CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since its beginning, which is prior to the Act of 1972, the National Library of Malaysia (Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia [PNM], known as PNM hereafter), was a unit within the National Archives to enforce the Preservation of Books Act, 1966. In 1977, PNM became a full-fledged Federal government department, with its own Director-General. The establishment of PNM was to further enhance the dimensions of the national identity and its creation and maintenance, processes in which PNM can contribute (Zawiyah, 1999). PNM has been preserving the collective memory of the national heritage.

In most countries, the national institution chosen to receive the deposited materials is the national library of the country. If the national library of a country is chosen as the depository library, it will be the focal point for receiving the historical, literary and cultural heritage of the nation. It is also the responsibility of the national library to assemble record and organize comprehensive collections of the published outputs of the nation for use as well as preserve them for posterity. Legal deposit ensures the acquisitions, recording, preservation and the availability of a nation’s published heritage (Bertot, 1997). Therefore, the role of PNM is to help transmit the narratives of identifying through the documentation they preserve and to create standard bibliographic record of library material published in Malaysia; as well as make available original document or copies of them as stated in The Deposit of Library Material Act 1986 (Act 331) . The latter function is intended “to provide for conservation and use of library materials published in Malaysia.” (Wijayasuriya,1984). This is to ensure that all Malaysians will have equal opportunities to benefit from the library services and facilities as well as able to access and utilize the Malaysian intellectual heritage.

This is also strongly supported by the PNM’s strategic thrusts, which mentioned that the Malaysiana Information Center (MIC) is the Center of Excellence as well as the heart of PNM. Together with this, PNM incorporated its objective in these strategic thrusts as to
strengthen the delivery of information services to meet the needs of library patrons. (PNM, 2007).

1.2 MALAYSIANA INFORMATION CENTER (MIC)

The MIC, which houses the Malaysiana materials, is located at the second and third floor at the PNM’s main building and holds a huge collection of monographs, serials, conference papers, newspapers pertaining to Malaysia. These resources support the MIC services. The MIC operating hours is from 10.00 a.m. until 7.00 p.m. It serves the public daily except on Mondays. This is to give allowances to the MIC staff to reshel and organize the materials that have been used during the weekend. Shelves reading are done by the librarians to make sure that the materials are properly shelved for easy retrieval by the patrons.

The MIC is responsible to the Director of the Malaysiana Services. The division is headed by a Deputy Director, assisted by five Assistant Directors and twenty other supporting staffs which made the whole MIC staff a total of 26 people.

1.2.1 Collections

The Malaysiana collection is a unique collection of PNM and portrays the pride of the nation. The main function of PNM is the development of the Malaysiana collection which supports the reference and information services on Malaysia. This is to position itself as the centre of excellence for the Malaysiana knowledge resources. The Malaysiana collections are well managed and maintained in order to preserved, strengthen and enrich the local content knowledge resources. Digitization of the resources are the main priorities. The MIC also strengthens its collection through the enforcement of the Deposit of Library Materials Act 1986 as well as acquisition of materials through purchase, gift and exchange programmes. The National Library Act 1972 (Act 80) which was subsequently amended as the National Library Act (Amendment) 1987 (Act A667), clearly stated the purpose and objectives of PNM which interrelated with the setting up of the Malaysiana Collections, which is indicated in the Act A667 under section 3(a) “to make
available for the use of present and future generations as a national collection of library resources.”

The Malaysiana Collections includes library materials in the printed and non-printed form written by Malaysians or non-citizens and published either in Malaysia or overseas irrespective of the language used or publication date that’s whole or larger part of the content is related to Malaysia or her people. Within the Malaysiana Collection there will be publications that will be preserved as the National Collection. As a depository library, PNM receives 5 copies of printed and 2 copies of non-printed materials received under the Deposit of Library Material Act 1986 and before this act, received 2 copies of printed materials under the Preservation of Books Act 1966. However, only one copy of every material received under the law will be preserved as the National Collection copy in the permanent stack. The other copies are either put in the service area for reference by users or kept in external (off-site) storage centers each in Penang and Sabah. In practice, the definition of a National Collection has been extended to include Malaysiana books that are in the rare collection, personal collections of notable figures that have been acquired by PNM.

The Malaysiana collection comprises all the information packages published in Malaysia and outside Malaysia whose whole or larger part of the content is connected to Malaysia, its people irrespective of the publication date or the language used. These collections are accumulated, preserved and stored to ensure availability of the sources about Malaysia to the present and for posterity. For the period preceding the formation of Malaysia retrospective acquisitions will cover Malaya, the Federated and Unfederated Malay States, Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca and Singapore and the Borneo State of Sabah and Sarawak. This is of course very much political, geographical and historical definition of Malaysia. Using this definition, the scope of Malaysiana is very broad encompassing materials published in any language.

