



Digital Archives and Preservation of Zakat-related Documents: Towards a Comprehensive Resource for Islamic Philanthropy

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to propose a framework for the digital archiving and preservation of zakat-related documents within the context of Islamic philanthropy. Methodology involving literature review and analysis, this research explores the theoretical and practical aspects of creating a comprehensive digital archive. The findings reveal the importance of digital technologies in preserving and providing accessibility to zakat-related materials while considering factors such as digitization methods, metadata standards, and long-term preservation strategies. The study contributes to the fields of Islamic studies and digital humanities by enhancing the scholarly understanding of zakat and Islamic philanthropy and providing a valuable resource for researchers and the general public. This research emphasizes the need for comprehensive digital preservation practices to ensure the long-term availability and utilization of zakat-related documents.

Keywords: digital archives; preservation; zakat; Islamic philanthropy; Islamic civilization

INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies have revolutionized various aspects of human society, including the preservation and accessibility of cultural and historical heritage. In the realm of Islamic civilization, where zakat plays a central role in Islamic philanthropy, the digital archiving and preservation of zakat-related documents present new opportunities for scholarly inquiry and the dissemination of knowledge. This research aims to contribute to the field of digital humanities by exploring the development of a comprehensive digital archive of zakat-related documents, thereby facilitating the study of Islamic philanthropy within the broader context of Islamic civilization.

Zakat, as one of the Five Pillars of Islam, represents a form of obligatory charitable giving that holds immense religious and socio-economic significance in Islamic societies (Quran 9:60). It serves as a mechanism for wealth redistribution and poverty alleviation,

promoting social justice and communal well-being. The study of zakat encompasses its historical, legal, theological, and socio-economic dimensions.

Scholars have delved into the concept and practice of zakat from various perspectives. For instance, Sadeq (2008) provides a comprehensive examination of zakat as an Islamic institution, tracing its origins, legal frameworks, and contemporary applications. Additionally, Moten (2013) analyzes the socio-economic impact of zakat in Muslim-majority countries, highlighting its role in poverty alleviation and sustainable development.

Moreover, the digitization and preservation of cultural heritage have garnered increasing attention within the field of digital humanities. In the context of Islamic civilization, efforts have been made to digitize and preserve various forms of cultural and historical documents, including manuscripts, inscriptions, and archival materials (Al-Suwailem, 2015). However, the specific focus on zakat-related documents within digital archives remains relatively unexplored.

Digital archives offer numerous advantages for the preservation and accessibility of zakat-related documents. They provide opportunities for scholars, researchers, and the general public to engage with primary source materials, enabling a deeper understanding of the historical, legal, and socio-economic aspects of zakat. Additionally, digital archives can facilitate interdisciplinary studies by integrating textual analysis, data visualization, and computational methods into the research process (Spiro, 2012).

Despite these opportunities, there are gaps in the existing literature regarding the digital archiving and preservation of zakat-related documents. Current scholarship primarily focuses on the theoretical and conceptual aspects of zakat, with limited attention given to the utilization of digital technologies for preserving and disseminating zakat-related materials. Thus, this research aims to address this gap by proposing a comprehensive resource for the digital archiving and preservation of zakat-related documents, contributing to the broader fields of Islamic studies and digital humanities. In the subsequent sections of this research paper, we will conduct a comprehensive literature review to identify key theories, methodologies, and gaps in the existing scholarship on zakat, Islamic philanthropy, and digital archives. Building upon this foundation, we will propose a framework for creating a digital archive dedicated to zakat-



related materials, emphasizing the preservation, accessibility, and scholarly utilization of these invaluable resources.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This literature review aims to explore existing scholarship on these topics and highlight key findings, methodologies, and gaps in knowledge.

Zakat

Zakat as an Institution

Benthall, J. (2003). Charitable giving in Islam: A critique of zakat practice. *Journal of Anthropological Research*, 59(4), 473-494. This article critically examines the practice of zakat within Islamic societies, exploring its historical development, contemporary challenges, and implications for poverty alleviation.

Sidani, Y. (2011). Zakat: Drawing insights for legal reform. *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture*, 13(1), 3-27. The article provides a comprehensive analysis of zakat as a legal and social institution, discussing its legal framework, historical evolution, and potential areas for reform.

Zakat and Economic Development

Mirakhor, A., & Zaidi, I. (2018). Zakat, poverty alleviation, and economic development. *Journal of Islamic Economics, Banking and Finance*, 14(1), 1-22. This study examines the potential of zakat to alleviate poverty and stimulate economic development, discussing its impact on income distribution, investment, and entrepreneurship.

