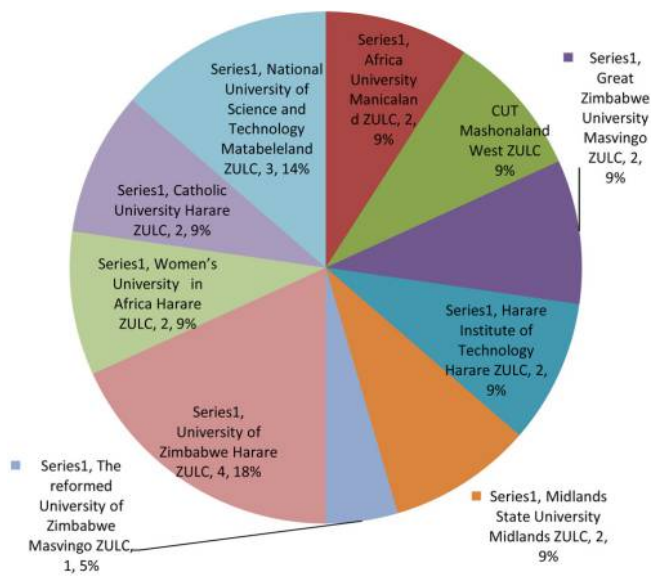
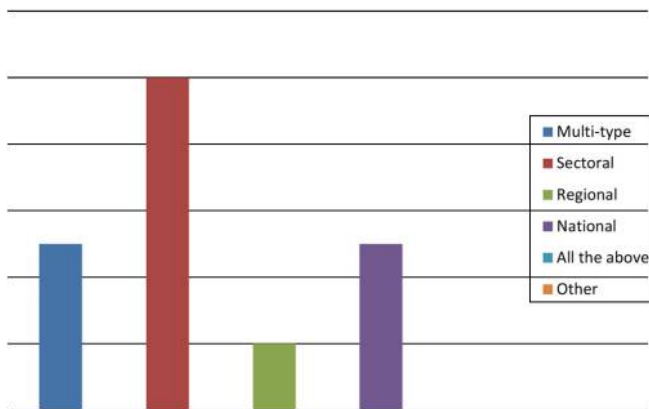**Figure 2.** ZULC Responses to questionnaire

Figure 3. Models to support library consortia development – ZULC

This model seeks to prevent the proliferation of multiple library consortia at a time when resources are limited, and when collaboration and cooperation is unavoidable. In this instance, it is not just about cooperation for academic libraries, but cooperation for all. It therefore aims at rationalising resource usage through sustainable resource sharing and the use of smart technologies (Figure 5).

The above model will have the following attributes:
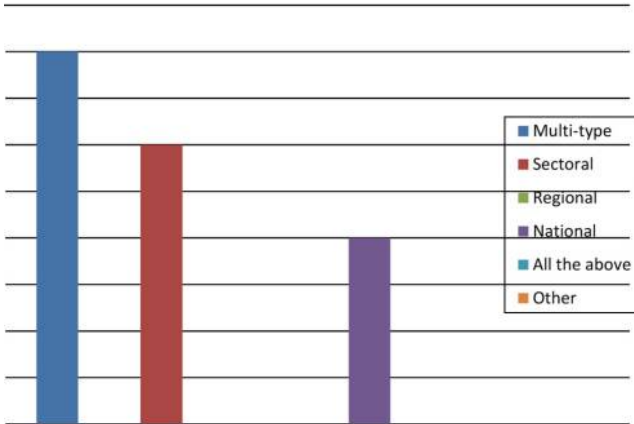
- ZULC;
- CARLC;

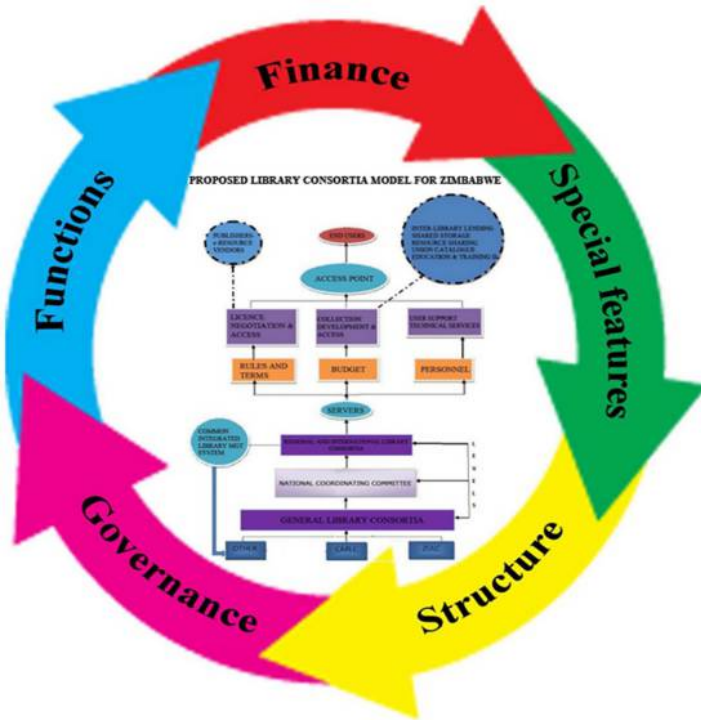**Figure 4.** MODELS to support library consortia development –CARLC

