



REFERENCING STYLE IN THE NIGERIAN ACADEMIA: THE CHALLENGES OF ISLAMIC LAW RESEARCHERS

By

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Abstract

Until recently, the University of Ilorin Law Referencing Style (UNILARS) was adopted for both undergraduate and postgraduate researchers, as a guide for referencing academic writings in the Faculty of Law. This also includes Islamic law researchers. The guide has been in place for more than a decade. Students and researchers have always struggled to comply with the obvious requirements of the guidelines, despite its discrepancies and ambiguous provisions. In the case of Islamic Law researchers, it became more perplexing adopting UNILARS due to the wide vacuum existing in the guidelines regarding Islamic law literature and its unique features in the manner of its presentation; writing names, dates, titles of literature, correct manner of referencing *Qur'ān* and *Hadīth* etc. Although the identified lacuna is not peculiar to UNILARS alone, Other referencing styles like the Nigerian Association of Law Teachers (NALT) Referencing Style also fall short of the recognition in this regard. Unity of style in referencing Islamic law literature could however, not be achieved, despite adopting a referencing style. This has one way or the other, contributed to the challenges of adopting UNILARS and some other referencing styles in academic writings. This research therefore identified some of the challenges embedded in adopting UNILARS, through a doctrinal-cum-non-doctrinal but qualitative research methodology. The research found and highlighted some of the uniqueness of Islamic Law literature, that are paramount for consideration, in styling any referencing guide. A model referencing style is therefore proposed for Islamic law researchers, named the University of Ilorin Sharī'ah Law Referencing Style (UNISLARS) to curb the challenges.

Keywords: Referencing; Islamic Law; UNILARS; Researcher

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Academics have various methods and styles of acknowledging literature sources in writings. This is one of the important aspects of research that demonstrates the quality of research. From a *Sharī'ah* perspective, referencing, which may also be in form of *tahqiq*,¹ *ta'liq*,² *tashih*³ or *shar'u*⁴ adds to the potency of a research work. The current trend, is for each academic setting, including a faculty, department, research institute or a journal outlet, to either adopt a particular referencing style among the popular ones or design its own for researchers. In the case of the

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¹ Meaning investigation, actualisation or researching the basis. See Qal'aji Ruwās Muhammad, *Mu'jam Lugah al-Fuqahāa (Dār al-Nafāis*, Lenanon 1996) 103.

² Reversion or annotation. Ibid. 116.

³ Correction or rectification. Ibid. 111.

⁴ Explanation, elucidation, clarification or exposition. Ibid. 118, 231.



Islamic Law Department, Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin, the applicable referencing style for postgraduate students is the University of Ilorin Law Referencing Style (UNILARS).⁵

In adopting the above style, a survey conducted revealed that recurrent challenges are encountered by researchers, which remain unresolved. The appropriate method of citing Islamic Law literature is said not to be properly addressed in UNILARS, notwithstanding the dedicated classes for Islamic Law research methodology. Styles adopted by students on the appropriate citation methods sometimes conflict, as different standards were required by lecturers, depending on their perspective on UNILARS requirements. Islamic law students are sometimes found wanting in due compliance with UNILARS, due to the ambiguity that exists in it. This resulted in an unwarranted situation. Student researchers are therefore confused about the exact standard to adopt in their research.

To resolve the conundrum, this research is apt to investigate the major areas of the challenges, with a view to determining the appropriate measure to curb the difficulties, by proposing a model citation standard for Islamic law research in the department that suits the peculiarities of research literature in Islamic Law. This discourse is segmented into seven parts. It commences with this introduction, followed by the exposition of the relevance of referencing in academic writings. Part three adumbrates the various referencing styles and methods, then, a review of UNILARS is done in the fourth part of this paper. An explanation of the challenges of Islamic law researchers is given in the fifth part, while a proposed model of Referencing Style for Islamic Law department is set out in part six before the paper concludes in the last part.

