

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of the Purpose and Design

The purpose of this study was to assess the current status of the school resource centres (SRCs) in the Chinese schools in Malaysia. The assessments included the administration, the collection, the relationship between the number of pupils and the size of the SRCs and the problems faced.

Four research questions were developed as the basis of this study. They were:

1. How are the SRCs in the Chinese schools in Malaysia administered, in terms 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 SRCs?
4. What, if any, are the main problems faced in SRCs?

The population of this survey was 60 independent secondary schools and 142 National-type Chinese primary schools in Malaysia. The data was collected through questionnaires and telephone interviews. Questionnaires were returned from 43(71.7%) independent secondary school and 117(82.4%) National-type Chinese primary schools .

The findings of the study, based on the returned questionnaires, are summarised in the following pages.

### Summary of Findings

#### 1. The administration of the SRCs in the Chinese schools in Malaysia.

##### *Personnel and Staffing*

The personnel and staffing in both secondary and primary school resource centres included the school library committee, principal, librarians and student library assistants. The largest percentage of the personnel in the school libraries was the student library assistants in both secondary (93%) and primary (95%) schools. Principals in primary schools played a major role as administrators of SRCs. Most of the primary schools have a library committee, but less than 50% of secondary schools have a library committee.

More than one third of the teacher-librarians were without any training or qualification in the field. Most of the schools make use of student library assistants, but very few schools had clerks.

The main responsibility of the school library committee in secondary schools was organising activities, while acquisition and organising activities were the major activities in the primary schools. The main responsibilities of the principal was acquisition in both the secondary (76.2%) as well as in primary schools (92.6%). Teacher-librarians still consider shelving of books as a major responsibility, despite having student assistants. Surprisingly, the percentage for cataloguing and classification was the lowest among the responsibility categories in both types of schools. 100% of the student library assistants in secondary schools took part in charging and discharging, maintaining cleanliness and labeling books. The primary schools also had a high percentage with similar responsibilities as in secondary schools.

### *Budget*

The main source of income for the secondary school resource centres was from school fees, whereas in the primary schools it was from government aid. The budget for both types of schools was between RM1000 to RM5000 annually. The mean library budget per year of the 22 secondary schools was RM12,165, while for the 71 primary schools it was RM3,960. Of this, almost 90% was used on the collection. The mean budget per pupil was RM9.28 per year in secondary schools, while in primary schools it was RM4.58 per year.

Seventy-two percent of the secondary schools did not answer the questions by stating that budgeting was confidential and estimation of budget was based upon on the School Board.

### *Physical Facilities*

Only six secondary schools had libraries located in a separate building. Most of the schools convert classrooms into a central library. The mean number of seats in secondary school libraries was 147, whereas in primary schools it was 50 seats. The mean number of seats per pupil was 0.14 in secondary schools and 0.057 in primary schools.

### *Technology*

Secondary schools had more advanced technology, and were better equipped with technology, than primary schools. Three secondary schools had Internet and two had a homepage on the Internet. Multimedia was also provided in four secondary schools. Twenty secondary (46.5%) and twenty primary (17.1%) schools had computers. Some of the schools stated that the technological equipment belonged to the A-V rooms. It seemed that some of the schools do not consider A-V materials as part of the collections of the school libraries.

Seven of secondary schools (16.3%) had automated systems. Of these all seven had cataloguing and classification automated, while 71.4% had circulation automated.

On the whole, the secondary schools were better equipped with technology than primary schools.

### *Usage*

The period for the opening of the libraries varied in different schools depending on the school hours. Most of the schools libraries were open during school hours and during

recess. The main purpose for using school libraries by the students was for leisure reading (95.2% of the secondary schools and 97.4% of the primary schools). Secondary school resource centres were used for project work, but very few in primary schools.

### *Services*

The highest percentage of the services provided in both secondary and primary schools was circulation, (95.1% in secondary and 95.5% in primary schools. Some activities and programmes were also carried out by the school libraries as to promote the in services.

## 2. Characteristics of the collections in the SRCs in Malaysian Chinese schools.

The mean size of book collection in secondary school libraries was 28,883, while in primary schools it was 12,373.

The ratio of the number of the books per pupil was 25.90 books per pupil in secondary schools and 14.41 in primary schools.

The majority of school resource centres did not have a collection development policy.

