

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to assess the current status of Chinese school resource centres (SRC) in Malaysia. The assessment was intended to provide a scenario of the administration and staffing, physical facilities, budget, technology, usage, services provided, collection and problems faced.

In particular, the study examined the following questions:

1. How are the SRCs in the Chinese schools in Malaysia administered, in term of:
 - a. Personnel and staffing
 - b. Budget
 - c. Physical facilities
 - d. Technology
 - e. Usage
 - f. Services
2. What are some of the characteristics of the collections in the SRCs in Malaysian Chinese schools?
3. Is there any relationship between the population of pupils and the size of SRC?
4. What, if any, are the main problems faced in SRCs?

Research Methodology

The methodology used in this study was survey research. The survey allowed the author to gather information from a large population spread throughout the country. The survey helped save time and money, without sacrificing efficiency, accuracy, or information adequacy in the research process.

This study primarily used the postal questionnaire for data collection. Interviews through telephone were carried out to gather supporting evidence .

Development of Instrument

The literature was reviewed to examine guidelines and similar research studies that used questionnaires to gain more knowledge on SRCs. The questionnaire, *The Current Status of Resource Centres in Malaysian Chinese Schools* (see Appendix B), was then designed based on the relevant literature, including Provision of Library Services by Hong Kong Schools (Kan 1976) and An Analysis of Secondary School Libraries in Israel (Yitshaki and Shoham 1990), and some previously used questionnaires like An International Comparative Study of School Libraries (Singh 1993), and *The Statistical Surveys on Libraries in Republic of China* (台 闽 地 区 图 书 馆 统 计 调 查) by The National Central Library, Taiwan (台 湾 国 立 央 图 书 馆 1992) [The National Central Library 1992].

The questionnaire comprised 9 parts, and there were 60 questions, both open-ended and close-ended. The questions dealt with background information, administration

and staffing, the collection, budget, physical facilities, technology, usage, services provided and problems faced.

The questionnaire was drafted in English. It was then translated into Bahasa Malaysia and the Chinese language. The translation was done by someone who proficient in both Bahasa Malaysia and Chinese. Approval was obtained from the Ministry of Education for use of Bahasa Malaysia since it is the official language of Malaysia, whereas Chinese, which is the language normally used in Chinese schools and by teacher-librarians, was used for the actual questionnaire.

Pre-Testing

In order to strengthen the questionnaire and to prevent misunderstanding of the questions, the questionnaire was sent to several schools prior to the actual study.

Eight sets of questionnaire were sent to selected schools on 7th September 1996 and six sets of questionnaire were returned.

The open-ended questionnaires were corrected after receiving the pre-tested questionnaire from the respondents. Some questions relating to job responsibilities, services provided, etc. were also answered objectively.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was all Chinese schools in Malaysia. This included independent secondary schools and National-type primary schools (Chinese) throughout the country. The total number of Chinese independent secondary schools was 60 (Dong

Zong 1996) while the total number of Chinese National-type Primary Schools was 1285 (Ministry of Education, 1996).

From this population, a stratified random sample was selected comprising all the 60 independent secondary schools and 142 (approximately 10%) of the national-type primary schools from each state. The selection of the primary schools was based on the Directory of Educational Organisations published by The United Chinese School Teachers' Association of Malaysia (UCSTAM) (教总 1992).

Data Collection

In this study, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the necessary data. The data collected included the background information of the respondents; whether the school has a school library committee; the administration of SRCs in Chinese schools; the professional qualification of the librarians or teacher-librarians; the selection tools used; the classification system used; the characteristics of the collections; the budget per year; the size of the SRCs; the usage of the SRCs; physical facilities and technology provided; the services provided and the problems faced by the SRCs.

The actual questionnaire was distributed to the schools on 2nd October 1996 and respondents were given a month to complete the questionnaires. Follow-up letters were also sent out on 14th October 1996 as a reminder.

Telephone interviews were carried out after receiving the questionnaire as some of the information provided was not clear.

Distribution and Return of Questionnaires

Two hundred and two copies of the questionnaire were sent out, 60 to independent secondary schools and 142 to primary schools, throughout the country. A total of 160 (79.2%) respondents returned the questionnaires, of which 43 (71.7%) were from secondary schools and 117 (82.4%) were from primary schools. From the returned questionnaires, no questionnaire was invalidated even though some parts of the questionnaires were not answered. Some omitted information was added by the researcher based phone call interviews. One questionnaire from a secondary school was received after the analysis had been completed, and was not included in the reporting of the results.

Data Processing

The data collected through the questionnaire was entered on to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet was then input into a data file and statistically analysed to obtain frequency counts, percentages and correlations