The Need for Islamic Information Management in the Information Institutions In Malaysia: An Analysis of Problems

Technical Management of Islamic Information Resource

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Topic
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Abstract: This paper attempts to reveal the result of a research with regard to the management of Islamic information that has successfully been conducted. The main purpose of the research is to study problems relating to the implementation of Islamic information management in the public and private organizations and to identify recommended solutions. Besides, it aims to explore skills relevant to the field which important drivers in implementing successful Islamic information management in organizations. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed throughout the study whereby main data collections are questionnaire and supported by interview. Two hundred and fifty five institutions known for having dealt extensively with Islamic information sources were selected with scholars from those institutions were interviewed. One hundred eighty four of them which equivalent to seventy two percent has replied. This paper reveals empirical findings of the management of Islamic information. The research revealed a lot of valuable suggestions and recommendations which can be implemented in managing Islamic information especially in the Malaysian Islamic institutions.

Keywords: Islamic information management, Islamic information, information institutions, Islamic information manager.

1.0 Introduction

Information over ages has always been important elements in people life and activities. Today, this importance has been reflected by it has become strategic assets of many organizations. Human
history reveals that information has been codified from early civilization like Babylon, Greek and today which some of them are well preserved and some are available in ruin and rubbles. Islam requires important transaction like trade and loan to be written and that information to be kept. In other verse, Allah asks Muslim to read. Reading and information materials are closely associated which indicate information materials must be subjected to a competent management. So, the librarians have to make sure that the information in the library is properly managed. Otherwise, the users will face the phenomena of information retrieval difficulties, information chaos, information overload and misinformation.

As of now, information management discipline has developed into a matured and advanced techniques and methods. Institutions like library, archive, educational based institutions and other profit and non profit organization has benefited from these methods and techniques. Islamic institutions to certain extent also follow these trends.

2.0 Literature Review

Information communication technology brings new opportunities and challenges to the management of Islamic information. Information management techniques and methods together with information communication technology will empower the process of Islamic information management in the organization if they are properly implemented
Dr Sidek Baba (1997) recommended to have more Muslim professionals especially in the field of library science and information technology who not only are able to give competitive advantages to the current information sources but also are able to produce Islamic information in line with Islamic teaching. Therefore, it is an urgent need to produce more Islamic information professionals. The reality shows that the country is lacking of those who are knowledgeable in managing Islamic information. In line with this, Dato’ Seri (Dr.) Haji Harussani Haji Zakaria, Mufti of Perak state (2002), explained that lacking of officers who have knowledge in both Islamic studies and library science is one of the reasons of difficulties in managing Islamic information in the most of Mufti offices in Malaysia.

In the present scenario, the information professionals know how to classify information in the library or resource center according to LCC or DDC. However, with the information explosion in the field of Islamic study, there is actually a strong need to have those who are able not only understand the content of books in this field which is normally in Arabic, but also know how to classified them better. For example in the case of book entitled Marriage in Islam. In some of the libraries, they classified this knowledge under Islamic doctrine. The classification is slightly wrong.

3.0 Problem statement

A brief glance of the institutions that administer matters relating to Muslims suggests that information is used and managed to support
institutional activities. There are department and personnel that handling Islamic information resources and materials in the organizations. However to what extends Islamic information managed in the organization is little known.

From observation conducted at some of the libraries and interview with some of the scholars, there were problems relating to the management of Islamic information materials. It shows that the current techniques of classification like LCC and DDC are not so fit to the character of Islamic information for example the discipline like Feqah, Tawhid and Islamic moral are classified synonymously.

4.0 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:-
1. To study the growth of Islamic information materials.
2. To identify the problems associated to the management of Islamic information materials.
3. To examine the role of Islamic information professional in managing Islamic information materials.
4. To examine the skills that the Islamic information professionals should have.

5.0 Methodology

This study used the survey method. The questionnaires were distributed to a total sample of 255 respondents from the government and private sectors which either directly or indirectly
involves in managing Islamic information. Besides that, a few interviews also have been conducted with authoritative interviewees. Among them were Mufti of each of zones; Kedah, Terengganu, Johor, Sabah and Perak, some of chief academic librarians of public higher educational institutes and director of public Islamic library. The response rate was 73.6 % with 184 returns.

