

# THE CURRENT STATUS OF RESOURCE CENTRES IN MALAYSIAN CHINESE SCHOOLS

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## ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this study was to assess the current status of the School Resource Centres in the Chinese schools in Malaysia. It is also aimed at finding out the ways in which libraries in Chinese schools are being administered, characteristics of their collections, relationships between size and development, and some of the problems faced.)

This study primarily used the postal questionnaire for data collection. Telephone interviews were carried out to gather supporting evidence. Two hundred and two copies of the questionnaire were sent, 60 to independent secondary schools and 143 to primary schools, throughout the country. A total of 160 (79.2%) were returned the questionnaires, of which 43 (71.7%) were from secondary schools and 117 (82.4%) from primary schools.

The responses showed that most of the Chinese schools were small in size, with almost 50% having less than 500 students and less than 30 teachers. More than 90% of the responding primary schools had a library committee, but only 44.2% of the secondary schools had one. Where present, the main activities of this committee were organizing activities and acquisition of materials. Students were represented in the majority of these committees.

The findings showed that secondary schools were well-equipped with technology, including some with Internet and multimedia, and even a homepage. However, primary schools were poor in technology. None of primary schools had automated systems. The main source of budget was the school fees and contributions from the Board of Directors in secondary and government aid in primary schools. The usage of school resource centres was mainly for leisure reading. The mean size of book collection in secondary school libraries was 28,883, while in primary schools it was 12,373. The mean number of books per pupil was 25.90 in secondary schools and 14.41 in primary schools. The collection was primarily in the Chinese language in secondary schools, but was more balanced between Chinese, English and Bahasa Malaysia in primary schools. The majority of school resource centres did not have a collection development policy.

The main problems faced by the SRCs in both secondary and primary schools were the lack of finances, lack of professional or trained staff, and lack of accommodation.

Chinese school resource centres are still traditional and have not fully adopted the resource centre concept. More development is needed, especially in the areas of administration, collection development, incorporation of technology and usage.