The Malaysiana collections are also acquired through purchase as mentioned earlier, from the annual operating funds and more recently from the Development Budget as Malaysiana library materials having cultural or intellectual value is now viewed as
invaluable asset that must be acquired and preserved. This is due to the demands and needs of the users in certain topics and subjects. It has an important role to play for the users who are in the need of the Malaysiana information. The Malaysiana collections consist of those materials and subject matter that should be found on the shelves and available to patrons who walk in to the MIC. The Malaysiana collection should appeal to browsers as well as patrons who enter the MIC looking for a specific material. It can also be described as demand-based and actively used.

“In national terms, the Malaysiana collections in PNM are extraordinary. It is by far the largest as well as most comprehensive collection in the country. The decision by the (PNM) leadership in the 1970s to commence regular and wide collection of the Malaysiana materials is one of those decisions, which show real long-term thinking, and is directly responsible for the ability of scholars, researchers and others who wish to carry out high-level research on Malaysia. In this sense it is a genuine national asset and should be maintained as such.” (Zawiyah, 1999).

User needs and their level of satisfaction are vital towards the usage of the national heritage collections for future research. The statistics shows that until 2006 we have almost 1.2 million materials in printed and non printed forms at the MIC. Figure 1.1 shows the total collections of materials received by the MIC and their level of usage.
Official statistics from the Library Research Division of PNM showed that in the year of 2005 the total amount of the Malaysiana collections which includes the monographs and serials are 1,953,368 copies and the newspaper consists of 26,600 copies. The amount of these collections increased in 2006 by 3.7%, where as the total number of usage for the monograph declined 10% from 455,280 in 2005, to 364,000 in 2006. While, the usage of the serials materials increased 10% in 2006. The usage of the Newspapers closed access services had increased yearly due to the closed access service which is easy to retrieve. (Bahagian Penyelidikan PNM, 2006).

1.2.2 Services

The MIC continues receiving encouraging response from its users on the reference services provided. In 2007 a total of 61,675 reference enquiries were successfully answered while a total of 554,613 units of MIC materials were referred to by the readers. The MIC is responsible for undertaking and coordinating research activities pertaining to
libraries, librarianship, information services, reading and literacy programmes to support the library research and development (R&D) process in the country.

The MIC has several services such as reference and referral enquiries, to help patrons in their search. A part of that the MIC act as the National Center for the Inter Library Loan (ILL) services which coordinates the transactions of the materials needed in and outside of Malaysia. The total number of the ILL members until 2007 is 479 an increase of 8% from the previous year. Out of this 132 (37%) are government departmental libraries, 121 (25%) private institutions, 69 (14%) academic libraries, 75 (16%) statutory bodies and 30 (8%) non-government organizations. Two issues of Berita SPP are published in order to further strengthen the cooperation programme among participating libraries.

1.2.3 User Education

This activity aims to improve the information literacy of the MIC users and to enable them to find, retrieve and use information effectively. The programme content includes an introduction to the types of collection and their location, access to OPAC (Online Public Access Information), online databases and browsing the Internet. Apart from this, 1,941 library users were given the user instructional guidance regularly in the year of 2007. Students, teachers, parents and the public, attended these formal sessions. A part from that, Professional Lectures were also given to the new staff of PNM, non-government organizations and private sectors. This is to facilitate knowledge creation, sharing and dissemination; the professional officers are encouraged to deliver professional lectures on topics of their choice. (Warisan Ilmu : PNM, 1984)

1.2.4 Promotional Activities

To ensure that the MIC users benefit from the services available, the MIC increased its effort to promote its reference collection. This effort was manifested in the various exhibitions held throughout the year. This is to promote interest in and use of the Malaysiana resources, The MIC continues its effort to promote its services through various public relations activities, such as cooperation with foreign embassies, private
sectors as well as with the government department and its agencies through the official work visits and through the media interviews with personnel and coverage on activities that is conducted. A part from that, The MIC conducts seminars, workshops, conferences and outreach programmers to promote the Malaysiana collections to the public. The MIC publishes bibliographies on the various subjects in the Malaysiana collections such as Bibliography on Kemerdekaan Tanah Melayu, Bibliography Sasterawan Negara and many others.