Haneef, M. A., & Hameed, S. (2017). Zakat-based microfinance: Realizing the poverty alleviation and economic empowerment potential. *International Journal of Economics, Management and Accounting*, 25(1), 1-24. The authors explore the integration of zakat with microfinance initiatives and its role in promoting financial inclusion, poverty alleviation, and economic empowerment.

Islamic Philanthropy

Conceptual Understanding

Ahmed, V., & Ali, A. (2013). Islamic philanthropy: A literature survey. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 4(2), 144-168. This survey provides an overview of



the conceptual framework, models, and mechanisms of Islamic philanthropy, highlighting its distinct features compared to conventional philanthropy.

Beekun, R. I., & Badawi, J. A. (2005). Balancing ethical responsibility among multiple organizational stakeholders: The Islamic perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 60(2), 131-145. The article explores the ethical principles and responsibilities underlying Islamic philanthropy, emphasizing its focus on social justice, community development, and sustainable impact.

Contemporary Practices

Mohamad, N. A., & Hassan, R. (2012). Islamic philanthropy and its contemporary practice in Malaysia. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research*, 3(2), 115-130. This study examines Islamic philanthropy's patterns, motivations, and challenges in Malaysia, shedding light on the role of culture, religious beliefs, and institutional frameworks.

Kurniawan, I. S., & Hayati, S. N. (2017). Islamic social entrepreneurship and sustainable philanthropy: Cases from Indonesia. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Business and Economics*, 5(1), 37-57. The authors analyze the emerging trend of Islamic social entrepreneurship as a form of sustainable philanthropy, providing case studies from Indonesia to illustrate its impact on societal development and welfare.

Digital Archives in the Context of Islamic Civilization

Preservation and Accessibility

Choudhury, G. S., & Rahman, M. S. (2018). Digital preservation of Islamic heritage: Challenges, trends, and opportunities. *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, 7(1), 129-152. This article explores the challenges and opportunities associated with preserving and digitizing Islamic heritage, discussing technological advancements, digitization practices, and the role of digital archives in safeguarding cultural artifacts.

Uddin, M. M. (2015). Digital Islamic content preservation: Issues, challenges, and strategies. *Journal of Information Science Theory and Practice*, 3(1), 22-41. The author examines the issues and challenges in preserving digital Islamic content, highlighting strategies and best practices for long-term preservation, accessibility, and usability.

Dissemination and Research

Hameed, S., & Jaafar, A. (2019). Digital Islamic humanities: A critical appraisal. *Islamic Quarterly*, 63(2), 131-155. This article critically evaluates the emerging field of digital Islamic humanities, discussing digital archives as platforms for research, analysis, and interpretation of Islamic civilization through the lens of various disciplines.

AlShahrani, A., & Koehler, W. (2020). Digital archives and the study of Islamic manuscripts: An interdisciplinary approach. *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts*, 11(1), 1-28. The authors examine the role of digital archives in enhancing the study of Islamic manuscripts, exploring interdisciplinary approaches and methodologies for analyzing and interpreting manuscript collections.

This literature review highlights key scholarship on zakat, Islamic philanthropy, and digital archives in the context of Islamic civilization. The sources discussed provide insights into the institutional aspects and economic implications of zakat, conceptual understanding and contemporary practices of Islamic philanthropy, as well as the preservation, accessibility, and research potential of digital archives in relation to Islamic civilization. Further research is needed to bridge gaps in knowledge and explore emerging trends and challenges in these interconnected areas.

RESEARCH GAP

Existing scholarship on zakat has primarily focused on its theoretical and conceptual aspects, leaving a significant gap in the literature regarding the digital archiving and preservation of zakat-related documents within the context of Islamic philanthropy. This research aims to fill this gap by proposing a framework for a comprehensive digital archive dedicated to zakat-related materials, offering valuable resources for scholars and researchers interested in studying Islamic philanthropy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to develop a framework for the digital archiving and preservation of zakat-related documents, with the aim of creating a comprehensive resource for Islamic philanthropy within the context of Islamic civilization. To achieve this overarching objective, the specific objectives of the study include:

- Conducting a comprehensive analysis of existing literature on zakat, Islamic philanthropy, and digital archives to identify key theories, methodologies, and gaps in the literature.
- Exploring the potential of digital technologies and archival practices for the preservation, organization, and accessibility of zakat-related documents.
- Proposing a framework for the creation of a digital archive dedicated to zakat-related materials, considering factors such as digitization methods, metadata standards, and long-term preservation strategies.
- Developing guidelines for the management and curation of the digital archive, ensuring its sustainability, security, and usability.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the objectives of the study, the research will employ a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The methodology will encompass the following steps:

Data Collection

Secondary Data: Secondary data was collected from existing digital archives, repositories, and relevant online platforms. These data sources will provide examples of zakat-related documents, metadata standards, and preservation practices employed in existing digital archives.

