



## Interdisciplinary research burden in Islamic studies and action from academic librarian

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### ABSTRACT

*Interdisciplinary research is increasingly recognized as a crucial approach to addressing the complexity of religious and social issues in regional and global contexts. However, the implementation of such research often encounters significant challenges, particularly in fields like Islamic Studies. Despite its potential, integrating diverse disciplines into Islamic Studies research is not always successful due to various obstacles. With their unique expertise and role as “connectors,” academic librarians are well-positioned to facilitate this interdisciplinary growth. This paper examines the challenges faced in interdisciplinary research within Islamic Studies and explores the potential involvement that academic librarians can use to overcome these barriers. Researchers employ a literature-based method involving stages of designing, collecting, analyzing, and presenting research to examine the challenges in interdisciplinary studies. The results reveal two primary types of burdens: scientific and practical. Scientific burdens include limitations in researchers’ knowledge, difficulties in integrating disciplines, and an overemphasis on the original discipline. Practical burdens include implementing interdisciplinary curricula, navigating bureaucratic procedures, accessing research facilities, finding relevant information sources, and preparing research proposals. Academic librarians play a crucial role in addressing these practical burdens by optimizing policies, providing relevant collections and access, and developing advanced facilities and services. The study concludes that for effective interdisciplinary research, it is essential to recognize and address these burdens, leveraging the support and resources provided by academic librarians to enhance the research process.*

**Keywords:** *Interdisciplinary research burden; Islamic studies; Academic librarians; Librarian Roles; Research burden*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic studies can no longer be viewed as an isolated entity. The challenges Muslim societies face today, such as radicalization, gender, interfaith dialogue, technology, social media, and socio-political dynamics in the Islamic world, require a more profound and holistic understanding. The interdisciplinary approach has the principle that religious phenomena cannot be understood only through the lens of one scientific discipline. Researchers vary in viewpoints, analytical methods, and theoretical approaches to delve into complex religious and social issues. For example, a combination of religious studies and social sciences can lead to an understanding of how religious beliefs influence the social actions of Muslim societies in a global context. This collaboration between Islamic studies and other disciplines, or vice versa, is expected to produce new frameworks and methods for studying social phenomena while meeting the expectations of today’s Islamic society. (Pettalongi, 2022). The interdisciplinary research process sometimes goes differently than expected. This gap can occur in graduate students in Islamic universities who take multidisciplinary research, especially students with non-Islamic studies educational backgrounds. The limited knowledge and skills required to research this type of interdisciplinarity is a gap that must be considered comprehensively by higher education stakeholders. Other factors include the rise and expansion of technology, Open Access, and innovative scholarly publishing approaches, fluctuations in funding, evolving acquisition models, diverse academic needs and interest groups, the emergence of interdisciplinary approaches, shifts in search behaviors, and the vast array of research materials available all contribute to the dynamic landscape of academia (Atallah & Salamon, 2020).



In higher education, academic librarians have an essential role in the success of student learning processes and outputs. Campus life that cannot be separated from information resources allows students to interact with librarians as providers of academic information services through the availability of collections, library services, and literacy programs. Ideally, librarians in the modernization era have insights and skills relevant to their users' interests, including interdisciplinary research students who explained their characteristics and constraints in the previous discussion. Librarians have increasingly become part of various team-based research efforts, including numerous studies examining their roles within cross-disciplinary research groups (Knaan & Miller, 2021). The context and complexity of the research can cause this transformation of information habits. The more complex the subject studied, the more references researchers must explore. Therefore, focusing on the research characteristics of library user students becomes urgent in the college library environment. Proper use of collections as instructed during the Orientation Program or Library Instruction contributes to student academic success (Gaha et al., 2018; Hart & Kleinveldt, 2011). Including interdisciplinary subjects with the peculiarity of combining two or more adjacent subject categories or even vice versa (Danermark, 2019) can increase the chances of success through intensive utilization of information resources and library programs (Anderson & García, 2020).

Regarding the role of academic librarians in interdisciplinary research, Vagda (2023) has investigated the role of librarians in achieving the transformation of India's National Education Goals, one of which is a focus on multidisciplinary education. Knaan and Miller (2021) analyze the involvement of librarians in interdisciplinary research, an experiment to determine the significance of the successful implementation of research grants. In the same year, Kasten-Mutkus (2021) conducted studies on the strategic roles of academic libraries in supporting interdisciplinarity in the "Medical Humanities." Gullbekk et al. (2015) they examined librarian expectations when involved in interdisciplinary studies and how they correlate with information literacy skills. The characteristics of this study emphasize the involvement of academic librarians, individually and institutionally, in the success of interdisciplinary research in the university environment.

