

Services at Jabatan Kehakiman Syariah Malaysia Library: An Analysis of Arabic Cataloguing Procedures

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ABSTRACT

This case study explores the Arabic cataloguing procedures at the *Jabatan Kehakiman Syariah Malaysia* Library (JKSM) and the challenges faced in organising Islamic legal resources. The study addresses key issues such as the adaptation of international cataloguing standards, inconsistencies in transliteration practices, and the lack of standardised subject headings for Arabic legal materials. Using a qualitative approach, the research gathers insights from library staff through a group interview, focusing on their experience with cataloguing procedures and the complexities of managing Arabic resources. The findings highlight significant obstacles, including transliteration inconsistencies, difficulties in Arabic input, and challenges in information retrieval. Moreover, the study underscores the need for localised classification systems like the IUM Library Classification System for Knowledge Resources on Islam (ICSI) to better represent Islamic legal texts. The research concludes with recommendations for a phased integration of ICSI, staff training, pilot reclassification projects, and collaboration with other Islamic law libraries. These strategies aim to improve accessibility, standardisation, and the overall efficiency of cataloguing Arabic legal resources, contributing to the advancement of Islamic librarianship and supporting the broader goal of equitable access to legal information in Arabic.

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INTRODUCTION

Arabic books and supplementary materials, including atlases and manuscripts, are unquestionably vital for the Muslim World, since they encompass knowledge, culture, and history passed down from historical Muslim academics to the contemporary Ummah. Over time, the quantity of Arabic and Islamic references has been increasing not only in Arab nations but also in Malaysia, where Islam is the state religion, necessitating Malaysian Muslims to use these resources. Non-Arabic speaking nations possess a vast array of Arabic collections within governmental institutions and private groups in Malaysia, which maintain their own Islamic and Arabic collections, accessible either to the public or exclusively to members.

The Arabic collections are primarily catalogued with standard classification systems, including the Library of Congress Classification (LCC), Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), and Ziauddin Sardar Classification (ZSC) schemes for documentation and efficient retrieval. Despite their designation as universal, these classifications are regrettably inadequate, biased, and possess an extensive call number, complicating the cataloguing of Islamic literature (IL) (Robinson, 2016). The inadequacy of IL classification causes inaccurate description, resulting in erroneous cataloguing rather than appropriate thematic and subject headings (Ismail & Roni, 2011). The issue of IL in LCC fundamentally pertains to the issue of religious law (Mansor & Ismā 'īl al-Shawābikah, 2007).

As the Islamic collection expands, the classification systems ought to be adjusted to accommodate the nuances of the Arabic language and script (Olukade & Abdulraheem, 2020). Idrees (2012) mentioned that several institutions have proposed alternate solutions, including but not limited to broadening/expanding the current IL classification and subclasses, adopting and adapting different standard classification schemes, and even developing totally new classification schemes that are culturally appropriate not only for Arabic-Islam resources, but also local IL such as Pakistan, Iran, Egypt and India.

A classification system for Islam is urgently required by the Muslim World, one that can encompass all principal topics and notable subtopics within the discipline, aligning with the intended organisation of knowledge in Islam for both the current corpus and future advancements in Islamic literature and jurisprudence (Qader, 2024). The classification system must evolve in tandem with the continuous expansion of knowledge resources pertaining to Islam. In response to that, in 2002, the Library of Congress (LC) changed its classification system, designating K for Law resources and KBP for Islamic law. The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) has adapted this expansion to encompass the domains of Islamic law in greater detail (Mukhtar, Daud, Ramli, Musa & Rabingan, 2016). The extension may prove highly beneficial if an autonomous classification system for Islam is established to address Islamic law. Subsequent efforts were undertaken for these objectives, culminating in the effective development of the IIUM Library Classification System for Knowledge Resources on Islam (ICSI) in 2021 which is also accessible through a web-based system (<https://icsi.iium.edu.my/login>).

ICSI has been arranged into 14 subclasses bearing the notation BPA to BPZ. The notation is in alphanumeric or mixed notation. BP (for Islam) in the beginning of the notation is used as a continuation from the already used LC notation (A-Z). The class number will always start with three letters (BPA to BPZ) and is followed by a maximum of four digits. The classification scheme consists of 65 topics. It comprises the bulk of individual developments or expansions of topics and subtopics. The topics are arranged from general to specific and in logical and alphabetical order. The layout of the scheme conveys hierarchy and meaning by the order, alignment, and indentation of topics and subtopics. Notes are also used in ICSI class numbers and headings to indicate the scope of the topics, headings and numbers. Notes are referred to in three formats; scope notes – explains the scope of the work at a particular subject, see notes – refers the classifier to another number or subject, and confer notes (cf) – explains that related topics are classed elsewhere in the schedule.

