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## **DEVELOPMENT OF QURAN PRINTING AND PRESERVATION: AN EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper examines the historical and contemporary development of Quran printing and preservation. Tracing its evolution from early oral transmission and handwritten manuscripts to modern mechanised and digital production. The study highlights how the principles established during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Accuracy, verification and standardisation. Continue to guide present-day Quran printing processes. Particular attention is given to Malaysia, where the Printing of Quranic Texts Act 1986 positions the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) as the sole authority responsible for licensing, approving and inspecting Quran printing activities. Using qualitative document analysis, the research synthesises historical records, manuscript traditions and regulatory documents to identify key strengths and challenges within the current system. Findings show that while Malaysia upholds strong regulatory control and adherence to rasm Uthmani, issues such as reliance on imported materials, workflow inconsistency and digital authentication remain significant. The study concludes that a more integrated optimisation framework is needed to align regulatory governance, technological capability and preservation ethics in ensuring the sustained accuracy, sanctity and accessibility of the Quran in the modern era.

#### **Keywords:**

Quran Printing, Preservation, Historical Development, Manuscript Tradition

## Introduction

The preservation of the Quran represents one of the most comprehensive and uninterrupted systems of knowledge transmission in human history, sustained through oral memorisation, written documentation and institutional verification across centuries (Al-A‘zami, 2020). From early oral transmission and handwritten manuscripts to mechanised mass printing and digital dissemination, each historical phase introduced structured mechanisms to ensure accuracy, accessibility and continuity of the divine text (Fathil et al., 2023). Early Muslim communities relied on rigorous memorisation practices, supervised transcription by appointed scribes and collective verification processes to safeguard textual integrity (Mohamad Redha et al., 2019). As Islam expanded across diverse linguistic and cultural contexts, the need for more formalised preservation systems became increasingly evident, leading to the standardisation of rasm Uthmani and the refinement of calligraphic traditions (Gacek, 2021).

In the contemporary period, Quran printing has evolved into a specialised and highly regulated activity that demands technical precision and ethical accountability. Malaysia presents a distinctive case in which Quran printing and distribution are governed exclusively by the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN) under the Printing of Quranic Texts Act 1986 (Act 326), positioning it among the most centralised Quran-printing regulatory systems in the region (Farid & Yusop, 2022). This paper examines the historical development of Quran preservation, the transition from manuscript culture to mechanised and digital printing, and the role of Malaysia regulatory framework. It further analyses how classical preservation principles continue to inform contemporary production practices while identifying current challenges that require strategic and institutional optimisation (Yusoff & Hanafi, 2022).

## Literature Review

The Existing scholarship on Quran preservation reveals four interconnected strands: early compilation and verification, the development of calligraphic and manuscript traditions, the emergence of printed standardisation, and contemporary regulatory governance in Malaysia. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that Quran preservation has evolved through different historical phases while maintaining a continuous commitment to textual accuracy, ethical responsibility and educational transmission. Rather than isolated practices, preservation mechanisms function as structured systems that integrate learning, verification and institutional oversight.

### *Early Compilation and Preservation*

Early Quran preservation was grounded in a dual system of memorisation and written documentation, ensuring the accurate transmission of revelation during and after the Prophet Muhammad lifetime (Rahman, 2019). Companions who had memorised the Quran played a critical role in cross-verifying written records, establishing an early model of communal validation. This process highlights that preservation was embedded within structured learning practices that combined oral mastery with written accountability.

The standardisation undertaken during the caliphate of Uthman further reinforced these principles by establishing a unified rasm to prevent textual divergence across expanding Muslim territories (Karame, 2023). This initiative reflects an early form of institutional governance, where authoritative oversight and educational consensus were applied to protect textual integrity. These foundational efforts continue to inform modern preservation frameworks by emphasising verification, standardisation and collective responsibility.

### ***Calligraphy, Manuscript Traditions and Aesthetic Preservation***

Classical Quranic manuscripts demonstrate highly disciplined verification processes and established calligraphic conventions that ensured both textual accuracy and visual consistency (Gallop, 2021). The development of Arabic scripts such as Hijazi, Kufic and later Naskh illustrates a sustained effort to balance aesthetic refinement with readability, particularly for instructional and devotional use.

Deroche (2022) argues that manuscript production was governed by strict scholarly norms, including proofreading stages and supervised copying, reinforcing the educational dimension of manuscript culture. Calligraphy functioned not merely as artistic expression but as a pedagogical tool that facilitated correct reading, memorisation and transmission. These manuscript traditions laid the intellectual and technical foundations for later printing practices by embedding precision and accountability within material production.