Figure 5. Proposed library consortia model for Zimbabwe federated library consortium (ZFLC)

- A General Library Consortium, (public, school, church, and other types special libraries) whose name will be decided at some future date; and
- NCC of the federal body (along the lines of SANLiC) whose name will be decided at a future date (Section 6.7). It will have connections with regional and international library consortia.

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The following sections set out the key features of this model based on the main lessons learned. The model is open to further adjustments.

6.1 Structure

The model encapsulates a federal and multi-type structure that will operate under the management of an NCC. The model will build on the strengths of the existing academic library consortia. The structure is ideal for Zimbabwe because it involves the country's various types of libraries, which can all contribute towards national development. This multi-type structure will extend the benefits of ZULC and CARLC to ensure inclusive development.

A federal structure provides for the autonomy of member consortia and supports mutual collaboration across all library sub-sectors. The three consortia will therefore exist independently but will be affiliated to the NCC. ZIMLA and the NCC should play the leading role and spearhead the process. Members could meet thrice per year, with the option of *ad hoc* meetings.

The NCC, in which all three consortia will be represented, will oversee their effective operation, promote the widening of access to e-resources and coordinate accelerated consortia development. It will also serve as a clearing house to prevent duplication of effort and support the negotiating power of member consortia. It will be responsible for aligning the long- and short-term plans of the three consortia with national development goals.

At the local level, the structure will have representation from all of Zimbabwe's libraries through ZULC, CARLC and the general consortium. At the national level, the NCC will liaise closely with ZIMLA to coordinate access to e-resources and establish bibliographic standards that ensures interoperability. The NCC as an overseeing agency with help from ZULC will also be responsible for reconciling budgets for the three library consortia with specific reference to raising grants from government and other institutions. It will play a role similar to that of OCLC in the USA and will coordinate shared storage for physical and electronic resources. At the international level, the NCC will seek affiliation to regional and international bodies, such as Electronic Information for Libraries, International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications and International Coalition of Library Consortia to benefit from discussions, debates and workshops to keep members abreast of current e-resources information, pricing practices of e-resources, information on e-content providers and vendors and critical management issues.

6.2 Finance

The library consortia in the model (ZULC, CARLC and the General Consortium) can secure funding from membership fees. Membership categories can be differentiated, for example, as full, affiliate and basic. Full membership will attract a high fee commensurate with the right to vote, while other membership categories will allow participation in specified committees and activities without voting rights. Membership categories and roles can be reviewed and redefined as the different consortia develop. Funding will also determine the overall and individual budgets for the consortia. These budgets will cover the operational costs and overheads for each consortium. Member consortia should create innovative ways of generating and managing funding to sustain the operations and activities of the consortium, such as collection development, shared storage, e-licensing, education and training, technical support and systems maintenance, continued subscription, marketing and communications and other miscellaneous activities.

Most importantly, the NCC's chief responsibilities will be to secure state funding for the general management of the three consortia and to lobby international organisations for special

project funding. The NCC will serve also as a clearing house and ensure that there is no duplication of effort. It should decide on the principles of financial management of the federal body, with a special focus on how to fund the new general consortium. If ZULC and CARLC wish to retain a certain measure of financial autonomy, then decisions should be made about which budget items should be shared and which should not. All of these matters should eventually be spelled out in an agreement to which all parties should consent and abide.

6.3 Governance
Good governance and service delivery are closely linked because quality service delivery results from effective structures of governance. Governance in the proposed model is premised on a system that will eliminate deficiencies relating to human and institutional capacity. The model incorporates a system of accountability and end-user engagement through regular feedback to ensure good governance. Items to be included are the terms of office, election procedures and compliance with ethics and integrity policies. This implies regular review of structures, strategic direction, legal and policy frameworks, accountability and openness. The NCC will be tasked to put these in place and monitor their effectiveness. The model for Zimbabwe ultimately aims to improve quality of service for the benefit of end-users.