Framework Development: Based on the findings from the literature review and data analysis, a framework for the digital archiving and preservation of zakat-related documents will be developed. This framework will incorporate best practices from the fields of digital archives, archival science, Islamic studies, and digital humanities. It will encompass aspects such as digitization methods, metadata standards, preservation strategies, and user accessibility.

POTENTIAL OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND ARCHIVAL PRACTICES

Digital technologies and archival practices have immense potential for the preservation, organization, and accessibility of documents. Scholars have highlighted the transformative impact of digital preservation, which ensures the long-term survival and accessibility of various types of documents.

Digital technologies offer opportunities for preserving documents in digital formats, reducing the risk of physical degradation and enabling broader access to cultural heritage. Anderson (2017) emphasizes the role of digital curation in ensuring the authenticity, integrity, and usability of digital records over time. The digitization of documents allows for their storage in secure digital repositories, ensuring their preservation for future generations (Duranti, 2008).

Archival practices play a vital role in organizing digital documents effectively. Scholars emphasize the importance of metadata creation and the use of standardized taxonomies or controlled vocabularies to facilitate searching and retrieval (Rhoads, 2013). By applying appropriate archival arrangement and description techniques, digital archives can ensure the discoverability and accessibility of documents (McKemmish et al., 2005). Digital technologies also enable innovative ways to explore and analyze documents. Techniques such as text mining, data visualization, and machine learning can be applied to digitized documents, allowing researchers to gain new insights and identify patterns that were previously challenging to uncover (Terras et al., 2013). Digital archives enhance research capabilities by providing advanced search functionalities and enabling cross-referencing and comparative analysis (Borgman, 2015).

However, challenges exist in ensuring the long-term sustainability of digital archives. Issues such as data integrity, format obsolescence, and technological dependencies need to be addressed to guarantee the accessibility and usability of digital collections (Thibodeau, 2006). Lynch (2008) emphasizes the importance of ongoing monitoring and adherence to digital preservation best practices for maintaining the integrity of digital records.

Specific to Zakat Documents

Digitization of historical manuscripts, legal texts, administrative records, fatwas, and documents from charitable organizations can ensure their preservation and reduce the risk of physical deterioration. This enables broader access to these valuable resources, facilitating research, education, and the preservation of Islamic cultural heritage.

Applying appropriate metadata and indexing techniques to zakat-related documents within digital archives allows for efficient organization and enhanced search capabilities. Researchers, scholars, and practitioners can easily access specific zakat-related documents, enabling them to analyze, interpret, and utilize the information contained within them.

However, it is crucial to address the challenges associated with digital preservation, such as data integrity and format obsolescence, to ensure the long-term sustainability and accessibility of zakat-related documents within digital archives. By following digital preservation best practices and adopting ongoing monitoring and migration strategies, the integrity and accessibility of zakat-related documents can be preserved for future generations of researchers and practitioners.

Thus, digital technologies and archival practices hold great potential for the preservation, organization, and accessibility of zakat-related documents, enabling broader engagement, research, and understanding of zakat within the context of Islamic civilization.

DIGITAL ARCHIVE DEDICATED TO ZAKAT-RELATED MATERIALS

It requires careful consideration of various factors, including digitization methods, metadata standards, and long-term preservation strategies. Here is a proposed framework for the creation of such a digital archive:

Digitization Methods

Selection and Prioritization: Determine the zakat-related materials to be digitized based on their historical, legal, and cultural significance. Prioritize rare or fragile documents that require preservation.

Scanning and Imaging: Utilize high-resolution scanning techniques to capture the content and visual characteristics of the materials. Ensure consistent image quality and color accuracy.

OCR and Text Conversion: Apply Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology to convert scanned images into searchable text. This enhances discoverability and facilitates text-based analysis.

Metadata Standards

Identify Relevant Metadata Elements: Determine the key descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata elements required for zakat-related materials. Examples include document title, author, date, language, subject, and provenance.

Adopt Existing Standards: Utilize established metadata standards such as Dublin Core, METS (Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard), and PREMIS (Preservation Metadata) to ensure interoperability and compatibility with other digital repositories.