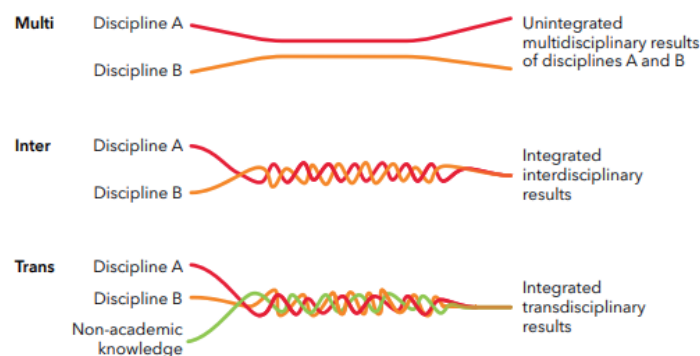
While existing research has explored various aspects of academic librarians' involvement in interdisciplinary settings, there remains a notable gap in systematically classifying how librarians address the specific challenges faced by users in interdisciplinary research. This study uniquely aims to fill this gap by comprehensively analyzing librarians' distinct roles in mitigating these challenges, offering a nuanced understanding of their contributions to supporting effective interdisciplinary research. Therefore, this paper seeks to identify and address the specific challenges in conducting interdisciplinary research within Islamic Studies and to examine the specification of librarians' roles in overcoming interdisciplinary research in Islamic Studies. By examining these challenges from the perspective of academic librarians, the study aims to develop a framework of solutions that librarians can implement in Islamic college libraries to support effective interdisciplinary research.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

An interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinary approach is expected to solve complex problems today, as well as scientific development, methodology, and the potential to give birth to new scientific hybrids (Ilana et al., 2022). The statement aligns with Nafris Roshan (2021), who states that academic science is fundamental in solving life problems. Still, it is considered incompetent for complex issues because it relies too much on monodiscipline. In contrast, interdisciplinary research involves investigating and problem-solving using a more comprehensive approach. Interdisciplinary research enhances researchers' knowledge and skills by facilitating collaboration across disciplines to study phenomena related to their primary field of inquiry (Nolen et al., 2021). The rationale for interdisciplinary approaches is supported by examining the theoretical frameworks and methodologies employed and the data sources, analytical techniques, and scheduling processes

involved (Danermark, 2019). These criteria are essential for identifying and integrating relevant disciplines in research endeavors. The presence of interdisciplinary research is motivated by the problems of human life that are increasingly complex and require in-depth study.

Social interaction and scientific advances create new, more sophisticated nuances and trigger issues complex for monodiscipline to overcome. For example, integrating technology into almost all societal activities creates the perception that the characterization of human generations is associated with their expertise in using the latest technology. Even the birth of the term *born-digital* describes the generation that, since the womb, has interacted with automation devices to make them more adaptable to digital technology than their predecessors. Thus, interdisciplinary praxis in Islamic research is inseparable from issues that develop in society, which are directly studied for correlation with the interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith as Izzah (2020); the interdisciplinary approach is fundamental, mainly if this approach is used to understand the message of Islam in the Qur'an and al-Hadith. Then, the principles of Islamic epistemology need to be derived from the Islamic nature view (worldview) to obtain a frame of thought, which is based on the Qur'an, al-Hadith, and Islamic intellectual traditions, so that Islamic epistemology does have peculiarities that have never been possessed by western epistemology or other civilizations (Mahmudin et al., 2021).



**Figure 1.** Illustration of different approaches to research

Source: Keesstra et al. (2016)