2.0. RELEVANCE OF REFERENCING IN ACADEMIC WRITINGS

It is a known fact that undertaking academic research entails sourcing information, data, and facts, etc. in order to solve a known or emerging problem.⁶ Starting from the point of discovering the existing problem or gap in the academic arena, certain pieces of literature must have been read in one way or another. The information, facts and data that are relied on in laying background and presenting one's view must have been obtained from a known source. It is part of the ethics of good research that those sources must be acknowledged in one's research.⁷ Acknowledging the sources in this regard means that regard must be given to the owner or originator of the information or conclusion by simply mentioning or referring to the author and the literature. This is done by referencing the specific information while citing the source of the information.⁸

Referencing in academic writing is an important phenomenon upon which the integrity of the author or researcher of a book or article depends.⁹ The quality of research is also found in the reality of the literature it relies on and relates with.¹⁰ Failure to reference facts represented in

⁵ Starting from the year 2024 academic session, the Faculty now adopt Nigerian Association of Law Teachers (NALT) Referencing styles for postgraduate students. Students who have started their research before the adoption are however, allowed to continue using UNILARS.

⁶ See Adewale Taiwo, *Basic Concepts in Legal Research Methodology, A Practical Guide on Writing Excellent Master's and Doctoral Theses* (St. Paul Publishing House, Ibadan 2011), 25-26.

⁷ *Ibid.* 106-107.

⁸ Abugu Uwakwe, 'Legal Research Methodology and Applicable Procedures to Legal Research in Nigeria' (Paper Presented at Virtual Workshop for Legal Research Assistants of National Judicial Institute, 17th to 18th August, 2021) 11 available at < <https://www.scribd.com/document/631347779/Untitled> > accessed last on 9 June, 2025.

⁹ Grix Jonathan, *Demystifying Postgraduate Research From MA to PhD* (University of Birmingham Press, UK 2001), 120.

¹⁰ Taiwo (n.2) 108.



academic writing may suggest that the research is not worthwhile. It may cause aspersions on the ability of the researcher, either as to his academic potency to conduct worthwhile research or his honesty in relating with other people's work.¹¹

Improper referencing and deliberate neglect to acknowledge academic sources are serious academic offences. It amounts to dishonesty and fraudulent acts in the academic arena, properly described as plagiarism.¹² It is also an offence punishable under the Copyright Act.¹³ To avoid this, however, citation and referencing are employed to acknowledge the source of the work. This is done in two ways: the idea may be placed in quotations as directly presented in the original source, with specific reference to the owner; or by paraphrasing the idea in a preferred sentence or sentences and acknowledging where the idea originated.¹⁴

There are different methods of carrying out source acknowledgment in academic research. The next section details some of the methods and styles in legal research, which are being adopted for Islamic research and those that are specifically engineered for Islamic law research.

3.0. REFERENCING METHODS AND STYLES IN ACADEMIC WRITINGS

There are several referencing methods and styles in the academic arena, depending on the area of one's research. The most popular methods in their broad classification are the 'in-text' and 'footnote' methods. In the 'in-text' referencing, the name of the author, the year of publication, and page number are only provided in the main text of the writing, while full details of the literature are given at the end of the writing as End Notes or Bibliography.¹⁵ Footnote referencing, on the other hand, gives the reader immediate details of the referred literature at the foot of the page of writing with a corresponding number inserted as a superscript in front of the information.¹⁶ Sometimes, a bibliography or references may also be given at the end of the writing when footnote referencing is used.¹⁷

Depending on either of the above two types of referencing styles, various academic institutions and journal outlets usually prescribe their preferred mode of citation, either by adopting an existing established reference style or creating a new style for the institution. Generally in Nigeria, it is common for universities and journal outlets to require authors to comply with either Nigerian Association of Law Teachers (NALT) Uniform Citation Style- Guide,¹⁸ or

¹¹ Santini Ario, 'The Importance of Referencing' *The Journal of Critical Care Medicine*, (2018) 4(1), 3. Available at < www.jccm.ro.> DOI:10.2478/jccm-2018-0002.