Enhance with Zakat-specific Metadata: Consider additional metadata elements specific to zakat-related materials, such as zakat category, geographical region, and associated religious figures or institutions.

Long-Term Preservation Strategies

Format Selection: Choose open, non-proprietary file formats that are widely supported and less prone to obsolescence. Examples include PDF/A for documents and TIFF for images.

Redundant Storage: Implement redundant storage systems, such as multiple servers or cloud-based storage, to ensure data redundancy and minimize the risk of data loss.

Regular Data Integrity Checks: Periodically verify the integrity and authenticity of the digital files through checksums and fixity checks. This helps detect and prevent data corruption or tampering.

Migration and Refreshment: Plan for regular migration of digital files to new formats or systems as technology evolves. Refresh file formats periodically to mitigate risks associated with format obsolescence.

Disaster Recovery Plan: Develop a comprehensive disaster recovery plan to handle potential hardware failures, natural disasters, or other emergencies that could impact the digital archive.

User Access and Interface

User-Friendly Interface: Design an intuitive and user-friendly interface that allows researchers, scholars, and the general public to access and explore the zakat-related materials easily.

Advanced Search Functionality: Implement robust search capabilities, including full-text search, faceted search, and advanced filters, to enable users to find specific documents or explore topics of interest.

Cross-Referencing and Linking: Establish cross-references and links within the archive to enable users to navigate related materials and facilitate comparative analysis.

Collaboration and Annotation: Incorporate features that allow users to collaborate, share annotations, and contribute additional information or insights to foster scholarly engagement.

Copyright and Access Controls

Copyright Considerations: Ensure compliance with copyright laws and regulations when digitizing and providing access to zakat-related materials. Obtain necessary permissions or apply fair use/fair dealing principles where applicable.

Access Controls: Implement access controls to protect sensitive or restricted materials. Consider different levels of access, such as public access to non-sensitive materials and restricted access for confidential or copyright-restricted materials.

Community Engagement and Outreach

Stakeholder Involvement: Engage relevant stakeholders, including scholars, experts, and zakat institutions, to solicit input, gather feedback, and foster collaboration in the development and curation of the digital archive.

Outreach and Education: Conduct outreach activities to raise awareness about the digital archive and its resources. Provide training and educational materials to help users navigate and utilize the archive effectively.

User Feedback Mechanism: Establish a feedback mechanism to gather user suggestions, requests, and corrections, ensuring continuous improvement and user-centric development of the digital archive.

Sustainability and Funding

Long-term Funding Plan: Develop a sustainable funding plan to support the ongoing maintenance, preservation, and enhancement of the digital archive. Explore partnerships, grants, and sponsorships from academic institutions, philanthropic organizations, and government entities.

Governance Structure: Establish a governance structure or advisory board to oversee the management and decision-making processes of the digital archive. Ensure representation from relevant stakeholders and experts in zakat and archival practices.

By following this framework, a digital archive dedicated to zakat-related materials can be created, preserving valuable documents, enhancing accessibility, facilitating research, and promoting a deeper understanding of zakat within the context of Islamic civilization.



THE MANAGEMENT AND CURATION OF A DIGITAL ARCHIVE

Collection Development

Acquisition Policy: Establish clear guidelines for acquiring new zakat-related materials, including criteria for selection, legal considerations, and ethical considerations.

Collection Scope and Growth: Define the scope and boundaries of the collection, taking into account the cultural, historical, and geographical diversity of zakat-related materials. Plan for the growth of the collection over time.

Metadata Standards and Documentation

Metadata Schema: Develop a comprehensive metadata schema that captures relevant information about each item in the collection, including descriptive, administrative, and technical metadata.

Metadata Creation and Maintenance: Implement consistent metadata creation and maintenance practices, ensuring accuracy, completeness, and adherence to established standards.

Documentation of Policies and Procedures: Document the guidelines, policies, and procedures related to metadata creation, data management, and preservation for reference and future training purposes.

Preservation and Data Management

a. Digital Preservation Strategy: Define a long-term digital preservation strategy to ensure the integrity, authenticity, and accessibility of the digital archive. Consider the use of standards such as OAIS (Open Archival Information System) for preservation planning.

b. Backup and Redundancy: Implement regular backup procedures and redundant storage systems to protect against data loss or corruption. Test data recovery processes periodically.

c. Data Integrity and Validation: Establish mechanisms to monitor and validate the integrity of digital files, including periodic checksum verification and fixity checks.

d. File Format Migration: Plan for the ongoing management of file formats to mitigate risks of format obsolescence. Regularly assess and migrate files to newer formats when necessary.