### ***Emergence of Printing and Global Standardisation***

The introduction of printing technology marked a significant transition in Quran dissemination by enabling wider distribution while maintaining adherence to established orthographic principles. Ismail (2020) notes that the late Ottoman adoption of printing expanded accessibility without abandoning traditional verification standards. This period illustrates how technological innovation was cautiously integrated into existing preservation ethics.

The publication of the Cairo Edition in 1924 further strengthened global standardisation by establishing a widely accepted reference for rasm Uthmani and verse numbering (Dutton, 2021). This edition continues to influence contemporary printed Qurans worldwide, demonstrating how institutional consensus can harmonise technological efficiency with doctrinal consistency. The emergence of printing thus represents continuity rather than disruption in Quran preservation practices.

### ***Quran Printing in Malaysia***

Malaysia Quran printing governance framework, established under the Printing of Quranic Texts Act 1986 (Act 326), centralises licensing, proofreading and approval processes under the Ministry of Home Affairs. This model positions Malaysia as one of the most regulated Quran printing ecosystems globally, prioritising accuracy and public trust (Hassan & Zulkifli, 2021).

Recent studies indicate that local printing institutions have incorporated digital typesetting, colour calibration and automated inspection tools to enhance compliance and production efficiency (Norazmi & Yusof, 2020). While these advancements improve operational capacity, scholars also emphasise the importance of aligning technological adoption with regulatory oversight and professional training. This literature underscores the role of institutional learning in sustaining Quran preservation amid evolving production technologies.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative document analysis approach to examine the development of Quran printing and preservation from an educational and institutional governance perspective. This method is suitable for studies that seek to synthesise historical, regulatory and scholarly texts to identify patterns, continuity and conceptual developments within structured knowledge systems. Qualitative document analysis enables systematic interpretation of textual data where direct empirical observation is neither feasible nor appropriate.

This study is guided by the following research objectives:

1. RO1: To examine the historical educational principles underlying Quran preservation from early Islamic transmission to modern printing practices.
2. RO2: To analyse the role of institutional governance in regulating and sustaining Quran printing practices in Malaysia.
3. RO3: To identify contemporary challenges in Quran printing, including technological advancement and digital dissemination, from an educational and regulatory perspective.

Based on the research objectives, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. RQ1: What educational and verification principles have historically shaped the preservation of the Quran?
2. RQ2: How are these preservation principles institutionalised within Malaysia Quran printing governance framework?
3. RQ3: What challenges do modern printing technologies and digital Qurans pose to existing preservation and regulatory systems?

### ***Sources of Information and Data Collection***

The study draws on secondary data sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, historical manuscripts, and official regulatory documents. Key legislative references include the Printing of Quranic Texts Act 1986 (Act 326) and institutional reports related to Quran printing supervision in Malaysia. Scholarly literature published between 2000 and 2025 was prioritised to ensure both historical grounding and contemporary relevance.

Data were sourced using academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar, employing keywords including Quran preservation, Quran printing, rasm Uthmani, Islamic manuscript tradition, Quran governance in Malaysia, and digital Quran.

### ***Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria***

To ensure relevance and consistency, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied.

The following requirements must be completed for inclusion:

1. Peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books or institutional publications.
2. Studies addressing Quran preservation, printing, manuscript traditions or regulatory governance.
3. Publications discussing educational, institutional or verification-related aspects of Quran transmission.

Exclusion criteria include:

1. Studies focusing solely on non-Quranic religious texts.
2. Publications that are purely devotional without scholarly analysis.
3. Works that do not address preservation, governance or educational dimensions.

### ***Data Analysis***

The selected documents were analysed using thematic analysis, following a structured interpretive process. First, key concepts related to preservation principles, institutional roles and technological challenges were identified. Second, the data were categorised into thematic clusters: early preservation mechanisms, manuscript and calligraphic traditions, modern

printing governance and digital Quran challenges. Finally, comparative interpretation was conducted to identify continuity, gaps and optimisation needs across historical and contemporary contexts. This analytical approach allows the study to conceptualise Quran printing as an educationally grounded institutional system, rather than a purely technical or industrial process.

### **Findings And Discussion**

This section discusses how classical Quran preservation practices continue to inform contemporary institutional approaches to Quran printing.

#### ***Continuity Between Classical and Modern Preservation***

The findings indicate a strong continuity between classical Quran preservation practices and contemporary institutional governance in Quran printing. During the early Islamic period, the preservation of the Quran relied on structured educational mechanisms such as memorisation, supervised writing and collective verification. These processes functioned not only as religious practices but also as formalised learning systems that ensured accuracy, consistency and ethical responsibility in textual transmission. The compilation process led by Zaid ibn Thabit, for example, operated as a systematic model of validation and peer verification, reflecting early principles of quality assurance within an educational framework (Hamid & Safri, 2021).