Additionally, the subject headings list in ICSI also referred to the class number correlations, the free-floating subdivisions and chronological subdivisions. There are about 4,500 subject headings listed to date. Subject headings are arranged alphabetically, and they correlate with the class number from the classification scheme. The Arabic terms were maintained in both Romanised and Arabic scripts. It is an index to the captions (headings and subheadings) in the classification scheme. Figure 1 demonstrates an example of ICSI headings and the corresponding subject headings.

Salat al-Jum'ah	BPA511.3
UF Jum'ah	
Salat al-Jum'ah--Ethics	BPA511.35
Salat al-Jum'ah--Etiquettes	BPA511.35
Salat al-Jum'ah--Rulings	BPA511.32
	BPA511.34
Salat al-Jum'ah--Virtues (Worth)	BPA511.33
Salat al-Khawf	BPA511.44
صلاة الخوف. Prayer of fear	
Salat al-Khusuf	BPA512.37
صلاة الخسوف. Lunar eclipse prayer	
Salat al-Kusuf	BPA512.37
صلاة الكسوف. Solar eclipse prayer	
Salat al-Maghrib	BPA511.25
صلاة المغرب	
Salat al-Nafilah	BPA512
صلوات النوافل. Sunnah prayers or voluntary prayers	
Salat al-Qasr	BPA511.424

Figure 1 – Heading for Solat al-Jum'ah and corresponding subheadings with classification number (source: ICSI web)

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Arabic cataloguing and classification practices in Islamic law libraries present unique challenges that significantly impact the accessibility and discoverability of legal resources in Arabic. Law libraries, which rely heavily on precise classification and retrieval systems to organise legal texts, face difficulties due to the complexities of the Arabic language, inconsistencies in transliteration practices, and limitations of current cataloguing standards like MARC21 and RDA (Dagher & Soufi, 2021; Idrees, 2012). These issues are further compounded by the fact that Islamic legal systems often rely on traditional legal texts, commentaries, and interpretations, which may not align with Western cataloguing and classification schemes (Mansor & Ismā'īl al-Shawābikah, 2007).

One of the key challenges in cataloguing Arabic legal resources is the adaptation of international classification systems, such as the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) and Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), to accurately reflect Islamic law and its various sources, including the Quran, Hadith, and legal commentaries (Abdulraheem, 2020). These classification schemes often fail to accommodate the

structure and organisation of Arabic legal materials, which may result in misclassification and limited access to critical legal resources in law libraries (Moustapha & Ahmad, 2021).

Additionally, the issue of transliteration and Romanisation remains a significant problem in Islamic law libraries. Inconsistent transliteration practices across different institutions lead to difficulties in cataloguing and retrieving legal materials, particularly when Arabic names, titles, and legal terminologies are transliterated into Latin script (Khurshid, 2002). This inconsistency not only hinders the retrieval of legal texts but also poses challenges for researchers who rely on accurate and comprehensive bibliographic records to conduct legal research.

Another critical issue is the lack of standardised subject headings for legal resources. Many law libraries continue to use Western subject headings, which often fail to capture the nuances of Arabic legal concepts and terminology (Abdulraheem, 2020). The absence of appropriate subject headings for Islamic legal materials results in the underrepresentation of Arabic legal literature and limits the ability of legal scholars and practitioners to access relevant resources in a systematic manner.

Given these challenges, this case study aims to explore the cataloguing practice of Arabic resources on Islamic law faced by Islamic law libraries in Malaysia, particularly at the Jabatan Kehakiman Syariah Malaysia Library (JKSM). The study intends to comprehend issues related to Arabic cataloguing procedures, emphasising the development of localised classification systems, the standardisation of transliteration practices, and the establishment of culturally relevant subject headings. Addressing these issues is essential to ensure equitable access to legal resources in Arabic and to support the development of a more inclusive and accurate legal cataloguing framework in Islamic law libraries.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- a) To understand the cataloguing process and procedure in the Jabatan Kehakiman Syariah Malaysia Library
- b) To discover challenges and strategies that facilitate the Arabic cataloguing process

RESEARCH QUESTION

- a) How does the library adapt international cataloguing standards to accommodate the specific linguistic and legal requirements of Arabic legal materials, including Islamic law and jurisprudence sources?
- b) What are the primary challenges in applying consistent transliteration and Romanisation practices for Arabic legal terminology in Islamic law libraries, and how do these affect information retrieval and resource accessibility?
- c) What culturally relevant classification systems and subject heading frameworks can be used to better represent Islamic legal materials in the JKSM library, and how can they be standardised across similar institutions?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Arabic cataloguing and classification practices have received significant scholarly attention over the past few years, given the increasing need to ensure efficient access to Arabic-language materials in libraries worldwide. Recent research has examined the challenges, adaptations of international cataloguing standards, and innovative approaches to cataloguing Arabic resources. This review critically synthesises

relevant literature on Arabic cataloguing practices globally, focusing on challenges, trends, methodologies, and frameworks that have emerged.