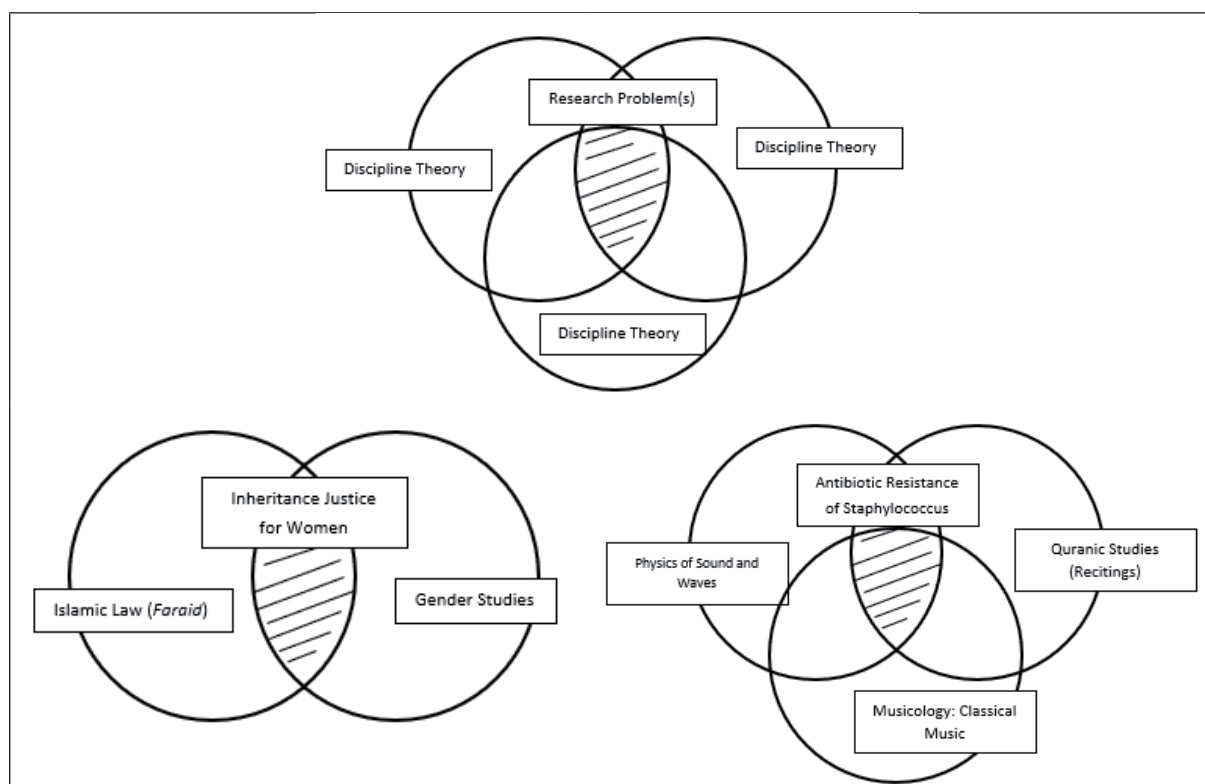
The picture explains that multidisciplinary research involves two subjects studying a phenomenon or problem, such as Islamic Finance and Economic Development. Meanwhile, interdisciplinary research integrates two disciplines whose results are related: Islam and Environmental Sustainability Research. Transdisciplinary combines the concepts of academic and non-academic disciplines to produce solid solutions to research problems or problem formulations, for instance, Islamic Perspectives on Technology and Digital Ethics. It is essential to note these properties because they affect the results of the studies. Holistic and systemic research findings from research are the focus of interdisciplinary studies, so researchers need to pay attention to their research outputs. There are two interdisciplinary research orientations of academic interest: targeted to the solution of academic questions, where disciplines have reached the limits of their methodological capacity and need to bring insights from other disciplines; Problem-based: addresses issues of social, technical and policy relevance, where discipline-related outputs are less critical to project design.

Furthermore, in Islamic studies, Muslim scientists face the challenges of modern problems, provide solutions as a manifestation of *sholih li kulli zaman wal makan*, and avoid stagnation and cheese in the scope of Islamic studies (Farid, 2021). The development of the times and the complexity of life are inevitable and have penetrated various layers of Muslim society. The presence of technology, the dynamics of social structure, and the pattern of meeting basic needs in the modern era can be studied through an Islamic point of view based on the Qur'an and Hadith. Muslim scholars and researchers who study Islamic topics can resolve current conflicts by broadening the

horizon of research perspectives, namely combining Islamic studies with other disciplines that are considered beneficial. This idea has been designed by universities that open interdisciplinary study programs, or research focuses on national and global campuses. Interdisciplinary Islamic studies help enrich the understanding of Islam among researchers, academics, and practitioners, and the merging of disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and politics can provide an explicit picture of Islam that can be viewed from various aspects of science (Saumantri & Hajam, 2023).