¹² Anastasia Rivkin, 'Manuscript Referencing Errors and their Impact on Shaping Current Evidence' *AJPE*, (2020) 84(7) 878, available at < <http://www.ajpe.org>>; Taiwo (n. 2) 106-107; Jonathan (n. 4) 121; M. H. Alvi, *A Manual for Referencing Styles in Research* (Pakistan Institute of Living and Learning, 2016) < <https://www.researchgate.net> > accessed last on 9 June, 2025.

¹³ Section 20 of Copy Right Act. See *Ugochukwu v Nigeria Copyright Commission* (2022) LPELR-57970 (CA).

¹⁴ Taiwo, (n. 2) 106-107.

¹⁵ See the style adopted in Ayinla-Edun Mohd Jamiu 'E-Commerce Transaction and Return Policy: The Islamic Law Options, *JCBIF* (2023) 3(1) 211-225, available at < <https://journals.iub.edu.pk/index.php/jcbif> > accessed last on 9 June, 2025.

¹⁶ This current research adopt footnote referencing. See also Imam Aliyu Aliyu 'Examining the Concept of of *Majlis al-Aqd* (Contractual Meeting Place) and it's Implication in Electronic Transactions, *UNIMAIDJICOL*, (2021) 6 (1) 1-21 where footnote referencing was adopted.

¹⁷ Abugu Uwakwe, (n. 4) 12; Umar A. Oseni, 'Legal Research and Legal Citation' <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288836148> accessed last on 9 June, 2025.

¹⁸ See < <https://nalt.org.ng/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/PartII-NALT-STYLE-GUIDE.pdf> > accessed last 9 June, 2025.



Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA)¹⁹ or sometimes give authors the option to choose between the two.²⁰ On rare occasions, Legal Journal outlets may demand for Chicago Manual Citation Style,²¹ the Harvard Referencing Style,²² or the American Psychological Association (APA) Referencing Style.²³

International Journal outlets outside Nigeria usually design their preferred referencing style for their journals.²⁴ The popular ones that are being used here in Nigeria are specifically designed by certain institutions or another. For example, OSCOLA is for Oxford University England;²⁵ Chicago Style was designed by the University of Chicago Press since 1906²⁶ while Harvard Referencing Style originated from Harvard University Law School, Cambridge.²⁷ Others like the Journal of College of Sharia and Islamic Studies, Qatar,²⁸ *Jurnal Syariah*,²⁹ and Journal of Shariah Law Research, Kuala Lumpur,³⁰ etc. have their unique referencing styles, which are provided on their websites or portal as part of the information and guidelines for prospective authors of their journals.

One unique feature in all these special referencing styles is, the recognition of the disparity in the manner and styles of writing books, journals and periodicals etc., and the acceptance of the unique appearance of the modes of writings in Islamic Law. Some of these Journal outlets provide specifically for the required style of referencing Islamic literature in recognition of its unique nature and also specify the transliteration model for Arabic Letters.³¹ This goes a long

¹⁹ See < https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/oscola_4th_edn_hart_2012.pdf > accessed 9 June, 2025.

²⁰ Recently Fountain University Law Journal (FULAJ), Call for Papers requested prospective authors to comply with Nigerian Association of Law Teachers (NALT) Uniform Citation Guide for Referencing in her Volume II Issue IV of 2025 Journal publication. The same applies to UNIPORT Journal of International & Comparative Law (UJICL) in her Volume 6 of 2025 Journal Publication. Al-Hikmah University Journal of Islamic Law (HUJIL) Volume 2, 2018 and Kano Bar Journal (Volume 7 Number 1, 2023) adopts Oxford Standard for Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA) while Unilorin Journal of Business and Corporate Law (IJBCL) in her third edition, 2025 gives option on either of the two styles.

²¹ See < https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html > accessed 9 June, 2025.

²² See

<<https://www.librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.html#:~:text=Harvard%20style%20referencing%20is%20an,or%20bibliography%20at%20the%20end.>> accessed 9 June, 2025.

²³ See < <https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/reference-guide.pdf> > accessed 9 June, 2025.