Transliteration, Romanisation, and Authority Control

Transliteration, particularly the Romanisation of Arabic names and titles, has long been a contentious issue in cataloguing. A study by Moustapha and Ahmad (2021) highlights the inconsistencies across different institutions and regions regarding the Romanisation of Arabic script, leading to difficulties in searching and retrieving Arabic materials. This inconsistency stems from the lack of a standardised transliteration system accounting for all variations of Arabic phonology, which is problematic for libraries using Western cataloguing standards. The authors reinforce this argument, emphasising that the lack of standardisation in transliteration not only complicates the cataloguing process but also hinders the user experience. They advocate for the development of a unified transliteration system for Arabic resources, which could potentially improve the accuracy and accessibility of catalogued items.

The bidirectional nature of the Arabic script poses unique challenges for cataloguing systems that are primarily designed for left-to-right languages. According to Khurshid (2002), this issue is compounded by the fact that many cataloguing platforms do not fully support the right-to-left script. The authors note that this limitation results in incorrect or incomplete metadata entry, which in turn impacts the discoverability of Arabic resources. In fact, the complexities of Arabic script, such as its use of diacritics and the variability in word forms depending on context, create difficulties for cataloguers. Ismail and Roni (2011) provide an analysis of how the lack of adequate software solutions to handle these intricacies leads to inaccurate cataloguing and difficulties automating Arabic cataloguing processes.

Authority control, particularly for Arabic personal and corporate names, presents significant challenges due to variations in transliteration, name structure, and the use of patronymics. According to Shaalan and Raza (2009), various complexities found in Arabic names, which can include prefixes, titles, and tribal affiliations, those complexities may lead to miscataloguing and duplication in authority records. Monyela (2021) advocate for the development of specialised name authority files that could be integrated into global cataloguing systems for non-Romanised names like the Library of Congress Name Authority File (LCNAF) as proposed by Zavalina and Aljalalmah (2023).

Another issue raised by Idrees and Mahmood (2009) is the inconsistency in cataloguing Arabic names when they are used in both Arabic and other languages. The research highlights the difficulties in maintaining consistent authority control across bilingual catalogues, particularly in regions with significant populations of Arabic speakers and expatriates.

Standardisation and Adaptation

Cataloguing is the systematic organisation of bibliometric information pertaining to all available information sources within a library. It generates an inventory that functions as access points to the library's resources. A significant catalogue produced by a proficient librarian who is considered a professional in bibliographic control, information management, and the development of resource discovery tools that assist users in locating research resources. They are tasked with the provision and organisation of an efficient and effective retrieval system. Contemporary cataloguers confront the issues of the information era and the evolution of cataloguing standards from Anglo American cataloguing Rules (AACR2) to Resource Description and Access (RDA), transitioning from Machine Readable-Catalogue (MARC) to Bibliographic Framework (BIBFRAME).

Libraries have historically faced challenges in adapting international standards such as MARC21, RDA, and AACR2 for Arabic-language cataloguing. The adoption of MARC21 and RDA standards for Arabic resources has been widely discussed as a significant issue. Dagher and Soufi (2021) examine how

MARC21 is inadequate for representing the complex linguistic structure of Arabic, particularly in terms of diacritics, transcription, and transliteration. They argue that MARC21, designed primarily for Western languages, does not account for the unique syntax and morphology of Arabic, leading to inconsistencies in cataloguing practices. Similarly, Osman and El-Masry (2016) highlights the limitations of RDA when applied to Arabic resources, noting the difficulties in applying its rules, especially in handling uniform titles and Arabic names. They suggest that a localised version of RDA, adapted to the specifics of the Arabic language, could be a potential solution, but this would require substantial international collaboration and consensus.

According to Dagher and Soufi (2021), while the MARC21 format is universally used, there is a lack of consensus on how to fully adapt it to accommodate the unique structural features of the Arabic language, such as the complexities of diacritics, script directionality, and name formatting. The flexibility of RDA has been noted, but challenges persist in creating uniformity across institutions adopting this standard for Arabic materials. Similarly, Zavalina and Aljalalmah (2023) discuss the challenges libraries in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) face when implementing international cataloguing frameworks. They argue that while RDA provides a foundation for cataloguing, national and regional modifications are essential to accommodate cultural and linguistic nuances specific to Arabic collections.

Classification of Arabic Resources

The issue of integrating Arabic resources into international classification schemes, such as Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) and Library of Congress Classification (LCC), remains a critical point of discussion. Idrees (2012) argue in their study that DDC does not adequately accommodate the richness and diversity of Arabic and Islamic intellectual traditions. They note that Arabic libraries often have to modify or supplement DDC to better reflect local content, particularly in subject areas like religion and history, where Islamic scholarship dominates. A similar argument is made by Zuwiyya (2007), who discuss how LCC, while more flexible than DDC, still requires significant adaptation for Arabic collections.