Islamic religious universities in Indonesia open opportunities for researchers to take interdisciplinary courses based on the educational background of student researchers, the problems studied, and the readiness of researchers. There are approximately 23 interdisciplinary studies that can be the focus of research by master and doctoral research students, including Islam and Human Rights, Islam and International Relations, Gender and Islamic Studies, Religion and Science, Religion and Medicine, Religion and Media, Religion and Environment, Religion and Library and Information Science (Sekolah Pascasarjana UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2023).

Research students in the postgraduate environment should ideally be able to solve science, technology, and art problems in their scientific fields through an inter or multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach (Fitri, 2020). In addition, the availability of scientific publications in the form of interdisciplinary journal portals such as The Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies (IJIIS) (UIII), Jurnal Kajian Islam Interdisciplinary (UIN Sunan Kalijaga), and Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies (ISIMU), demonstrate the urgency of the importance of interdisciplinary research in the field of Islam. They especially consider the primary context of Islamic studies in the contemporary era: terror and Islamophobia, post-truth, the era of identity, and post-orientalism (Widiyanto, 2022). The example below illustrates how Islamic Studies and other disciplines are intercorrelated in solving an issue.



**Figure 2.** Sample of interdisciplinary research

Source: Inspired from Online Repository UIN Jakarta

Figure 2 extends interdisciplinary research, which involves integrating and synthesizing ideas and methods from multiple disciplines rather than merely combining them, allowing for a broader understanding of a topic and overcoming the limitations of a single disciplinary perspective (CohenMiller & Pate, 2019). Interdisciplinary research on inheritance justice for women involves integrating Islamic law (*Faraid*) with gender studies to critically examine how legal frameworks influence women's rights and socio-economic outcomes. This approach highlights the theological and legal dimensions of inheritance practices and addresses the gendered implications and social realities women face within these frameworks. The research problem of antibiotic resistance in *Staphylococcus aureus* can be explored through an interdisciplinary approach that combines the physics of sound and waves, Quranic studies (particularly the reciting), and musicology, specifically classical music. By examining the potential therapeutic effects of sound frequencies and vibrations on bacterial behavior, the study can investigate whether specific sound patterns found in Quranic recitations or classical music can influence the growth or resistance of *Staphylococcus aureus*.

That breadth of interdisciplinary focus underscores the necessity for effective research support. In this context, the competencies required for academic librarians to facilitate such research partnerships. The necessary competencies for academic librarians in research partnerships are identified through five pertinent areas of librarianship: reference services, research data management, digital scholarship, bibliometrics for research assessment, and scholarly communication that are crucial to research support services (Rabasa & A.Abrizah, 2022). In a study conducted by interviewing librarians regarding research services, several recommendations from respondents highlight key roles for librarians in research activities. Librarians should act as plagiarism checkers for research proposals and engage actively in literature review processes. They must adapt to changes, be proficient in information technology, and pursue continuous self-development. Researchers are encouraged to frequently involve librarians in their research endeavors, leveraging their expertise in managing scientific documents such as journal articles, books, proceedings, and research reports (Riyanto et al., 2019). Supporting librarians in these roles effectively integrates and utilizes their contributions to research activities.

### 3. METHOD

This research uses a literature review approach, ranging from narrow investigations of specific variable effects or relationships to broader explorations of collective evidence in a research area, with literature reviews being particularly useful for providing an overview and evaluating the state of knowledge on a particular issue or research problem (Snyder, 2019). This research practically seeks to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of a particular topic by critically evaluating available sources of information (Institute for Academic Development, The University of Edinburgh, 2023). The research process refers to Snyder (2019) and Paré & Kitsiou (2017), which can be formulated in the next paragraph.

First, designing (initial design), the research aims to identify interdisciplinary research challenges in Islamic studies and outline opportunities for the role of academic librarians to solve these problems. Researchers choose the literature study method to achieve the research objectives, assuming the limitations of publications that evaluate interdisciplinarity in Islamic studies and the time limitations of researchers. To facilitate the discovery of relevant documents, researchers use keywords: Interdisciplinary Research + Challenge(s); Interdisciplinarity + Challenge(s); Interdisciplinary Research + Discovery; Interdisciplinary Research + Concept; Interdisciplinary Research + Librarian + Role(s); Interdisciplinarity + Academic Library (ies); Academic Librarian + Research Partner + Interdisciplinarity; libraries, OR librarians + Interdisciplinary Research and others continue to be developed as the search process progresses. Second, in Conducting (literature collection), search criteria include accessible full-text, clear authorship, scientific publication's