²⁴ See < <https://journals.qu.edu.qa/index.php/sharia/submission/authorGuidelines> > for Journal of College of Shari'ah and Islamic Studies, < <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JS/guidelines> > for *Jurnal Syariah* and < <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JSLR/issue/view/2053/741> > for Journal of Shari'ah Law Research etc. accessed 9 June, 2025.

²⁵ Sandra Meredith, 'About OSCOLA, UK Standard for Legal Citation' *Legal Information Management*, (2011) 111

²⁶ See < https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Chicago_Manual_of_Style > accessed last 9 June, 2025.

²⁷ n. 18.

²⁸ See Authors Guideline at < <https://journals.qu.edu.qa/index.php/sharia/submission/authorGuidelines> > and Transliteration System at < <https://journals.qu.edu.qa/public/Journals-files/Sharia/common/Transliteration-6-2-2021.pdf>> accessed last on 9 June, 2025.

²⁹ *Jurnal Syariah* though adopts Chicago Manual Citation Style, the provision of her writing style have indeed overwhelm the Chicago Style and becomes needless to be referred to. See *Jurnal Syariah* Writing Style at < <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JS/issue/view/1671/Jurnal%20Syariah%20Writing%20Format>> accessed last on 9 June, 2025.

³⁰ See < <https://ejournal.um.edu.my/index.php/JSLR/issue/download/2053/741> > accessed last 9 June, 2025.

³¹ The transliteration usually follows the Library of Congress Standard Arabic Romanisation. See < <https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsp/romanization/arabic.pdf>> accessed last 9 June, 2025.



way to ameliorate the difficulty one may have in referencing Islamic law material, while trying to comply with a certain referencing style.

Understanding the above analysis may seem unclear until specific examples are given. Some literature in Islamic law goes beyond the original author's work; *Tahqīq*, *Ta'liq*, *Tashīh*, *Shar'u* or *tafsīr*, etc. have been done subsequently on some of the original work, which will sometimes make the content differ from the original text. This is apart from the differences associated with the manner of book presentation, by different publishers of the same literature,³² and the unfettered privilege in the Islamic domain to sometimes repeat writing similar works, that others have written on, especially, with annotation, summary, explanation or referencing etc.³³ Hence, recognising the inimitable features of Islamic Law literature by providing a specific style of referencing underlines the uniqueness of Islamic law research and the utmost relevance of the need for a distinctive referencing style.

In this regard, the University of Ilorin Law Referencing Style (UNILARS) applies to both Islamic and other legal research in the Faculty of Law until 2024 when NALT Uniform Citation Referencing Guide was adopted. The details of the content of UNILARS are explained in the next segment of this work.

4.0. THE UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN LAW REFERENCING STYLE (UNILARS): A REVIEW

It is not uncommon for universities to adopt separate referencing styles for students and researchers within the school.³⁴ In fact, the current trend is for each segment of the school, in terms of faculty or department, to adopt a distinct referencing style for students and researchers. The Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin is not an exception in this regard. The University of Ilorin Law Referencing Style (known as 'UNILARS') is adopted for students in their research since 2010.³⁵ The UNILARS provides a guide on how theses and dissertations should be written in general. It also specifically sets out how literature is referenced in all postgraduate academics writing.³⁶

³² Compare Ibn Rushd al-Qurṭabī al-Andalusī, *Bidāyah al-Mujtahid wa-Nihāyah al-Muqtaṣid* (Dār al-Fikr, Lebanon 2008) Vol. 1-2 from Ibn Rushd al-Qurṭabī al-Andalusī, *Bidāyah al-Mujtahid wa-Nihāyah al-Muqtaṣid* (Dār al-Hadīth, Cairo 2004) Vol. 1-4 and Khalaf AbdulWahab, *Ilm Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Maktabah al-Ṣafā, Cairo 2016) 1-246 from Khalaf AbdulWahab, *Ilm Uṣūl al-Fiqh* (Maktabah al-da'wah al-Islamiyyah, Cairo n.d.) 1-236.

³³ Compare Ibn Abdullah al-Andalusiy, Abi Abdullah, Muhammad, *Uṣūl al-Sunnah* (Maktabah al-Garbā'u Athaniyah, Madinah 1415 H) from Ibn Zubair al-Hamīdiy, Abī Bakr Abdullah, *Uṣūl al-Sunnah* (Dār Ibn Kathīr, Kuwait n.d.).