Igwe and Ayandokun (2024) investigate the challenges of adapting DDC for Arabic materials in the context of public libraries in the African countries. Their findings highlight the frequent misclassification of Arabic texts due to cultural biases inherent in Western-centric classification systems. They propose the need for localised or regionally customised classification schemes that maintain the integrity of the Arabic intellectual tradition while ensuring global discoverability of resources. This mirrors the findings of Idress and Mahmood (2009), who underscore the importance of the classification system for Islamic knowledge, which tailors Islamic and Arabic resources for specific regional needs without compromising global access standards.

Cultural sensitivity in the classification of Arabic and Islamic collections is another key focus area. Mukhtar et al. (2016) points out that Western classification schemes often fail to represent non-Western intellectual traditions adequately, which results in misclassification or marginalisation of Arabic knowledge. They advocates for a more inclusive approach to classification that reflects the cultural and intellectual diversity of Arabic and Islamic scholarship. This view is supported by Qader (2024), who examine the use of indigenous classification systems in Arab countries. They argue that while such systems have not yet been fully developed or standardised, they represent an important step toward culturally sensitive cataloguing.

Similarly, Zuwiyya (2007) argue that the bias present in conventional classification systems often leads to marginalisation or oversimplification of Arabic intellectual heritage. Aljalalmah and Zavalina (2021) study calls for more culturally inclusive systems that properly represent the depth of Arabic literary traditions. They also advocate for cross-disciplinary research to better inform the design and implementation of culturally sensitive classifications.

Digitisation and Collaborative Cataloguing Initiatives

Technological advancements have played a key role in modernising cataloguing practices. The digitisation of Arabic manuscripts and rare collections has introduced new dimensions to cataloguing. Aljalalmah and Zavalina (2021) discuss the difficulties in generating metadata for manuscripts with incomplete or damaged texts and argue for the development of specialised metadata standards that address the unique characteristics of Arabic manuscripts. Recently, a similar study by Rajan and Esmail (2021) explores how the digital preservation of Arabic texts affects the cataloguing process, especially in terms of metadata generation. The authors highlight the unique challenges that arise from digitising fragile, often incomplete, Arabic manuscripts, and the need for specialised metadata standards to preserve the authenticity of these documents in digital form.

The development of linked data for Arabic resources has been a focus in several studies. Kurzman and Martin (2018) explore how linked data can be employed to improve the discoverability of Arabic manuscripts and rare collections. Their research suggests that utilising linked data, especially through collaboration between Arabic and international institutions, could bridge gaps in resource accessibility. Moreover, a study by Guichard-Marneur (2023) highlights the importance of integrated library systems (ILS) that support bilingual interfaces, enabling more efficient Arabic-English cataloguing workflows. They underscore the role of artificial intelligence (AI) in automating Arabic script recognition and enhancing metadata generation for digital Arabic collections.

Collaborative cataloguing efforts for Arabic materials, particularly in the digital realm, have shown promise. Atallah and Salamon (2020) highlights the role of the Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) in fostering collaboration between institutions to create standardised catalogues for Arabic manuscripts. Farooq's study emphasises the importance of international cooperation in developing shared metadata and authority files that can be used across institutions. The trend for collaboration in Arabic cataloguing is evident in global initiatives such as the International Islamic Digital Library (IIDL) role in creating centralised, accessible catalogues for Arabic and Islamic manuscripts (Alsahar and AlKhatib (2023). Ibrahim emphasises the need for ongoing international collaboration to ensure consistent standards across institutions.

In conclusion, Arabic cataloguing practices continue to evolve, driven by technological innovations, challenges of cultural representation, and the need for international collaboration. Despite ongoing difficulties in fully integrating Arabic resources into global cataloguing frameworks, advancements in AI, digitisation, and regionally tailored classification systems present promising solutions. Future research should focus on developing more inclusive, technology-supported frameworks to enhance the discoverability and accessibility of Arabic collections worldwide.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a case study approach to explore the Arabic cataloguing procedure in JKSM. It is defined by Baxter and Jack (2008) that case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context by using multiple methods of data collection as it involves an in-depth study of a phenomenon. Additionally, the case study approach allows for an in-depth, context-specific examination of the processes, challenges, and insights involved in cataloguing Arabic/Islamic legal resources within a real-world institutional setting (Houghton, Murphy, Shaw & Casey, 2015). The choice of this method aligns with the current study's objectives.

The study focused on gathering insights from three library staff members who are directly involved in cataloguing and classification work at JKSM. These participants were selected based on their extensive experience with the library's cataloguing procedures and their potential involvement in any transition to

the library system. The participants included a senior cataloging with experience in both Western classification systems, a library manager responsible for overseeing the cataloguing operations, and an information technology librarian responsible for managing digital systems that support cataloguing and classification workflows. This selection ensured that a variety of perspectives were gathered, ranging from operational issues to technical implementation concerns.