6.0 Findings

6.1 Profiles of respondents

From all respondents selected, 50.5% comprised of senior manager and 36.4% from the middle management who have sufficient knowledge and experience as well as authority to describe the organization’s environment. Besides that, 156 (84.8%) of the returned respondents were from the government agencies and only 28 (15.2%) were from private agencies.

6.2 The scenario of Islamic information management

Respondents were asked their opinion about the growth of Islamic information materials, the scenario of managing Islamic information and the difficulties to employ Islamic information professionals.
Table 1: The increase of Islamic information materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Did not agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The growth of Islamic information materials</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The scenario of Islamic information was not properly managed</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Facing the problem of difficulties and uncertainty in accessing Islamic information</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. difficulty in employing Islamic information professionals</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 1, 80.5% of the respondents agreed that Islamic information materials increase in the society, only 6% did not agree and the rest (13%) were unsure. It indicates that most of the respondents agreed with the idea of the growth of Islamic information materials in society. For the management of Islamic information, 38% of the respondents agreed that Islamic information was not properly managed and 30% were unsure. The respondents were further asked to know their difficulties and uncertainty in accessing Islamic information. It shows that 46% of the respondents agreed that they have difficulties and uncertainty in accessing Islamic information. However, 30% were did not agree.
Regarding the difficulties in employing Islamic information professionals, 41.3% of them agreed and 37.4% were did not agreed. From these data, it shows the respondents agreed that they have some problems with regards to the management of Islamic information materials.

Table 2: The needs for Islamic information professionals in managing Islamic information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>unsure</th>
<th>Did not agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Islamic information professional can help to improve efficiency and effectiveness of managing Islamic information</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The needs for Islamic information professionals in managing Islamic information</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reveals that majority (90.8%) said the Islamic information professionals can help to improve efficiency and effectiveness of managing Islamic information. A small percentage rated did not agree (2.7%) and 6.5% were unsure. Table 2 also shows that the majority (90.2%) said the institutions need to employ Islamic information professionals to manage their Islamic information properly. Only a small percentage (4.4%) rated did not need and 5.4 rated unsure. In line with this, it shows that there is a strong need to employ Islamic information professionals in managing Islamic information materials.
The following data as shown in table 3 illustrates the respondents answer to the question of the skills and knowledge that the Islamic information professionals should have.

Table 3: summary statistics for the skills and knowledge that the Islamic information professionals should have

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
<th>percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The need to have Islamic information classification knowledge</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>95.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The need to have Arabic knowledge</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The need to apply Islamic etiquettes</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data shows 175 (95.1%) of the respondents said the Islamic information professionals need to have knowledge in Islamic information classification. This strongly supports the argument to have a proper Islamic information classification. In the case of having Arabic knowledge, 155 (84.3%) of the respondents rated agree they need to have that knowledge. In addition, 170 (92.4%) stated they need to apply Islamic etiquettes. In short, the research found that Islamic information professionals really need to have knowledge in Islamic information classification as well as Arabic language. In addition, they also need to apply Islamic etiquettes.
Table 4: The need to have Islamic classification system

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>unsure</th>
<th>Did not agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The need to have Islamic classification system</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The needs to have training in Islamic information management</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 demonstrates that 92% of the respondents agreed to have Islamic classification system in managing Islamic information. Only 3% did not agree and 5% were unsure. Furthermore, 88% told Islamic information professionals need to have training especially on the Islamic classification system to ensure that they can handle the management of Islamic information materials in the Islamic institutions.

7.0 Conclusion

As a conclusion, based on this research, there is an indication of Islamic materials increase from time to time and as a result they need to be managed appropriately by those who have enough knowledge and skills.

The research also demonstrates the important of having knowledge on Islamic Information Management particularly for those who are working in the Islamic institutions. The respondents also strongly
agreed that it should have an Islamic classification system by which it helps the information professionals to manage Islamic information properly.

In fact, there is high demand in improving the management of Islamic information in the country. The government has to take more effort in producing the professionals who are able to manage Islamic information.

The researcher also faced some limitations in conducting the research like late of response from some of the respondents and the budget is very limited. However, the research could be completed on time.
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