Due to the difference of languages in book collections, 25.6% of secondary schools used two different classification system in the libraries, namely Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) and the New Chinese Scheme for the Chinese Libraries (NCS). 74.4% of secondary schools used a recognised classification systems. In primary school libraries, 79.5% used DDC and only 1.8% used NCS.

The largest percentage of books by language was Chinese books with 74% of the collection in secondary schools, and 48% of collection in primary schools. In secondary schools, the ratio of Chinese books to English books was approximately 5:1, while the ratio of Chinese books to Bahasa Malaysia books was approximately 7:1. In primary schools, the ratio of Chinese books to English books was approximately 2:1, while Chinese books to Bahasa Malaysia books was approximately 2:1. The largest percentage of books by subject were also in the Chinese language with 78% in secondary schools and 90% in primary schools.

The collections in both the secondary and primary school libraries were mainly books, while A-V materials were generally not collected. It was found that most of the Chinese schools were still having separate rooms to collect and display books and non-book materials. Generally, A-V materials did not belong to school libraries.

### 3. The relationship between the population of pupils and the size of SRCs.

The correlation between pupil population and the sizes of school resource centres showed a positive relationship.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient between total population of pupils and total number of seats was +0.83 in secondary schools, and +0.50 in primary schools. The correlation coefficient between total population of pupils and total volume of collections was +0.24 in secondary schools, whereas in primary schools the correlation was +0.52.

The correlation coefficient between total population of pupils and total budget per year was +0.68 in secondary schools, and +0.66 in primary schools.

#### 4. The main problems faced in SRCs.

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

The main problem faced in both secondary and primary schools was lack of finances. In secondary schools, 65.9% of the income was from school fees. Some schools faced the problems of lack of students and this made it even harder for the schools to develop their libraries. In primary schools the main source of income was from government aid.

The second major problem was the lack of professional or trained staff. In Malaysia, the factor influencing the lack of professional or training staff is the lack of organisations that organise professional training courses. Dong Zong was the only organisation that provided professional training courses for librarians and this was only done for secondary schools. However, only one course had been conducted so far. The majority of the primary school librarians attend courses at the Specialist Teachers' Training College.

The majority of the schools lack accommodation for their collections. The library is a growing organism, where collections increase with time. In order to overcome the lack of space, some book materials need to be replaced by non-book materials, and newer technologies such as CD-ROMs.

### Limitation of the Findings

The findings of this study are based on responses to the returned questionnaires. Telephone calls were made to some of the schools as to verify the data, but the responses were generally accepted as given in the questionnaires.

Some of the schools were reluctant to provide information, especially regarding the budget, as they considered such information to be confidential.

Some of the schools did not have any statistical records on the collections which made them unable to provide any statistical information.

### Recommendations for Further Studies

The researcher believes that more studies need to be conducted on the resource centres in Chinese schools. In particular, a more in-depth analysis of selected areas of the collections, physical facilities, services, and usage needs to be done. This was a preliminary study, and more in-depth follow-up studies are needed.

Focus should also be given on secondary analysis of the data, especially to look for relationships among variables. This study, being a preliminary one, examined relationships between pupil population and seats, pupils and collection, pupils and budget, seats and collection, seats and budget, and collection and budget. Relationships between other variables also need to be studied.

Apart from the Chinese schools, Tamil schools and national schools should also be surveyed, to provide a comparative picture, as well as a more comprehensive picture of SRCs in the country.



## Conclusion

The development of school libraries in each school is different and this could be attributed to historical circumstances, geography, pupil demography, teaching and management styles and other related factors. Some are well-developed while others are not. Generally, the majority of school libraries in Malaysian Chinese schools are still very traditional and more development is needed.

This study has presented a preliminary picture on the status of resource centres in the Chinese schools in Malaysia. Some of the findings have been very encouraging and above expectations. These include the large budgets, the large seating capacity and the utilisation of technology in secondary schools. Other findings have been as expected, including the usage for leisure reading, the high percentage of Chinese materials and the problems of lack of finance, staff and accommodation. Yet, other findings are disappointing and not as expected, such as the lack of library committees in secondary schools, separation between books and audio-visual materials and the low involvement of teachers, in the school library committee.

These results are useful preliminary information for policy makers, educationists and administrators. It is hoped that they will be fully made use of.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the Ministry of Education, Chinese organisations, the Chinese community, and the schools themselves will pay more attention and put in more efforts towards the development of resource centres so as to ensure a better future for the nation and society at large.