A group interview was chosen as the primary data collection method to facilitate dynamic discussions, allowing participants to share their experiences and build on each other's ideas. The group setting encouraged interaction, which provided richer data than would be possible through individual interviews. The interview followed a semi-structured format, allowing the researcher to probe deeper into topics of interest while also allowing the participants the flexibility to discuss challenges and insights not initially anticipated by the researcher. The group interview took place in a dedicated meeting room at JKSM to provide a comfortable and familiar environment for participants, ensuring an open and constructive discussion. The researcher began by explaining the purpose of the study, emphasising the focus on improving cataloguing practices for Islamic legal resources. Participants were informed about the confidentiality of their responses and were provided with consent forms, which they signed before the interview began. The interview lasted for 90 minutes and was divided into three sections.

The interview was audio-recorded with participants' consent to ensure accurate transcription and analysis. After the interview, the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. The transcriptions were coded using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns. The analysis focused on understanding the flow process for cataloguing Arabic resources related to Islamic law and jurisprudence, specific challenges the JKSM library faces in cataloguing Arabic/Islamic legal materials, and strategic planning taken to overcome those challenges. The thematic coding process involved three steps: familiarisation with data where researchers thoroughly read the interview transcript to gain an overview of the responses, initial coding where each section of the interview was coded based on key topics discussed by participants, and theme development where codes were grouped into broader themes based on recurring ideas and patterns identified during the coding process. These themes were used to organise the findings of the study (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2019).

The study followed strict ethical guidelines to ensure participant confidentiality and data protection. The participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study and their role in it. Written consent was obtained before the interview took place. Personal information and identifiable data were anonymised to protect the identity of participants. Interview recordings and transcripts were stored securely, accessible only to the research team. Participants were informed that their involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

The findings from this group interview, along with the thematic analysis, are used to identify the key challenges the JKSM library faces in cataloguing Arabic/Islamic legal resources, develop a roadmap for training and resource allocation, ensure staff are well equipped with all the cataloguing skills, identify strategic planning for future improvement of the library, and contribute to broader scholarly discussions on Islamic cataloguing practices by publishing the results of this case study enhancing understanding of how Islamic libraries can better manage and organise their legal resources. This will help shape the future of cataloguing Islamic legal materials, benefiting both the institution and its users.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Overview of the Library

The Syariah Judicial Department of Malaysia or *Jabatan Kehakiman Syariah Malaysia* (JKSM) is a government institution that has a specialised library known as the Information Resource and Publication

Division (BPSMP). The collection comprises 70% Arabic materials, in addition to Malay and English, to meet the requirements of lawyers and legal officers in the Shariah Courts across Malaysia, who necessitate comprehensive and precise information on Islamic Law and associated Islamic revealed knowledge, which may not attract significant interest from others (Makin et al., 1996). The JKSM Library serves as a reference and information management centre, encompassing monitoring, acquisition, documentation, development, and advisory services to coordinate all libraries within the Department of Shariah Judiciary or the Shariah Court of the States (Perpustakaan Jabatan Kehakiman Syariah Malaysia, n.d.).

The interview findings indicated that the JKSM Library is categorised into two sections: learning resources and publications. The JKSM Library, as a specialised library, is exclusively accessible to the personnel and solicitors of Shariah Courts.

Collection

The JKSM Library primarily houses Arabic materials encompassing diverse domains of Islamic revealed knowledge, including Islamic Jurisprudence and Law, the Qur'an and its translations, Islamic Finance, Hadith, and Tawhid, serving as a reference for lawyers and legal officers in Shariah Courts. It includes monographs, a collection of laws such as acts, enactments, and law journals, as well as serial collections comprising departmental bulletins and journals in both Malay and English. In addition to physical books, there exist digital collections for general reading, serial publications, references on Islamic revealed knowledge, and corporate video and speech materials from former directors. The resources are available in two formats: flipbook and PDF, both of which can be viewed by the public through the library's website (<http://library.jkasm.gov.my/>). The flipbook versions were subscribed to the program and displayed on the OPAC. The librarian stated that the law journal, which compiles judgements from the Shariah Courts, is their esteemed publication. JKSM publishes two volumes annually, wherein the law journal committees choose and determine the most relevant articles for publication each year. The digital format is accessible exclusively from the first volume to the fifteenth. The remainder of the collection is exclusively available in printed format, which the public can purchase from JKSM.

Management

Although BPSMP is the JKSM Library, it operates under the National Library of Malaysia (NLM), which offers human resources and consulting services to government special libraries (Abu Bakar, 2012). Nonetheless, JKSM also contributes to certain projects within the library. All libraries of state Shariah Courts are consolidated here. The state librarians previously conducted cataloguing independently upon the acquisition of new books or materials; however, they can now consult the Arabic cataloguing from the KOHA system and assign call numbers autonomously.

