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Abstract: The intent of this study is to present the status and position of academic journals in Islamic studies in this country. The exponential growth of teaching and research institutes centralising on Islamic studies has given rise to the number of Islamic scholars in this country and prosers various research and publication endeavours. This scenario is welcome with the emergence of diverse academic journals that serve as the academic centerpiece in multiple Islamic knowledge branches. The status of this journal is examined by detecting it using the library and publisher catalogues. This study documents 34 academic journals in various branches of Islamic studies and published for the past 3 decades in the period of 1977-2007.

Key words: Malaysia, scholarly publishing, scholarly journal publishing, Islamic studies, Islamic titles

INTRODUCTION

The progress of higher education institutes with the core of Islamic studies in Malaysia can be said to have started with the founding of the Islamic Studies Department in Universiti Malaya in 1959 resulting from the official relationship formed between Malaya Islamic College with Universiti Malaya. Other than the Islamic Studies Department, there is the Islamic Academy in Universiti Malaya. When both work in affiliation, this births the Islamic Studies Academy, Universiti Malaya. The Islamic College Council has the role of safeguarding administration matters of the department while the Senate of Universiti Malaya monitors the academic activities. When the Islamic College Council was abandoned in 1970, the Islamic Studies Department was placed under the supervision of the Universiti Malaya Council and Senate. When combined with the Islamic Studies Academy in 1996, this department was then relocated under the Social Science and Arts Faculty, Universiti Malaya.

The Islamic Studies Academy was established in 1981 when Universiti Malaya had taken over the Kelantan Higher Education Foundation. This academy is proud to have two faculties which are the Shari’a and Usuluddin Faculties and it offers Islamic education degree and the matriculation programme, Islamic pre-Academy Universiti Malaya. The matriculation programme started since 1981 after the handing over of the Kelantan Islamic Higher Education Foundation into the administration of Universiti Malaya. The Islamic pre-Academy Course serves as the main source of entry into the Syariah, Usuluddin and Islamic Education faculties.

In 1996, the academy has 9 departments, all of which are the Fiqh and Usul Department, Siyassah Syar’iyyah Department, Shari’a and Economy Department, Shari’a and Management Department, Moral and Islamic Thinking Department, Human Development and Islamic Teaching Department, al-Quran and Hadith Department, Islamic History and Civilisation Department.

At the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, the Islamic Studies Faculty (FKI) was established on 18th May, 1970 in tandem with the establishment of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. The basis for its foundation began with the founding of Malaya Islamic College in Klang in 1955 materialising the wishes of the Muslims in this country to have an Islamic based Higher Education Institute in the country. In 1968, the Ministry of Education had agreed to elevate the status of Malaya Islamic College to the college university status. When the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia was established, the Islamic College was included under the UKM as one of the faculties, together with other two faculties at the time which are the Science and the Arts Faculty. To date, the Islamic Studies Faculty has 5 departments namely; the Shari’a Department, Usuluddin and Philosophy Department, Arabic Studies and Islamic Civilisation Department, Islamic Studies and Leadership Department also al-Quran and Sunnah Studies Department.

The Islamic Contemporary Studies Faculty (FKI), Universiti Darul Iman Malaysia (UDM) had its establishment endorsed by the Higher Education Ministry (KPT) starting from July, 2006 into the Higher Education Committee meeting code 9/2006 on 19 December, 2006. This faculty serves as a combination of three schools.
during the era of Kolej Ugama Sultan Zainal Abidin (KUSZA) or Sultan Zainal Abidin Islamic College namely Islamic Studies School (SFI), General Studies School (SPU) and the Education Studies School (SPP). The combination of three main fields Islamic Studies, Social Science Studies and education are anticipated to be able to solidify these related fields, especially those associated with contemporary issues.

Up until 2008, FKI was headed by a dean assisted by 2 deputees and 6 heads of the department. The departments approved by the FKI endorsed by the UDM Senate are the Shari’ah, Usuluddin, Islamic Teachings, al-Quran and al-Sunnah, Social Science and Islamic Education and Civilisation Departments.