Access and User Services

User Access Policies: Define access policies, including levels of access, authentication requirements, and any restrictions or embargoes on specific materials.

User Interface and Search Functionality: Design a user-friendly interface that enables users to search, browse, and discover zakat-related materials efficiently. Consider implementing advanced search features and faceted navigation for enhanced user experience.

User Support and Outreach: Provide user support services, such as documentation, tutorials, and FAQs, to assist users in navigating and utilizing the digital archive effectively. Conduct outreach activities to raise awareness about the archive and its resources.

Security and Privacy

Data Security Measures: Implement appropriate security measures to protect the digital archive from unauthorized access, data breaches, and cyber threats. This may include firewalls, encryption, access controls, and regular security audits.

Privacy and Data Protection: Comply with relevant data protection regulations and ensure the privacy of personal and sensitive information contained within the digital archive. Obtain necessary permissions and consent for the use and dissemination of data.

Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Usage Statistics and Analytics: Monitor and analyze usage statistics and user feedback to gain insights into the effectiveness and impact of the digital archive. Use this data to inform decision-making and improvements.

User Feedback and Evaluation: Encourage user feedback and conduct periodic evaluations to assess user satisfaction, identify areas for improvement, and address any issues or concerns.

By developing comprehensive guidelines covering these aspects, the management and curation of the digital archive dedicated to zakat-related materials can be effectively ensured, contributing to its sustainability, security, and usability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Establish dedicated digital archives for zakat-related documents

Create specialized digital archives that focus on collecting, preserving, and providing access to zakat-related documents. These archives should adhere to international digital preservation standards and best practices to ensure long-term sustainability.



Develop Comprehensive Digitization Programs

Implement digitization programs to convert physical zakat-related documents into digital formats. Prioritize high-quality digitization techniques to capture detailed information, including text, images, and metadata.

Apply Standardized Metadata Schemas

Utilize established metadata standards such as Dublin Core or PREMIS to describe zakat-related documents. Consistent application of metadata will facilitate the organization, searchability, and interoperability of digital archives.

Implement Robust Preservation Strategies

Implement strategies for the long-term preservation of digital materials, including backup systems, format migration, and checksum validation.

Regular monitoring and periodic audits should be conducted to ensure the integrity and authenticity of digital zakat-related documents.

Foster collaboration and community engagement

Collaborate with relevant stakeholders such as zakat institutions, Islamic scholars, and researchers to encourage participation and contributions to the digital archives.

Engage the community through educational programs, workshops, and exhibitions to raise awareness about the importance of preserving zakat-related heritage.

CONCLUSION

The preservation and digitization of zakat-related documents are crucial for safeguarding the rich cultural and historical heritage associated with zakat practices. The findings of this study highlight the need for dedicated digital archives, comprehensive digitization programs, standardized metadata schemas, robust preservation strategies, and community engagement initiatives. By implementing these recommendations, zakat institutions and cultural organizations can ensure the long-term accessibility and preservation of zakat-related documents, allowing future generations to study and understand the significance of zakat in Islamic society.

This study highlights the importance of digital archiving and preservation in the context of zakat-related materials. The findings indicate the potential of digitization techniques and archival practices to safeguard and enhance the accessibility of zakat documents, ensuring their long-term preservation and usability.

However, there is still ample scope for further research in this area. Future studies could focus on:

Exploring the application of artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms in automating the process of digitization, metadata extraction, and document classification within the zakat context. (Borges et al., 2019; Sánchez-Rada et al., 2017).

Investigating the effectiveness of different preservation strategies, such as emulation and virtualization, in ensuring the continued accessibility and authenticity of digitized zakat materials (Giaretta, 2008; Rosenthal et al., 2012).

Examining the impact of the digital archive on promoting transparency, accountability, and public trust in zakat institutions (Kamla et al., 2014; Yaghoubi et al., 2019).

Assessing the usability and user experience of the digital archive, considering the needs and expectations of different user groups, including researchers, students, and practitioners (Nicholas et al., 2015; Stanton et al., 2018).

Exploring the potential of data analytics and visualization techniques to extract meaningful insights from the digitized zakat materials enables researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural aspects of Islamic philanthropy (Borgman, 2015; Borgman et al., 2012).

By addressing these research areas, scholars can further enhance the preservation, accessibility, and utilization of zakat-related materials, contributing to the broader field of Islamic studies and cultural heritage preservation.

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