Financial

JKSM BPSMP has ceased the acquisition of new physical books, as the librarian indicated that the current collection is sufficient. Digital Arabic books are obtained from online Islamic resources such as Waqfeeya, Islamic Online Library, and other open-access platforms, as they can be downloaded free of charge. The demand for these digital publications has increased as individuals can access them remotely without the need to visit JKSM BPSMP in person. This indicates that there is a constrained budget from the government and a reduction in expenditures for acquiring new books. Acquiring books through open access is more convenient and cost-effective. Additionally, the revenue generated from publishing the law journal may help mitigate this issue.

The JKSM Library, a government institution specialising in Arabic collections, is overseen by the Malaysian government in terms of decision-making, policy, and budgetary allocations to ensure its sustainability and fulfil the informational requirements of its users, specifically the lawyers and legal

officers of the Shariah Courts throughout Malaysia, in accordance with the objectives of the government agency (Peyvand Robati & Singh, 2013).

Arabic Cataloguing Proficiency

The results indicated that the JKSM library does not have a chief librarian. An assistant librarian oversees the entire library alongside two subordinates and two Shariah officers. Currently, there is no intern. The assistant librarian is a cadre officer lacking a background in Library and Information Science. He acquired knowledge in library management, digitalisation, and Arabic cataloguing through his experience. He acquired knowledge about cataloguing around the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the subordinates formerly worked in the National Library of Malaysia before being transferred to the JKSM Library. Aside from the two Shariah officers, there are no library personnel proficient in Arabic.

This issue may pose an additional challenge in Arabic cataloguing due to the significant involvement of non-professionals (Makin et al., 1996). The organisation may perceive that possessing a human resource with an Islamic studies background is unnecessary, believing that the task merely requires cataloguing skills and technological proficiency. Comprehensive training and qualifications in organising Arabic collections are essential. The cataloguer must possess competence in Arabic to enhance their understanding of Arabic materials. Contemporary libraries, particularly special libraries, necessitate a librarian with a commitment to constant learning and up-to-date knowledge, as technology advances swiftly, even in library management, which has expanded significantly via the integration of information technology. It is essential to recognise that an Islamic librarian requires not just lifelong learning in cataloguing but also expertise in Islamic studies and the Arabic language (Momin & Othman, 2012).

Cataloguing Practices

The investigation into cataloguing processes at BPSMP, JKSM revealed that the library has utilised the KOHA library system since January 2021, having transitioned from the ILMU library system with the assistance of IT specialists. The library workflow commences with the procurement of new materials, followed by the verification of all acquired items and the application of an acquisition stamp on them. Subsequently, the librarian will document the materials utilising Google Spreadsheet. At this point, he will compile the materials documentation, and finally, assign class numbers and print them utilising a specific machine. Previously, they utilised Excel; however, Google Spreadsheet facilitates better sharing and accessibility for the other three library staff, enabling any of them to perform the acquisition duty.

The library employs the Ziauddin Sardar classification system for Arabic collections and the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system for Malay and English resources. The employment of Ziauddin Sardar is a result of prior cataloguing practices, which the current librarian continues to uphold. Although it would be simpler to maintain the existing practice and a few modifications are required, the librarian nevertheless perceives the procedure as complex owing to the lack of online sources on the Internet.

The library engages in copy cataloguing utilising the National Library of Malaysia's catalogue for Malay and English books, while Arabic titles are accessible through WorldCat.org and the National Library of Malaysia via Z39.50 cataloguing, which enables libraries to search and retrieve MARC records for cataloguing and integrate them into local systems. The librarian consistently seeks alternative methods or efforts to facilitate the cataloguing process.

Challenges Cataloguing Arabic Collection

Challenges are ever present. The researchers noted in the previous findings that the librarian acquired knowledge of cataloguing and the Arabic language solely through experience. Consequently, it results in the discoveries on the difficulties in cataloguing Arabic collections at JKSM Library. The librarian

identified three primary obstacles in classifying the Arabic collection including transliteration from Arabic to English, challenges with Arabic input in the library system, and difficulties in searching for information in the Arabic language.

The challenge of transliterating Arabic to English arises from the lack of Arabic language specialists, leading librarians to rely on alternative tools amidst contemporary technological advancements. He formerly utilised Google Translate, but he is now employing *lexilogos.com*. This is also attributable to the variability in Arabic pronunciation, which might result in incorrect spelling provided by Google Translate. For instance, the terms *minhaj* and *manhaj*.

The issue of Arabic input into the library system arises from the keyboard utilised in the cataloguing procedure. The librarian needs additional time to input Arabic letters due to the lack of an Arabic keyboard at the library, relying solely on the on-screen keyboard for typing. The institution subsequently authorised the library to replace the standard keyboard with one including Arabic letters, with further assistance from *lexilogos.com*.