With the progress that has been mentioned earlier, it is clear that a drastic improvement has been noted in the number of Islamic studies scholars in this country. With the increasing number of universities, faculties and departments that make Islamic studies their core subjects, automatically the number of Islamic based research also escalates. Therefore, the demands for publication media in the form of academic journals are also increasing.

The academic journals of Islamic studies need to grow in line with the increasing number of institutions as the scholars need to illustrate great contributions in the publication to prove that they are competent and can perform well in their own respective careers. The performance of a scholar is measured through the total amount of academic publication that he or she has produced. What is the status of the academic journal publication among Islamic studies scholars in this country? Is there any progress in various fields and sub-fields of the Islamic studies? What is the institution that has been active in publishing Islamic studies academic journals? What is the position of Bahasa Melayu in this stream of development? What is the quality of the publication that has distributed these journals?

**DETAILING THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC JOURNALS**

A lot of studies have been done on the development of academic journals in certain fields. Tiew (1998), for example, examines the progress of JMBRAS between 1878-1997 in another study, he looks at the movement of academic journals publications in the field of history (Tiew, 2003). In this study, he reviews the earliest journal published in 1847. Roosfa in turn, examines the advancement of the translators journal or Journal Psikologi Malaysia, the 10 year progress of Journal Filologi Melayu, the 30 year development of the Journal Akademika, the Movements of Scientific Journals in Malaysia and at the UKM (Hashim, 2002).

On the journals’ visibility at the international level, Ngah (1997) has made the effort to look at this aspect. The issue of accepting our scholars to publish their study in the electronic journals has been unravelled by Ding and Suhaimi and also by Hashim (2002). Yet up to this extent, there are yet to be writers or researchers who take a close look and examine the growth of academic journals in the field of Islamic studies. This is the gap that this study has attempted to fulfill.

**EARLY ISLAMIC STUDIES JOURNAL**

Although, the Islamic Studies Department at the Universiti Malaya had been birthed back in 1959, no academic journal has been detected in the Islamic studies discipline as early as the time when the department was founded. Contrastingly, the earliest academic journals in Islamic studies started to emerge in the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, named Islamiyat which publication started in 1977. It is safe to say here that the publication of academic journals in Islamic studies had been behind time in this country.

By contrast at the Universiti Malaya, the earliest detection of academic journals at the Islamic Studies Academy in 1988 had been noted in the journal entitled Medium Majalah Elmiah Akademi Islam Universiti Malaya. From the title which did use the word magazine (or Majalah), it is a strong point to say that there was yet to be the likelihood towards publishing Islamic studies journals at this oldest university campus in Malaysia. Islamiyat is now published by the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Publisher. This journal is published in Bahasa Melayu, English and Arabic, twice in a year. The articles published cover all the fields of Islamic studies and from other fields written from other perspectives of Islam.

**THE GROWTH OF ISLAMIC STUDIES JOURNAL**

All in all, this study has managed to document as many as 34 academic journals in various branches of Islamic studies in the period of 30 years, between 1977-2007. In these 3 decades, only 1 journal namely the Islamiyat publication journal in the 70s, 10 journals in the 80s, 13 in the 90s and 10 in the new millennium that is after the year 2000 (Table 1).

This total number of 34 journals are based on the adoption of the title used at the time when the study was
The written language

This study explores the use of language in the academic journals of the Islamic studies published in this country. The Islamic studies field is often linked with the use of Arabic. Mastery in Arabic is a skill that is highly regarded by scholars who are involved in this field. However, any Islamic studies journal simply cannot be discerned in this country where the journals have used Arabic throughout the journals. Most of the 34 journals which are able to be documented in this study use Bahasa Melayu (in 14 journals) whereas the remaining would use either full English (6), Bilingual which is Bahasa Melayu and English (7 journals) or using all 3 languages Bahasa Melayu, English and Arabic (6 journals) (Table 2).

