CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate CD-ROM use behavior of end-users of Sultan Qaboos University library, the Sultanate of Oman. The analysis covered among other issues, respondents' library usage behavior, use of CD-ROM databases, search techniques, seeking help. The study attempted to identify users of CD-ROM databases; investigates search techniques used; identify type of training received by the end-users, and determine the effectiveness of CD-ROM usage in the library. The survey method, using questionnaire, was employed for the study. All responses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency analysis, cross-tabulations chi-square were made to draw meaningful results related to the following aspects:

1. Demographic background
2. Respondents' library usage behavior
3. CD-ROM usage behavior

An interpretation of the findings of this survey is attempted in this section by focusing on the second and third aspects mentioned above.

5.1 DISCUSSION

5.1.1. Computer Usage in Library

The number of postgraduate students using computer in the library was found to be lower compared to the number of students do no use computers in the library. The results further result showed that, master's students were more likely to use computers in the library than the diploma students. The nature of their studies was most probably the
main factor that motivated masters’ students to use computer more frequently in the library. On the other hand, low computer usage in library by the diploma students might be due to inadequate promotion, distance from the main library, nature of coursework, and number and types of databases relevant to their information needs.

5.1.2 Information Sources

A majority of the respondents preferred to use the Internet to satisfy their information needs. Beside the Internet, online databases were also preferred source of information among the respondents. Since the Internet and online database use online connection, the popularity of these information sources among the respondents could be due to their similarity as both are accessible through the World Wide Web. Moreover, there was significant relationship between respondents’ computer use and their preferred information sources. Users who were frequently using computers in the library were also found often using preferred information source. These respondents may have found that the information they retrieve from the preferred information sources do match their information needs or that the selection of the databases was proper.

5.1.3 Information Need

A large majority of respondents expressed their satisfaction with the library ability to meet their information needs. However, an interesting number of respondents were not satisfied with the library’s provision of information required by them. This indicates that the library has not adequately addressed information needs of this particular users. It is also possible that the library management might be aware of this problem in the library, however, budget constraints might be the major inhibiting factor to satisfy information need of all its users.
5.1.4 Training Programme

Most of the respondents indicated the need for training programme that would improve their searching skills. According to participants, the training programme should be three-hour workshop using online tutorial, demonstrations and video show. This shows that, the participants do not possess sufficient library use skills. Preparing special training programmes for this group of users could help them to enhance their search capabilities. Alien (1990) found that 80% of the respondents in her survey needed assistance in selecting appropriate databases.

5.1.5 CD-ROM Usage

Based on the findings, almost all the users who participated in this survey had used CD-ROM at the university library. However, a small proportion of the respondents were found to be using CD-ROM databases search once a week. This indicates that the majority of the respondents use CD-ROM databases more than two times per week. It was also found that CD-ROM usage by the students was mainly for the purpose of class assignments, research, term paper, dissertation /thesis, curiosity and searching practice. However, preparing class assignment and research were found the most popular purpose for the CD-ROM use, while curiosity and searching practice were the least popular purpose. This might due to the fact that students give more value to the assignments/research as compared to other purposes. In addition, the quality of assignments and research required by the lecturers might encourage the students to use the CD-ROM more frequently in order to produce a quality work.
5.3 CONCLUSION

The following conclusions are drawn from the findings:

a. The use of CD-ROM by postgraduate students at the College of Education, the Sultan Qaboos University, has had effects on the students. The students have benefited a good deal from CD-ROM and they showed strong interest in learning more about CD-ROM in order to fully utilize its potentials.

b. The potentials of CD-ROM databases have not been fully appreciated by majority of respondents due to a lack of effective promotional activity by the library. This has greatly influenced the extent of CD-ROM use in library. Majority of the potential students showed strong interest in attending training programme for library use.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and observations of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for an improvement in CD-ROM use in the university library.

a) The library management must strive to aggressively promote the CD-ROM service. Emphasis should be given to enhance students’ awareness, keeping in mind the immense potentials of the CD-ROM. The promotional activities must be geared towards reaching the whole community of library users.

b) The library management must be responsive to the training needs of users related to CD-ROM technology. Different training approaches must be employed keeping in mind different backgrounds and information needs of the user groups.

c) The library management should evaluate the CD-ROM databases available in their
collections. A similar user survey must be carried out to precisely determine the information needs of library users. Combination between the library user information needs and the collection of CD-ROM databases should indicate the adequacy of the database collection.

d) The library management should emphasize on enhancing the role of reference librarian to provide the best type of assistance and instruction in the use of CD-ROM. Education and training of library users for CD-ROM use should be a high priority.

The results of this survey should be a beginning of many related researches in the Sultanate of Oman, including:

i. A similar survey should be conducted covering students from other academic disciplines in the Sultan Qaboos University. This will not only help update the current information about CD-ROM use at the university, but also provides a holistic analysis for the existing situation.

ii. There is a need for a more in-depth study concerning CD-ROM services. This should address areas such as end-users' satisfactions, end-users' database selection, effectiveness of reference service, bibliographic instruction, and needs assessment of various categories of users in relations to the database collection in the library.