The issue of information retrieval in the Arabic language arose previously due to the lack of an Arabic search option in the library's KOHA system, despite the librarian's ability to catalogue in Arabic. This is troubling since the information sought by end users lacks precision and accuracy, as hundreds of items with the same keyword emerge following the search. The institution's upper management acknowledged the library's importance and approved the funding to enhance the amenities by upgrading the system.

Challenges in Implementing ICSI

However, while the ICSI system presents an excellent opportunity for Islamic libraries to adopt a more tailored approach to cataloguing and classification, its implementation in JKSM library, an institution specifically dealing with Islamic law, poses a range of practical challenges.

Incompatibility with Existing Systems – One of the most significant challenges is the potential incompatibility between the ICSI and the current cataloguing systems used in JKSM library. Many law libraries, including JKSM library, are often integrated into larger national or global cataloguing networks that rely on standardised systems such as MARC21, LCC, and DDC. A sudden switch to ICSI could lead to disruptions in interoperability, data exchange, and resource sharing between JKSM library and other libraries in Malaysia or internationally.

Staff Training and Familiarity – ICSI is a specialised system that requires in-depth knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic studies, and a specific understanding of the classification framework itself. Cataloguers and librarians at JKSM library may not have been trained in ICSI and may lack the necessary expertise especially the Arabic language mastery to implement the system accurately. This knowledge gap could lead to misclassification or underutilisation of the classification system, hindering its potential benefits.

Cataloguing legacy collections – JKSM library has an extensive collection of legal texts, case reports, and important references and materials catalogued using existing systems. Retrospectively cataloguing or reclassifying these materials using ICSI could be a labour-intensive process. It would require significant resources, including time, manpower, and expertise, to ensure that the transition is smooth and that all materials are correctly classified under ICSI.

Lack of standardisation across institutions – Even if JKSM library adopts the ICSI system, there may be issues with standardisation across other Islamic law libraries or legal institutions that may still use

different classification systems. This lack of standardisation could lead to fragmentation, where Islamic legal resources are not easily discoverable across various institutions or databases.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges

In light of the potential issues previously identified, it is imperative to delineate effective measures to manage risks during the implementation of changes. These measures may enable librarians to manage the comprehensive potential risks that JKSM may encounter later on.

Phased Integration with Existing Systems – To avoid disrupting the current workflow and compatibility with other libraries, JKSM library can adopt a phased integration approach, where ICSI is gradually implemented alongside the existing classification systems. This hybrid model would allow for a smoother transition, ensuring interoperability is maintained while still leveraging the specialised benefits of ICSI for Islamic legal materials. This phased approach would also provide time to evaluate the system's effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. Moreover, integrating the e-Syariah system with the JKSM KOHA system, instead of solely publishing it as a hardcopy collection of *Jurnal Hukum* will provide legal researchers and practitioners with extensive access to prior Shariah court cases for reference and research purposes.

Comprehensive Staff Training and Capacity Building – Librarians and cataloguers at JKSM library must undergo targeted training to become familiar with ICSI's structure and application. This training can be facilitated by IIUM experts specialising in Islamic cataloguing and knowledge management. Workshops, hands-on training sessions, and ongoing professional development programs would help staff master the nuances of ICSI, ensuring that the classification of Islamic legal materials is accurate and meaningful.

Pilot Reclassification Projects for Core Collections – Instead of reclassifying all materials simultaneously, JKSM library can implement pilot projects focused on core collections such as the Quran, Hadith, and Fiqh resources. These smaller projects would allow the library to assess the time and resources required for full implementation, and determine the practicalities of reclassifying larger collections. Lessons learned from these pilots can inform future phases of implementation.

Collaborative Efforts for Standardisation – To address the issue of fragmentation and lack of standardisation, JKSM library can engage in collaborative efforts with other Islamic libraries and institutions across Malaysia to promote the broader adoption of ICSI. Establishing a network of libraries that use ICSI can lead to shared practices, guidelines, and even a centralised database that ensures uniformity in the classification and accessibility of Islamic legal resources.

Roadmap for Applying the Recommendations

Creating a roadmap for applying the recommendations beforehand is crucial as it provides a structured and strategic approach to the implementation process, ensuring that all necessary steps are systematically addressed. A well-developed roadmap helps in identifying potential challenges early on, such as resource limitations, staff training needs, or technological upgrades, allowing for proactive solutions to be incorporated into the plan. Moreover, it ensures that the transition to the new system—such as the adoption of ICSI in the JKSM library—is smooth and minimally disruptive to daily operations. By establishing clear milestones, timelines, and responsibilities, the roadmap fosters collaboration among stakeholders, maintains accountability, and ensures that the project remains on track. This forward planning also enables

better resource allocation, ensuring that the library is fully prepared for the changes, ultimately leading to a more effective and sustainable implementation of the recommendations.