Publisher Journal Pengajian Islam

Academic journals are publication work which contains only writings produced from research done and recorded. With that, academic journals are only written and read by expert scholars in their respective fields. The Islamic studies field is not exempted from this condition. The number of printing and sale of academic journals have been somewhat low. Therefore, the private sector has not placed too great an interest on publishing academic journals as it will not bring in any profit. In turn, academic journals are only published by the university publisher, faculty and academic department, government department, scholars’ associations and stakeholders like the non-governmental bodies (Table 3).

The development of sub-fields of Islamic Studies

It can be said that most journals (19 of them) in the Islamic studies published in this country are journals that are general by nature where it only accumulates any articles related to the field of Islamic studies. About 19 (55%) is actually a big figure. Only 6 (17%) are journals from the fields of law or Shari’a, 3 (8%) in Economy and Finance, 2 in Philosophy and Thinking and Fiqh and Usuluddin, respectively. Only 1 journal in civilisation and another journal in the field of Fatwa (Table 4).

The Islamic Studies Academic Journal Publication Quality

Like academic journals in other fields, Islamic studies journals also have to confront similar problems so much so that the publication quality suffers. The level of professionalism among the editors are also taking the backseat. They are not exposed to the formal publication
training. The exposure received is only based on the experiences and errors that have been committed when being involved in the particular faculty or department's journal publications.

This low professionalism level can be observed on several basic aspects. An example is from 34 academic journals that are documented with only 22 having the ISSN number. About 12 journals do not have ISSN number, a number that is considerably high. Only 4 journals (12%) are published twice a year while the rest (30 journals) published once a year. This illustrates the low level of capability among the Islamic studies academicians to publish academic journals. For the large part of the Islamic studies journals, the publication company has also failed to follow the publication schedule.

From 34 academic journals of Islamic studies published in this country, only two (5%) have been enlisted in the index database and international abstracts. The said journals are the IIUM law Journal enlisted in EconLit.e-JEL; JEL (dlm CD), Asian Academy Economic Literature, Index of Islamic Literature. Another journal namely Intellectual Discourse: The Journal of the Faculty (Kulliyah) of Islamic Reveal Knowledge and Human Sciences is included in LISAPlus.

Journals enlisted in various index services and international abstracts are of course more visible compared to Islamic studies journals that have become their rivals. To improve on visibility, journals make the initiative to create their own websites and this is apparent in an example, the IIUM Journal of Economics and Management (www.iium.edu.my/envijournal/).

CONCLUSION

Several conclusions can be derived from the study outcome. First of all, there has been a rather fast paced growth in academic journal publications in Islamic studies since Islamiyyat was published in 1977. Secondly, there has been no extensive development in the certain knowledge sub-fields under Islamic studies. The majority of journals published come in various general fields of the Islamic studies. Thirdly, the university emerges as a party that has published a great deal of academic journals in Islamic Studies. Universiti Malaya is the university that has published such journals the most. Fourthly, the visibility of academic journals of Islamic studies published in this country is low. Only 2 journals are in the list of the index services and international abstracts and only 1 has a website. Fifth, Bahasa Melayu is prominent as the major language used in the academic communication of the Islamic studies field. English and Arabic are used as additional languages. Sixth, the professionalism level of the academic journal publication in the field of Islamic studies has also been low. Several prominent weaknesses are also exposed rather easily, for instance, the non-existent ISSN number.

This study is an initial effort to monitor the development and growth of academic journals in the Islamic studies field. In the future, it is probably a wise move to conduct more profound studies. Among these, studies which are bibliographical by nature for analysing the contributions of certain scholars in the construction of the knowledge corpus in certain fields can be done. Also, an equally good idea is for future studies to look at the trend that can be shown on the knowledge movement that is taking place as the outcome of the research done by the scholars and researchers in the area of Islamic studies.