purpose, complete document metadata, and supporting research ideas. Therefore, a literature search is carried out online using the Boolean Logic strategy to filter information for a higher level of relevance. The research utilizes academic databases subscribed by universities, open-access sources, university online publications, and scientific e-journal sites. Third, in analysis, researchers examine the content of information sources from abstracts and keywords defined by the author of the literature. When deemed relevant, an entire content scanning process is carried out to determine which sections support research ideas or ideas about interdisciplinary research challenges in Islamic studies and the role of academic librarians. Researchers organize the literature cited into research results; some are complementary, adding, confirming, and others depending on the author's context in his work. However, researchers focus more on literature that supports or complements each other. Fourth, in structuring and writing the review, researchers present the results of a descriptive literature study to describe how research objectives are achieved through literature studies. Researchers oversee research findings by elaborating the concept of interdisciplinary research in general and its specificity in Islamic studies. Then, elaborate on the literature's main findings to answer the previous research's two objectives.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Identified Interdisciplinary Research Challenges in Islamic Studies**

The high-yield demands of interdisciplinary research are a challenge for the authors. Practical barriers to interdisciplinary research include difficulties organizing meetings, developing language and general knowledge, and understanding the task. Interdisciplinary researchers have a double burden in completing their research, like understanding (cognition) and practice in the field. When examining the challenges and opportunities of interdisciplinary research in general or without referring to the label of the discipline, researchers have studied it quite regularly. Unfortunately, discussions about interdisciplinarity in Islamic studies are still minimal and cannot be dissected by relying on research or studies that have been published. This situation is evidenced by search results that are less or less representative in answering the research objectives. Some use the word “challenges” in the title, but its discussion is not directly spelled out.

Referring to the assumption of limited literature that addresses the challenges of interdisciplinary research in Islamic studies, researchers approach other terms but remain relevant to achieving research objectives. From several journals, researchers obtained the closest picture from the literature on the theme of challenges in “teaching interdisciplinary in Islamic Studies,” “Challenges of Islamic Education,” and “problem in Multidisciplinary Islamic Studies” and directly examine interdisciplinary Islamic research journals such as *Islamic Economic Studies* (a merger of economic and Islamic disciplines). The following paragraph elaborates on the challenges obtained from the literature review with the development of previous keyword themes. In addition, researchers can see from the research process, which includes activities to determine Islamic problems, the process of bringing together two or three different knowledge families but still related to the problem topic, conducting interaction between sciences review/analysis again in depth, the conclusion creation process (Aziz & Azizah, 2023).

The challenges of interdisciplinary research in Islamic studies reveal a complex interplay between theoretical frameworks, educational dynamics, and practical applications. Abidin (2022) identifies a significant barrier: the difficulty in aligning traditional Islamic concepts with contemporary societal dynamics. This disconnection often results in misconceptions regarding Islamic texts, where interpretations may diverge from intended meanings, complicating efforts to contextualize these teachings within modern frameworks. Khan (2023) adds another layer to this discussion by critiquing the methodology used in comparative political research within Islamic studies. The challenge here is twofold: first, the risk of isolating Islamic texts from their practical applications in contemporary

legal and political contexts, and second, the inherent limitations of applying liberal frameworks to assess Islamic practices. Khan's argument emphasizes the importance of recognizing sharia not merely as an individual choice but as a collective moral obligation, suggesting that such a perspective requires a nuanced approach that respects the cultural and ethical dimensions of Islamic practice.

Anum et al. (2022) further highlight the role of academic supervision in this interdisciplinary landscape. The friction between students and lecturers, where students perceive a lack of engagement from their mentors while lecturers feel students are not adequately prepared, exacerbates the issue. This mutual blame may inhibit students' exploration of new interdisciplinary approaches, suggesting a need for a more harmonious collaboration in the academic environment. Moreover, the authors point to the systemic obstacles, such as campus bureaucracy and resource availability, which can hinder effective engagement with interdisciplinary Islamic studies. It envisages that the discourse around interdisciplinary research in Islamic studies highlights significant obstacles ranging from theoretical misalignments and pedagogical challenges to methodological constraints. For progress to occur, a collaborative approach among educators, students, and researchers is essential, along with a commitment to integrating Islamic principles meaningfully into contemporary contexts. This integration demands not only an understanding of Islamic texts but also a careful consideration of the socio-political realities that shape their interpretation and application.