Initial Assessment and Planning – conduct an internal assessment to review the compatibility of ICSI with the current cataloguing systems used in the JKSM library. Moreover, it is appropriate to identify key stakeholders (library staff, legal experts, external consultants) and create a task force team dedicated to overseeing the ICSI implementation. In this phase, it is essential to carefully develop a project plan outlining the timeline, budget, and resources required for phased integration.

Staff Training and Capacity Building – collaborate with IIUM ICSI experts to develop a tailored training program for JKSM library staff. Conducting workshops and training sessions focusing on ICSI principles, its application to Islamic law materials, and its integration with existing systems will provide skilful librarian before embarking into the actual transition phase. Besides, ongoing support and advanced training for staff during the implementation process are deemed necessary.

Pilot Reclassification Projects – select key Islamic legal collections (e.g., Quranic law, Fiqh, Hadith) for a pilot reclassification project. Use the pilot project experience to refine workflows, identify challenges, and estimate the resources needed for full-scale reclassification. Monitoring the effectiveness of the ICSI classification and collecting feedback from cataloguers and library users will help to mitigate possible risks in future.

Phased Integration of ICSI – begin phased reclassification of the entire JKSM library collection, starting with newly acquired materials. Gradually integrate older materials, prioritising high-demand resources and continue to evaluate the impact of ICSI on resource accessibility and usability, while making adjustments as necessary.

Collaboration and Standardisation Efforts – engage with other Islamic law libraries in Malaysia and internationally to share the benefits of ICSI and promote its broader adoption. Establishing collaborative partnerships for the exchange of best practices and the development of shared classification guidelines will be a smart move for the collective use of ICSI throughout the nation. The collaborative effort will somehow encourage those libraries to create a centralised database or union catalogue using ICSI for Islamic legal materials across institutions.

Full Implementation and Review – complete the reclassification of the entire JKSM library collection and conduct a comprehensive review of the system's effectiveness, focusing on resource discoverability, staff ease of use, and patron satisfaction. The library may publish the findings and case studies to contribute to the broader literature on Islamic knowledge classification systems for the use of similar information institutions.

Implementing the IIUM Library Classification System for Knowledge Resources on Islam (ICSI) in the JKSM library offers a promising approach to organising Islamic legal materials in a way that reflects the cultural and intellectual context of Sharia law. However, challenges such as system compatibility, staff expertise, reclassification of legacy collections, and lack of standardisation across institutions must be carefully managed. A phased integration, staff training, pilot reclassification projects, and collaborative efforts for broader standardisation provide a practical roadmap for overcoming these challenges. Through these strategies, the JKSM library can enhance the accessibility and representation of Islamic legal resources, contributing to the field of Islamic librarianship and legal scholarship.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the case study of the Arabic cataloguing procedures at the JKSM library reveals the multifaceted challenges faced by Islamic law libraries in organising and providing access to legal resources in Arabic. These challenges stem from adapting international classification systems such as MARC21, LCC, and DDC, which are not always suitable for Islamic law sources, as well as the ongoing difficulties in transliteration, Romanisation, and the lack of standardised subject headings for Arabic legal materials. The findings indicate that JKSM Library staff, although resourceful and adaptive in managing Arabic cataloguing processes, face significant obstacles, particularly due to limited training in the Arabic language and cataloguing expertise. Despite these challenges, the library has made notable strides in adopting the KOHA system and implementing tools such as Ziauddin Sardar's classification system to improve cataloguing practices. However, gaps remain in terms of staff proficiency and system capabilities for Arabic input and retrieval, which hampers efficiency and accuracy.

To address these issues, the case study suggests adopting a culturally relevant classification system like the IIUM Library Classification System for Knowledge Resources on Islam (ICSI), which aligns more closely with Islamic legal materials. The implementation of ICSI, while presenting certain challenges such as system compatibility, the need for staff training, and the reclassification of legacy collections, offers a pathway toward better representation and discoverability of Islamic legal resources. A phased integration of ICSI, comprehensive training, pilot reclassification projects, and collaboration with other Islamic libraries are recommended as strategic steps to enhance the JKSM Library's cataloguing framework. By embracing these recommendations, JKSM Library can improve access to Arabic legal materials, support more accurate legal research, and contribute to the broader scholarly discourse on cataloguing and classification practices in Islamic libraries. Ultimately, the findings of this study underscore the importance of continual improvement and innovation in cataloguing practices to ensure equitable access to vital legal resources in Arabic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The IIUM Library Classification System for Knowledge Resources on Islam (ICSI) is designed to organise Islamic knowledge with a cultural and religious sensitivity that Western classification systems like Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) or Library of Congress Classification (LCC) do not adequately address. The ICSI offers a specialised framework that integrates Islamic intellectual heritage, recognising the unique subject areas in Islamic studies, including the Quran, Hadith, Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), and other branches of Islamic knowledge. This classification system aligns with the spiritual, legal, and cultural components of Islamic teachings, making it an appropriate tool for institutions dealing extensively with Islamic materials, such as the JKSM library.

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