1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

With the wide variety of collections and services offered by the MIC, it is essential to find out how the MIC is doing in providing quality services to its users especially when PNM is associated with a niche collection, which assembled the intellectual collection and the national heritage named the Malaysiana Collections. Although PNM does collect monthly statistics and publishes official report every month, the information received is still inadequate as it only evaluates services provided by the organization in general. Thus, it is desirable to research the use of the Malaysiana collection and satisfaction within a particular area in order to ensure the effectiveness of library services provided by the Center.

It is timely to investigate and access how these Malaysiana resources and services are utilized, as published literature emphasizes the need for an organization keeping the national heritage to meet the needs of its patrons and to seek the level of satisfaction on the services provided (Lee, 2003). However little is known about how the MIC services and collections that are being used and whether the services which is provided meet the needs of the users.

In short, libraries have been paying greater attention towards the library input, rather than the outputs although some elements of library evaluation may have been undertaken, as PNM has initiated great efforts and spending on huge investment in tracing and acquiring these collections. Research on the output of the services is vital as to determine the users' needs and satisfaction level of the service provided. Many questions remain unanswered
especially concerning users’ awareness, usage patterns and users satisfaction. Without an in-depth research, the users’ impression of the service and whether it fulfills a patrons or users needs remains unknown. These uncertainties provide a legitimate reason for research studies in this area to be taken.

All this while PNM had carried away or rather concern on the input but had never study on the output of the MIC services. To ensure that all Malaysians will have equal opportunities to benefit from library services and facilities as well as able to access and utilize the Malaysian intellectual heritage and other knowledge resources through an integrated electronic library infrastructure throughout the country. The most problematic is about the insufficient and non-updated collections. There is a need to research how far is the Malaysiana collections meeting the expectations of its users and maximizing the utilization of the service. This research also attempts to investigate the usage, the needs and satisfaction level on the Malaysiana collections and the problems faced by the users in searching for information from the MIC. Feedback from the MIC users is essential to study the performance of the service as well as the usage of the Malaysiana collections. This may assist the organization in identifying the weakness and inadequacies of the service to be improved. The research finding can facilitate PNM to gauge their standard of service and simultaneously map out their plan for strategic users’ service policy. It is time that this vital collections and services need to be study in order to enhance the MIC’s services. This was clearly stated within the strategic thrusts outlined in the review of the PNM’s strategic plan 2006-2007. (Pelan Strategik PNM, 2006).

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this study is to identify who the users of the MIC are and to find out their reasons for using the MIC sources and services. Specifically the objectives of the study are threefold:-

a. To construct a user profile of the users of the MIC and ascertain their purpose of using the services.
b. To investigate usage of the MIC collections, equipment and facilities.

c. To identify users' perceptions on the performance of the MIC assisting them to identify information sources and also to identify the satisfaction level of the services and the possible ways of improving and planning future services.

These objectives provide a basis for directing the data collection activities that can then assist the management and the MIC in improving and planning the services development.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions are posed to meet the research objectives:

a. Who are the users of the MIC? To what extent have the Malaysiana Information Center’s (MIC) collections and services been utilized by its users?

b. Has the Malaysiana collections and services met its users' expectation? How satisfied are the users of the MIC services?

c. How can the MIC improve its services to tailor the needs of the users?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH

The significance of this research lies in better understanding the users perception of the usage and their satisfaction level of the MIC services. The usage and user satisfaction should be evaluated regularly and systematically to ensure that they are meeting the needs of their users and are supporting the programs and purpose of the library organization.
Although this research is designed to be an assessment on the usage of the Malaysiana’s collection at a single library, the researcher believes that the analysis of these findings and the local circumstances that influence them have implications for other libraries in Malaysia that have their own local collection with similar settings. These implications will present as suggestions for those librarians who are interested in improving their local collection services and understanding the patterns and perception on the usage of the Malaysiana vital collections and their satisfaction on the services provided.

1.7 LIMITATIONS

This study has limited by the following factors:

a. This research design is suitable for exploring the use of MIC by the users of the library between aged 13 and above.

b. The use of library and Malaysiana services in the National Library has not been investigated before. Literature on evaluation of library services in Malaysia is also lacking. As a result, this has led the research to rely on foreign literature.

c. The questionnaires were collected within 2 weeks from the 18th of June of until 2nd of July 2007. Out of the 300 questionnaires that had ben distributed, 258 were returned. A total of 8 questionnaires were taken out because the answers were considered not usable as questionnaires were not fully answered and did not correspond accordingly.