Based on previous researchers' findings, problems in preparing interdisciplinary research on Islamic studies are relatively diverse. This condition can be categorized as a burden for researchers because it conceptually and practically hinders the process of completing research. For this reason, rare anticipation should be considered before starting research on integrating specific disciplines into Islamic studies. This research load is a problem that may have similarities with interdisciplinary research in general (non-integrated Islamic Studies). Factors of subject specificity, epistemology principles, researchers' readiness, and external resources strongly influence the success of interdisciplinary research. Therefore, specifications regarding the interdisciplinary research load of Islamic studies need to be mapped as a basis for future researchers to consider. The following paragraph will describe two significant problems regarding interdisciplinary research in Islamic studies.

The scientific burden is the challenge of interdisciplinary Islamic research focusing on cognitive unpreparedness, understanding of knowledge, and researcher mentality. This group of problems is classified into three categories, which will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, researchers with non-Islamic Studies backgrounds have limited knowledge of Islamic studies. This obstacle becomes urgent given the principle of interdisciplinary research that requires researchers to understand other disciplines integrated to avoid errors in interpreting the epistemology of Islamic studies and the primary sources of its teachings, including the Qur'an, al-Hadith, and Islamic intellectual traditions.

Secondly, merging two disciplines is not always easy to apply, especially in studying social phenomena and contemporary science. Some disciplines cannot be directly integrated with Islamic studies or vice versa. Each scientific discipline is born and influenced by the thickness of the theory, the figure's reputation, adherence or inventor, and its openness to injecting other disciplines. Understanding the taxonomy of science is indispensable for interdisciplinary researchers to understand the scope of a particular discipline. For example, merging electrical engineering with Islamic studies requires identifying scientific levels first to determine in what scope the two disciplines can be integrated.

Thirdly, the potential for egocentrism makes other disciplines complementary rather than partners. Researchers are sometimes not solid in understanding Islamic texts as the primary foundation for uncovering problems in the field, so the research results are not holistic. In addition,

the trust of researchers as individuals or part of certain groups will significantly affect the harmony of interdisciplinary research. This issue has the potential to occur due to the lack of flexibility of researchers to understand other disciplines comprehensively and contextually. As a result, researchers fenced the nature of openness with previous understanding.

Field burden is the challenges of interdisciplinary Islamic research that focuses on the experience and interaction of researchers in the field. This group of problems is classified into four categories, which will be explained in the following paragraphs.

Firstly, an interdisciplinary curriculum that has not been strategic and effective in interdisciplinary Islamic studies, particularly in aspects of the processes and outputs of higher education to which it aspires. The pattern of transfer of knowledge and interdisciplinary research skills is still not harmonious, namely the absence of mutualism symbiosis between students, lecturers, and supervisors (promoters). This potential can occur due to the lack of independence of research students to explore the topic of their discipline, and the lecturer provides the same teaching method for various characteristics of their students.

Secondly, the bureaucratic procedures and relatively inflexible on-campus learning facilities will hinder knowledge transfer and interdisciplinary research skills. Research students have an expectation of distance learning (online) that can be accessed to understand research concepts without having to always meet with lecturers or promoters. Furthermore, the absence of special consulting services, such as interdisciplinary research service centers for Islamic studies, is difficult for researchers when they rely on supervisors or promoters who must protect many research students.

Thirdly, the availability of supporting information resources online and offline is a must. The complexity and specifics of interdisciplinary research require qualified reference sources that researchers can easily access. This peculiarity of combining research makes it difficult for interdisciplinary researchers to find relevant references. Most researchers are overwhelmed looking for similar previous research. This problem occurs when the subject under study is a merger of two disciplines that are not widely discussed in widespread scientific communication or do not become the scope of research in university scientific publications or organizations. Other factors, such as lack of information and digital literacy skills, can affect how students interact with electronic information sources. Bottlenecks in digital information search usually occur because researchers rely solely on the exact keywords and academic databases. Therefore, an understanding of terms in a particular discipline must mature to be used to expand or narrow search keywords.

Fourth, a research proposal preparation program for interdisciplinary Islamic research students. Although the skills of compiling proposals are generally integrated with the lecture curriculum, interdisciplinary researchers can potentially lose their direction after lectures, in the next semester, or in the middle of research. As a result, designing interdisciplinary research is still raw, and researchers do not know how to communicate it. Given the importance of the design stage (proposal), such as Analysis of previous research, literature studies, and management of supporting datasets, universities ideally organize special programs or services to prepare proposals / interdisciplinary research planning in Islamic studies.