APPENDIX

List of Journals in Islamic Studies:
Title: AFKAR
ISSN: 1911-8819
Publisher: Islamic Moral and Thinking Department, Islamic Studies Academy, UM
Publication: 2000
Field: Islamic thinking
Language: Bahasa Melayu, English
Frequency: Yearly
Title: Hadisah: Menjelang Tamadun Terbilang, Al-
ISSN: None
Publisher: Bangi, UKM
Publication: 1997
Field: Islamic studies
Language: Bahasa Melayu
Title: Hikmah, Jurnal Kusza
ISSN: None
Publisher: Sultan Zainal Abidin Islamic College
Publication: 1987
Field: Islamic studies
Frequency: Yearly
Editor in Chief: Embong Mohamed
Title: IIUM Journal of Economics and Management
ISSN: 1394-7680
Publisher: International Islamic University, Gombak
Publication: 1997
Field: Economy
Track number: Series HB126.4.A2 1558
Language: English
Frequency: Twice a year
there is a version online, www.iium.edu.my/envijournal/
Title: IUM Law Journal
ISSN: none
Publisher: Petaling Jaya: International Islamic University
Publication: 1989-1992
Field: Law
Track number: BP140 IIUMLJ
Language: English
Frequency: Twice a year
Index: EconLit.e-JEL; JEL (dlm CD), Asian Academy Economic Literature, Index of Islamic Literature.
Original title: Journal of Islamic Economics
Title: Insight
Appendix continue

Appendix continue

Track number: Series HG187.4J6
Language: English
Frequency: Yearly
Title: Journal CITU (Centre for Islamic Thought and Understanding)
ISSN: 1394-8977
Publisher: Centre for Islamic Thought and Understanding, UTM
Publication: 2005
Field: Islam, Philosophy
Language: Bahasa Melayu, English
Frequency: Yearly
Editor-in-Chief: Zahirah Yahya

The CITU journal is a journal due to be published twice a year by the Centre for Islamic Thought and Understanding (CITU), UTM. The main purpose of this journal is to prepare a channel for publishing academic works in the form of research, articles, reviews with regards to culture, social, economy, politics, education and others including current issues, local and abroad.

Title: Journal Dakwah
ISSN: None
Publisher: Kuala Lumpur: Biro Dakwah Pegarakan Pemuda UMNO Malaysia
Publication: 1983
Field: Religion
Track number: BP1.7D
Language: Bahasa Melayu
Frequency: Yearly
Publication ended in 1987
Title: Journal Darul Quran
ISSN: 1394-439X
Publisher: Jabatan Kemajuan Malaysia
Publication: 2006
Field: Islam
Language: Bahasa Melayu
Frequency: Yearly
Editor-in-Chief: Mohd Murni Awang Mat

The magazine called Journal Darul Quran 10th edition continues to maintain the sequence of objectives and role in highlighting discussions that cover various issues associated with the al-Quran other than shedding light on the Quran as an invaluable treasure to mankind in the world and in the afterlife.

Title: Jurnal Fikrah
ISSN: 1511-1113
Publisher: Islamic Education Unit, Preparatory Education Center, ITM Shah Alam
Publication: 1998
Field: Islamic studies
Track number: Series BP1.4J84kat
Language: Bahasa Melayu
Frequency: Yearly
Price: RM 15
Editor-in-Chief: Mohd Azam Mohamed Adil

According to the Editor-in-Chief, Journal Fikrah is birthed to improve the quality of knowledge as a fraction of the academics. Without writing and research, one cannot simply be called a lecturer if he only comes to the lectures to give a lecture but they must show the quality of the lecture through knowledge improvement.

Title: Journal Fiqh = Journal of Fiqh
ISSN: 1823-089X
Publisher: Department of Fiqh and Usul Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya
Publication: 2004
Field: Fiqh and Usuluddin
Language: Bahasa Melayu, English, Arabic
Frequency: Yearly
Editor-in-Chief: Idris Awang

This journal has become the media in addressing contemporary issues in the
REFERENCES


