

Examining Islamic perspectives in Five Allied Health Disciplines in Scopus Indexed journals

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Introduction

- Islam as a way of life
- Scientific writing
- SciVerse Scopus

Implications:

The accessibility of information that can be made available by accessing through databases such as Scopus.

The multi-disciplinary database can provide a “latent” advantage.

Question: How can we utilise databases such as Scopus to introduce, promote and spread the beauty of Islam in our scientific writing?

Objectives

1. To examine the level of Islamic perspectives that are evident in journals indexed in SCOPUS for 5 disciplines in Allied Health Sciences, namely Radiography (Medical Imaging), Optometry, Audiology, Dietetics and Physiotherapy.
2. To identify the subthemes that are associated with those journal articles that project Islamic perspectives.
3. To discuss the findings and its impact on the obligation of projecting or promoting Islam to the professionals and others.

Literature review

- Based on an article “Portraying Islam and Muslims in MEDLINE: A content analysis” Laird LD, de Marrais J, and Barnes LL *Social Science & Medicine* Volume 65, Issue 12, December 2007, Pages 2425–2439, Elsevier
- The research examines the promotion of Islam as evident in publications indexed in Medline.

- *Highlights of the study:*
- Believed to be among the few studies that examines the frequency of Islamic perspectives in databases, in this case Medline.
- From 1966-2006 , 2342 articles has either the words “Islam”, “Muslim”, “Muslims”, “Moslem” in their title or abstract and showed an increasing trend with the years.
- As a general comparison, the total number of articles indexed in Medline in 2005 stood at 16 million. http://www.nlm.nih.gov/pubs/techbull/so06/so06_pm_10.html
accessed 6.6.2012

- The researchers approach to look for the keywords in either the title or abstract- this is important since keywords in title or abstract will ensure more significant “hits” compared to keywords in text which will be displayed further down the “hits” menu.
- *Ninety-nine per cent of readers will read only the title and abstract of your paper (and most people will only read the title). These are therefore the most important parts to get right - Tropical Biology Association (2007)*

- The researchers limited their search to 2 or 3 keywords i.e “islam or muslim or muslims.” only
- Names of authors that were similar to the keywords were eliminated from the results.

Questions raised

- What would be inferred from the above?
- How does it describe the state of affairs from the above : extend of coverage
- Implications on Muslim Contributors
- Implications on Muslim readers
- Implications on the element of Da'wah
- Could there be a “latent” effort to prevent Islamic perspectives to be incorporated in materials to be published.

Methodology

- 5 (Five) lecturers participated in the research; each representing areas: Radiography (Medical Imaging), Dietetics, Audiology, Optometry and Physiotherapy. All departments from Kulliyyah (Faculty) of Allied Health Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia
- Each lecturer identified the journals that are usually referred to in their disciplines from the Scopus List.
- The websites for the journals were then accessed.

- Using their individual search engines, various terminologies such as Islam, Islamic, Tauhid, Tawhid, Tawhidic, Muslim and Moslem were typed to look for those terminologies in either the title and / or abstract.
- No time frame
- Articles with those terminologies either in title / abstract were then examined in terms of their sub-themes
- “Instruction to authors” or equivalent were also examined to look out for specific indications concerning acceptability of articles than contains religious perspectives.

Results - questions

- How many journals from Scopus list in terms of areas of specialisation.
- How many had actually Islamic perspectives.
- What are the themes that are associated with those Islamic perspectives.
- If there are Islamic perspectives, what are the areas covered?
- Is there any indication that there are restrictions to publish anything religious in nature?

Results

- The number of journals and number of articles that contains the keywords either in the title or abstract identified by the 5 respective lecturers in the disciplines are as follows:

Sub-Specialisation	No. of Journals	No of articles
Audiology	12	0
Dietetics	16	6
Optometry	15	0
Radiography / Medical Imaging	11	0
Physiotherapy	6	3

All Journals accessed did not indicate any suggestions to authors to avoid submissions with religious perspectives.

Thematic Codes

(adapted from Laird LD, de Marrais J, Barnes LL)

Aspect	
Five pillars	(3) Impact of Ramadhan (fasting)
Other religious practices and attitudes	
Islamic law/ethics	
Islamic medical history	
Cultural competence	
Public health-related	(2) Physical activity
Social medicine	
Other	(4) Diet and dietary habits

A side study

- Undertaken to determine whether there are efforts to restrict Islamic perspectives to be incorporated in materials to be published.
- Using Springerlink since Springer is indexed in Scopus.
- Using keywords such as Islam, Islamic, Muslim, Tawhid, Tawhidic, Islamic Worldview, Islamic perspectives

Springer Link As of 6th June 2012

Using various keywords with and without filtering. Filtering by using filter “Medicine”

Keyword	No-Filter (All fields)	Filter: medicine “Online First”
No keyword	5,681,372	17,577
Islam	19,495 *	128 *
Islamic	12,320	85 **
Muslim	12,385 *	79 #
Tawhid / Tauhid	127 *	6 *
Islamic Worldview	679 ##	23 ##
Islamic perspectives	6,030 ##	528 ##

Comments on the result

- The actual number of articles with the keywords in either the title and/or abstract will be reduced taking into consideration:

the number include author's name similar to keyword (example: Islam, Muslim and Tauhid)

- Keyword appears in the text
- keywords such as Islamic Worldview and Islamic perspectives are taken as separate entities and the word "Islamic Worldview" in the text.

Results from side study

- The Publisher Springer actually permits articles that contains the various terminologies related to Islam and derivatives to be published in its journals.

Restrictions to publish materials that contain religious perspectives?

The use of the keywords are evident in some titles or abstracts of the published articles.

Hardly, any of these journals indicate reservation to publish materials containing religious perspectives.

It can be inferred that the editors have the prerogative whether to approve any article for publication.

Discussion

- How does the results compared to published article?
- Does the result suggest failure of Muslim writers?
- Muslim Scholars and The Challenge
 - Personal Obligation and commitment
 - The Concept of Fardhu Ain
 - The Concept of Fardhu Kifayah

Discussion – cont.

- Will it still be worthwhile to publish literature that is devoid of Islamic Perspectives.

Where do we go from here?

- Critical examination of current status in one's own area of specialisation.
- Weigh our options objectively.
- Collaborative effort.
- Setting up of own database / repository for all Islamic writings
- Embrace the Islamic concept of Knowledge

Promoting Islamic perspectives – examples of titles

- *Applying the Islamic concept of safety in(the various sub-specialities in Medicine)*

For example:

- *Applying the Islamic concept of safety in medical imaging (Macro level)*

- *Applying the Islamic concept of safety in Computerised Tomography Examinations (Micro-level)*

- *An Islamic perspective on patient's dignity / honour / aurah in medical imaging. - (Macro)*
- *An Islamic perspective on patient's dignity / honour / aurah in Angioplasty procedures. - (Micro)*
- *Socio economic dimensions in Medical imaging: an Islamic perspective*
- *A Muslim perspective on patient care in medical imaging.*
- *The objectives of the Islamic jurisprudence (Maqasid al Shariah) in medical imaging.*

Conclusion

- Appreciating scientific writing in its dual role in contributing in human sciences as well as propagating the objectives and principles of Islam, enhancing Islamic values and other Islamic perspectives.
- The need to enhance and conceptualise efforts to promote Islamic perspectives in future scientific writing.
- All efforts should be intensified towards identifying avenues where the above can be easily accessible by the masses, paving opportunities for a better understanding of Islam among the Muslims as well as yet to be Muslims.

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Disclosure Information

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I have no financial relationships to disclose.