#### **4.2 Librarians' Involvement in Overcoming Interdisciplinary Research Challenges**

Refer to the description of the potential research burden faced by researchers. The most applicable role of librarians is to solve field or technical problems because the burden of knowledge will be more relevant to solving it with curriculum planning and handling the learning process. Librarians can contribute through their knowledge and information literacy skills with the principle of "active-participatory," which is not waiting for students to come for help but initiatives to be directly involved by promoting expertise and as partners, socializing information search programs, and disseminating academic information resources. A critical premise that needs to be built is that the position of the librarian is not complementary but as a partner regardless of whether included as a writer or not.



The involvement of academic librarians in knowledge production (research) is an opportunity to build the professional image of the librarian apart from its traditional duties, Especially expertise in solving researchers' information needs, research design, and data analysis (Borrego et al., 2018). Therefore, the role of academic librarians in preparing interdisciplinary Islamic research will be described in the next paragraph.

The role of academic librarians in facilitating interdisciplinary research is increasingly recognized as pivotal, particularly in areas requiring integration across diverse fields. As discussed by Wishkoski (2018), librarians are not just custodians of collections; they actively promote information literacy and enhance teaching and learning processes. This foundational role is crucial for researchers navigating complex interdisciplinary landscapes, as librarians can guide users through the wealth of knowledge available in various subject areas. Additionally, specialist librarians play a particularly vital role in this context. For instance, in health-related disciplines, they assist researchers in accessing specialized biomedical resources such as PubMed and guide tools like EndNote and Innography. Chen et al. (2019) emphasize that librarians help determine effective keywords and topics related to specific fields, thereby enhancing the research process. Their expertise extends to education on patents, iconography, and the broader nuances of information literacy, which are essential for researchers engaging in complex interdisciplinary projects.

Furthermore, the evolving skill set of librarians now encompasses areas such as copyright management, geographic information systems (GIS), media production, e-learning, and data management. Borrego and Pinfield (2020) highlight the importance of these competencies, which enable librarians to contribute substantively to the research process, from managing publications to designing research methodologies and conceptualizing data collection. Libraries can also facilitate interdisciplinary research by curating qualified collections and offering services tailored to the needs of researchers. This involves repacking and promoting collections relevant to interdisciplinary studies, ensuring that resources from various fields are accessible and integrated. Kasten-Mutkus and Saragossi (2021) discuss the importance of providing traceability guidance and linking specialized sources across disciplines, such as medical humanities, thereby enhancing the researchers' ability to access and utilize pertinent information effectively.

Collaborative partnership between librarians and researchers is essential for maximizing the impact of interdisciplinary projects. Rabasa and Abrizah (2022) argue that librarians must cultivate a collaborative character, integrating knowledge and practical skills to support academics effectively. Their role extends to aiding research teams in addressing complex problems, fostering connections among experts, and enhancing communication strategies across disciplines, as noted by Miller and Ben-Knaan (2020). Academic librarians are integral to interdisciplinary research, acting as facilitators of knowledge, collaborators in the research process, and educators in information literacy. By leveraging their specialized skills and resources, librarians not only enhance the effectiveness of research endeavors but also contribute to the development of innovative solutions to complex, multifaceted challenges.

Based on a comprehensive review of existing literature, the role of librarians in interdisciplinary research encompasses a spectrum of activities, from planning and utilizing information resources to guiding interdisciplinary research publications. Additionally, the contribution of academic librarians is crucial in mitigating or addressing the challenges associated with interdisciplinary research methods within Islamic studies.

The literature indicates a paucity of discussions specifically addressing the role of librarians in interdisciplinary Islamic studies. Consequently, a growing expectation exists for a focused examination of librarians' contributions to interdisciplinary research. To broaden search outcomes, the term "library(ies)" is often employed, as it is presumed to encapsulate the multifaceted responsibilities of librarians within the broader context of library management and their integral role in supporting research activities within the academic environment.