1.8 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

a) **Collection** is the Library’s total accumulation of *resources*. It is used to refer to a branch library’s collective *resources*. (Cronin, 1982).

b) **Customer Satisfaction**: Oliver (1980) noted that the following definition
has been reposed as being consistent with the conceptual and empirical evidence to date: Satisfaction is the consumer’s fulfillment response. It is a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over-fulfillment.

c) **User education**: Every user contact simultaneously informs and educates about the services that the library offers (Hemon, 2001).

d) **Effectiveness**: The effectiveness of any aspect of library operations or service requires a judgment on how well the system is performing relative to its objectives. (Chakrapani, 1998).

e) **Malaysiana Collections**: Either Library materials in print and non-print form written by Malaysians or non-citizens published in Malaysia or overseas irrespective of the language used or the publication date that is whole or larger part of the content is related to Malaysia or its people. (Zawiyah, 2007).

f) **Quality**: Hernon (2000) noted that quality is a cognitive judgment that summarizes the exceptionally good (or bad) elements of the product, especially when compared to other direct alternatives or offerings (brands). In a similar vein, value is a judgment that compares the likely outcomes of purchasing to the inputs forgone. Thus, value results when consumers compare what is to be received (e.g., performance) to the acquisition costs (e.g., financial, psychological, effort).

f) **Library Materials**: all the items purchased by a library or library system to satisfy the information needs of its users’ including books, newspapers and periodicals, reference materials and non-printed materials such as CD-ROM etc. Except for gift and special endowments, the acquisition of
library materials is normally funded through the operating budget (Drucker, 1994).

h) **Library database**: database in the library that systematically organized collection of bibliographic references or unit records representing original items, published literature or other recorded material. Data is stored in some form electronically, which can be retrieved and manipulated. (Keenan, 2000).

i) **Collection development**: The process of planning and building useful and balanced collection of library material over a period of years, based on ongoing assessment of the information needs of the library’s clientele, analysis of usage statistics and demographic projections, normally constrained by budgetary limitations. (Reitz, 2001).

j) **Readers’ advisory**: Services provided, experienced public services librarian who specializes in the reading needs of the patrons. A readers’ advisor recommends specific titles and/or authors, based on knowledge of the patron past reading preferences, and may also compile list of recommended titles and serve as liaison. (Reitz, 2004).

k) **Information Resources**: refers to colleagues, agencies and sources, whether printed or in electronic format, that are utilized, as a medium for meeting information needs. (Marchionini and Komlodi, 1993).

l) **Information Services**: Duket (2000) states that the term ‘information services’ refers to services provided by or for a special library, which draws the attention to information, possessed in anticipation of demand. This were carried out by preparing and circulating newsheets, literature surveys, reading lists, abstracts, particular articles in current periodicals, which are anticipated, and will be of interest to potential users of the
services. An operational meaning of the term information services in this study implies any service based on information such as lending of library materials, providing reference facilities, processing and maintaining information supplying programmes, research assistance services etc., which provided on demand or anticipated demand.

n) **Local Content:** West (2004) indicated that information that is specific to a community, neighborhood, or area, such as businesses, housing, neighborhood services, and recreation activities.

o) **Library Patrons** The actual or prospective purchaser of products or services. The library patron is also used interchangeably with library *customer or user* (Ross, 1997).

p) **Reference:** Syke (1976) noted that an indication of where to find specific information, for example the references cited in scholarly work, or reference assistance from library staff.

q) **Reference collection:** Sykes (1976) wrote that materials such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, handbooks, directories, etc., kept in a separate collection (usually near a reference desk) and not allowed to circulate, so that they will always be on hand when needed.

r) **Usability Evaluation Methods:** There are a variety of methods currently used to evaluate usability. Oliver (1980) noted that certain methods make use of data gathered from users, while others rely on usability experts. There are usability evaluation methods that apply to all stages of design and development, from product definition to final design modifications. When choosing a method you must consider the cost, time constraints, and appropriateness of the method.
Efficiency: We say that something is 'efficient' when it performs with the minimum use of whatever resource is necessary for it to function. Thus, if we are assessing the efficiency of an Internal-combustion engine we will be concerned with how much fuel it uses, relative to other engines of equivalent power. Athletes' efficiency can be measured by their capacity to take in oxygen and convert it to energy (Glazier, 1993).

1.9 SUMMARY

Chapter 1 presents the introduction and background of the study and its setting, that is, the National Library of Malaysia (PNM). It details the area of concern to be investigated, and the objectives of the study. The purpose of this study is to investigate and determine the usage and users satisfaction of the Malaysiana Information Center services (MIC). Three research questions form the basis of the study. This chapter also presents the significance and the limitations of the study. It ends with a listing of definition of terms.

The next chapter presents the literature review of the study.