It is critical that a library consortium should exist as a legal entity because of ownership of properties and engagement in contractual obligations with vendors and publishers. The legal basis and policies on membership, administration, ownership of assets, open subscriptions, e-content licensing and access should be aligned with the structure of the consortium, so that all library sub-sectors will benefit. The *ad hoc* committees will deal with strategic issues, for example, long-term planning. Library consortia will formulate clear statements of what they intend to achieve within a specified time frame and establish structures to achieve established goals. It is encouraging that ZULC has committed itself to this in its strategic plan document for 2014 to 2018, but in the new dispensation, plans will have to be coordinated with a view to national goals rather than sectoral interests only.

The model expects that resource sharing will operate with protocols and standards. The national consortium body will require a server for the cooperating libraries to computerize their collections and ensure interoperable metadata within the network. Participating libraries can use a standard protocol, for example, Z3950, for resource sharing to allow for interoperability of systems. Member consortia will have to ensure that proper and effective records management systems are in place for accountability purposes. However, good governance should also be aligned with socio-economic development, and in this regard, access to information is critical to achieving national development goals.

These ideals are spelled out in the goals and targets of international bodies such as the United Nations and International Federation of Library Association (2016). But for Zimbabwe, the member consortia will have to seek representation either as full or affiliate members on key national bodies and programmes, such as the National Youth Council, the National Chamber of Commerce and the Research Council of Zimbabwe. Their aims should be to sensitize these bodies to the developmental role of access to information and to facilitate this access through raising awareness of relevant databases and education in the tools of access.

It is critical for the federated library consortium to involve key stakeholders in its development strategies. For example, working with other development partners such as the National Library and Documentation Services and Higher Examinations Council will add value to the consortium's projects. The NCC should lobby to serve on various committees relevant to the provision and licensing of electronic information resources to libraries in the public sector. The main aim therefore is that good governance for the NCC will mean also

inserting itself into bodies that deal with Zimbabwe's national development and convincing them about how they can contribute.

6.3.1 Functions. The federated library consortia will fulfil the following key functions:

- licensing negotiations and access;
- collection development;
- user support and Technical Services; and
- promoting compliance with standards.

6.4 Special features

The special features of the proposed model focus on ways in which a federated consortium can promote Zimbabwe's national development agenda. The focus is primarily on ZIMASSET, e-content licensing and education (Figure 5).

6.4.1 ZIMASSET. Access to quality information and scholarly research is critical for ZIMASSET's focus on the maximum exploitation and adding value to the country's abundant resources. In this regard, the new federated library consortium can contribute in respect of digitization, metadata creation, text mining, discovery and preservation. Special consortium projects could target food security, nutrition, social services and poverty eradication. The kind of support offered by these projects could focus on providing the infrastructure for access to relevant and high-quality information and electronic content production. Through partnerships with relevant government departments tasked with ZIMASSET activities, the new consortium can share information skills and repackage knowledge in official developmental documents for the benefit of ordinary citizens. These can then be disseminated to the public through the libraries, especially those attached to the general consortium.

The experience of the academic consortia with IRs will assist in capturing and leveraging local content, which ZIMASSET stresses as enabling citizens to access education and training.

6.4.2 Zimbabwean national site licensing initiative. The range of e-resources has broadened beyond current journals to contain journal archives, reference and e-books. Library consortia have developed capacity in e-content licensing to enable access to e-resources from licensed databases. The new library consortium can apply this expertise to bring together the traditional focus on research with a focus on development. This combined research and development focus will expand affordable access to e-resources that target the key national development focus areas such as food security and poverty alleviation.

While the new federated consortium cannot operate like SANLiC in South Africa because of the different historical and socio-economic circumstances, there is much to be learned from the South African example. The main benefit for the new federated consortium, as with SANLiC, will be discounted pricing for the consortium members' subscriptions to electronic information resources.

The new federated library consortium will be actively involved in the coordination of the National Site licence Service to provide sustainable access to all participating members. This will promote inclusive development through incorporating all types of libraries to access e-content, but the higher purpose remains the contribution to the national development agenda.

6.4.3 Education and training. The new federated library consortium will play an important role in supporting the education and training of its key stakeholders. The new consortium will equip citizens with multi-modal literacies to enable them to effectively

participate in the realization of the governance and performance management sub-cluster through e-inclusion, e-governance and wider access to shareable databases.

Furthermore, the new federated library consortium will capacitate citizens through continuous professional development and workplace learning to realize national development goals. The federated library consortium will educate users to use information portals. The means of providing access to resources to support national development goals is critical to the success of the federated library consortium.

6.5 Conclusion

This federated library consortium model aims at accelerating the development of library consortia in Zimbabwe to underpin national development. It draws on lessons learned from library consortia in African and other countries. The model is premised on principles of sustainability, continuous engagement with all stakeholders, active participation of members and delivery of quality service. This model, if adopted or adapted, will contribute to the development of all library sectors and in turn contribute to achieving Zimbabwe's national development goals.

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