**Table 1.** The matrix of role and contribution of librarians

The Burden of Interdisciplinary Islamic Research	The role and contribution of librarians	Categories			
		Policy	Collection	Facilities	Programs/ services
Interdisciplinary learning curriculum	Design and promote quality teaching and learning / (support) the lecture learning curriculum	✓			
	Designing information literacy education is devoted to Islamic interdisciplinary researchers.				✓
	Designing instructional library pieces of training relevant to interdisciplinary research interests				✓
Bureaucratic procedures and learning facilities	Manage cooperation with stakeholders, namely professors, experts, practitioners, lecturers, and communities and institutions, to facilitate the difficulties of interdisciplinary researchers practically	✓			
	Support distributed education or e-learning by providing various access to relevant digital information sources.		✓		
	Provide collections with printed and electronic interdisciplinary subjects that are relevant and current.	✓	✓		
Availability of information resources	Provide remote access to collection resources for interdisciplinary researchers.			✓	
	Provide services and guidelines for tracking information to discipline-specific databases (including search keyword determination strategies)				✓
	Provide services for sending information source documents to researchers quickly.				✓
Research proposal preparation program	Promoting the Interdisciplinary Collection to Researchers at the Faculty				✓
	Understand the data analysis practices needed by interdisciplinary researchers in supporting research problems and conceptualizing research ideas.				✓
	Understanding the habits of interdisciplinary researchers as library users and how to inform can overcome obstacles to collection access, limited knowledge and browsing skills, devices used, and others.				✓

Source: Construction Researcher (2023)

The table above illustrates the capacity of academic librarians to address, mitigate, and anticipate the challenges inherent in interdisciplinary Islamic research. The emergence of these roles highlights that academic librarians are expected to possess a high degree of research expertise and skills, as the demands of collaborating in interdisciplinary research are complex and multifaceted. Librarians must excel in designing interdisciplinary curricula, forecasting relevant literature for interdisciplinary lectures, leveraging digital and print information resources, and mastering data analysis techniques. This expectation positions academic librarians as essential catalysts and facilitators in successfully implementing learning and research within the university setting. The evolving landscape of researchers' behavior and interactions in the information age necessitates that library policies, collections, facilities, and services consistently align with user needs. The urgency of this research skill is affirmed by Leonard et. Al (2023) that librarians today and in the future at least master bibliometrics, research data management, systematic review, and scoping.

Thus, to address the challenges inherent in interdisciplinary research within Islamic Studies, librarians must develop a range of specialized skills aligned with the distinctive characteristics of Islamic learning and research. These skills include:

1. Curriculum Support: Designing and promoting quality teaching and learning experiences aligned with Islamic education principles and supporting interdisciplinary lecture curricula.
2. Information Literacy and Training: Develop specialized information literacy education and instructional training tailored to the needs of Islamic interdisciplinary researchers.
3. Stakeholder Collaboration: Managing partnerships with professors, experts, and institutions to address practical research challenges and facilitate collaboration.
4. Resource Management: Provides access to relevant and up-to-date digital and print resources, supports remote access, and offers efficient document delivery services.
5. Data Analysis and User Insights: Understand the data analysis practices required for research and gain insights into researcher habits and barriers to improving access and usability of resources.

Considering the potential research burdens researchers encounter, librarians' most pertinent role is to address field-specific or technical challenges. The complexities of managing knowledge are most effectively alleviated through strategic curriculum planning and learning process management. Librarians can make significant contributions by leveraging their expertise and information literacy skills in an "active-participatory" manner. Rather than passively waiting for students to seek assistance, librarians should proactively engage by promoting their expertise, acting as partners in the research process, socializing information search programs, and disseminating academic information resources. This proactive approach ensures that librarians are integral to resolving research challenges and enhancing their learning experience.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on research findings and discussions, the challenges of interdisciplinary research in Islamic studies are practical constraints, including the implementation of an interdisciplinary curriculum, bureaucratic procedures, research facilities, the availability of supporting information resources, and the preparation of interdisciplinary research proposals. Referring to these problems, academic librarians can take a role to reduce, anticipate, and overcome the burden of practical category research through the formulation of collection development policies and interdisciplinary information promotion strategies in the Islamic field, optimization of collection management and ease of access by researchers, providing adequate ICT-based facilities and services. Librarians and university stakeholders can involve librarians in learning management and interdisciplinary research in Islamic studies. Academic librarians must be equipped with comprehensive, solid, and applicable research skills with university target users. Considering the research method of this paper and the limited literature that examines the topic of interdisciplinary research challenges in Islamic studies, it is highly recommended that the next researcher conducts quantitative and qualitative field research to prove the conceptual findings of this research.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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