These early preservation practices demonstrate that Quran safeguarding was organised, procedural and knowledge-driven rather than informal or incidental. The emphasis on verification, accountability and communal oversight established preservation as an institutionalised educational system, where learning, assessment and correction were integral components of transmission.

In the Malaysian context, similar principles are institutionalised through regulatory procedures implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs (KDN). Processes such as manuscript submission, expert proofreading and print inspection reflect formalised verification structures that parallel early preservation methodologies. These procedures operate as modern educational governance mechanisms, ensuring that individuals and institutions involved in Quran printing adhere to established orthographic, ethical and professional standards. This continuity demonstrates that contemporary Quran printing governance functions as an extension of classical pedagogical principles, sustaining accuracy, standardisation and ethical integrity across generations.

#### ***Influence of Technological Advancement***

Technological advancement in mechanical and digital printing has significantly enhanced access to the Quran, supporting broader educational dissemination and institutional learning. Mass production enables the distribution of certified Qurans to schools, mosques and learning centres, thereby strengthening Quranic literacy and formal religious education nationwide. From an educational perspective, printing technology has expanded the reach of structured Quran learning beyond traditional settings.

However, the findings reveal that large-scale production introduces operational challenges, including workflow inconsistency, colour misalignment and typographical risks, which may compromise textual accuracy if not properly managed (Salleh & Mahmud, 2021). These risks

highlight the tension between efficiency and precision in mass production environments, particularly when technological processes are not supported by adequate verification training.

These challenges underscore the importance of continuous institutional training and technological competency among Quran printing stakeholders. Without structured learning frameworks, professional development programmes and integrated management systems, technological efficiency may conflict with preservation ethics. Therefore, technological advancement must be accompanied by ongoing education and skill development to ensure that innovation reinforces, rather than undermines, the principles of accuracy, amanah and professional accountability.

### ***Regulatory Strengths and Constraints in Malaysia***

Malaysia Quran printing governance under the Printing of Quranic Texts Act 1986 (Act 326) represents one of the most centralised regulatory models globally. KDN sole authority over licensing, approval and inspection ensures a high level of textual accuracy and strengthens public trust in locally produced Qurans. From an educational governance perspective, this regulatory framework functions as a national quality assurance system that institutionalises verification knowledge, professional standards and ethical compliance in Quran production (Hassan & Zulkifli, 2021).

Findings identify several structural constraints within this model. Dependence on a single approving authority may limit operational flexibility and slow production workflows, particularly for high-volume printing. Furthermore, reliance on imported paper, ink and Arabic typesetting technologies increases production costs and reduces opportunities for developing local technical expertise (Ahmad & Mohamad, 2020). These limitations suggest the need for a more integrated governance approach that balances regulatory control with capacity-building, institutional learning and industry-level knowledge transfer.

### ***Emergence of the Digital Quran and New Governance Challenges***

The transition towards digital Quran dissemination introduces new challenges related to authentication, version control and technological vulnerability. Unlike printed texts, digital platforms allow rapid reproduction, modification and distribution, increasing the risk of inaccuracies if not subject to effective oversight. Existing legislation in Malaysia primarily governs printed Qurans, leaving digital formats less comprehensively regulated (Radzid et al., 2019).

This regulatory gap highlights the urgent need for policy expansion that incorporates digital governance frameworks, ethical guidelines and authentication mechanisms. From an educational perspective, digital Quran management should be conceptualised as an extension of preservation pedagogy, where institutions, developers and users share responsibility for maintaining textual integrity. Aligning digital innovation with traditional preservation principles is therefore essential to sustaining the Quran accuracy, sanctity and educational value in contemporary learning environments.

### **Conclusion**

The development of Quran printing and preservation, from early oral transmission and manuscript traditions to contemporary mass printing and digital dissemination, reflects a continuous and systematic commitment to accuracy, sanctity and accessibility. This study

demonstrates that Quran preservation has consistently functioned as an organised educational and institutional process, grounded in verification, accountability and ethical responsibility rather than merely a technical or religious undertaking.

In the Malaysian context, the regulatory framework governing Quran printing provides a strong foundation for maintaining textual integrity and public trust. Centralised oversight ensures high standards of accuracy and standardisation; however, the findings indicate that further optimisation is necessary to address emerging challenges related to technological dependency, operational efficiency and digital dissemination. Without strategic institutional learning and capacity-building, technological advancement risks outpacing existing preservation mechanisms.

From an educational and governance perspective, the study highlights the importance of an integrated national framework that aligns regulatory control, production operations and preservation ethics. Such alignment would support sustainable innovation while safeguarding the enduring principles of amanah and ihsan that have historically guided Quran transmission. By reinforcing institutional learning, professional training and digital governance, Malaysia can continue to strengthen its role as a responsible custodian of the Quran in both printed and digital forms.

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