³⁴ Some universities in Nigeria adopt the popular referencing style for students. For example, Bayero University Kano prescribe both OSCOLA and Harvard Referencing Style. See The Bayero University, General Regulations Governing Postgraduate Studies (2008) paragraphs 4.7.1 – 4.7.6. University of Ilorin has its own Referencing style called 'University of Ilorin Referencing Style (UNILARS)'. See The University of Ilorin Postgraduate Handbook and Guidelines for Writing Thesis and Dissertation. 119-123.

³⁵ Alaro Abdulrazzaq AbdulMajeed, *Nigerian Legal System: Challenges and Opportunities For Muslim Law Aspirant* (Lecture delivered on the 8th of February, 2023 at the Maiden Annual Public Lecture organised by National Association of Muslim Law Student (NAMLAS) in Honour of Prof. M. M. Akanbi, Late Vice Chancellor of Kwara State University, Malete) 7.

³⁶ See University of Ilorin Law Referencing Style (UNILARS) 2010 available on file with the author. Although, it was said to have been reviewed, the latest copy was neither available in hard or soft copy. It is also noted that, the review was only about the requirement of the proposal or Chapter 1 of the thesis or Dissertation; it does not concern the referencing style. One of the lecturers revealed this during the Research Methodology Class for 2021/2022 Academic Session.



Specifically at page 6, UNILARS provides as follows:

“Footnotes:

- Surname first to be followed by initials of author i.e. Akanbi M.M,
- automatic, font 10 and must follow the style in SAMPLE J
- First time citation to be in full
- Subsequent citations to be titles and pages only
- 1.5 line spacing and justify”

The simple analysis made from the above is that, the citation of any reference must be cited by writing the surname first, followed by the initials of the author. The citation, which must appear in the footnote must be in automatic font size 10, with 1.5 line spacing and justified. While the first citation is required to be in full, subsequent citation is to have titles and pages only. The full style is provided in SAMPLE J.

Upon perusal of Sample J in the document,³⁷ it is found that, it contain a total of 19 Citations when counted sequentially, as it is not numbered. Three out of the 19 have more than one reference. The types of the literature cited therein include Textbooks, Chapters in Book, Articles (both Hard Copy Journal Articles and Online Articles), Thesis, Laws and Cases.

The first 2 references by the content, is a Textbook and Journal respectively. It, however appears to be a subsequent citation, as it does not provides full details of the literature cited. The first citation of the two references is however not contained in Sample J. The third references referred to 3 different literatures. The first of it is a Ph.D Thesis in full citation, followed by a textbook and later by a Journal literature. Since all the three citations are full as it appeared, it is taken as a sample for full citation of thesis, textbook and journal article from UNILARS.

Furthermore, references number 4 to 8 are clear as to how an Act and Cases are cited. It is also clear from note 7 and 11 that the Latin word ‘*Ibid.*’ is used when subsequent citation follows the immediate reference. Footnote 9 is another textbook reference while note 10 is a Chapter in Book reference appearing for the first time in full citation. This is followed by ‘*Ibid*’ which indicates that note 11 has the same reference as 10 above. However, footnote 12 has the same reference as in footnote 10, although the citation was not in full as in note 12. Footnote 12 also includes a reference of an Article from the internet.

Footnote 13 and 14 from Sample J showcase how Articles on the internet can be cited for the first time and subsequently in a discourse. Footnote 15 reproduced the reference of Chapter in a Book in note 10 and 12 respectively. Note 16 is another Article reference which is not in full citation while note 17 is a subsequent citation of Thesis in note 3. Note 18 and 19 are apparently subsequent citation of Textbooks. The first one does not have authors name in it while the last has a name of the author with ‘*et al*’. Sample J is reproduced in this work as Figure I.

The above analysis becomes necessary, to highlight the difficulty of University of Ilorin, Faculty of Law Students, in adopting UNILARS for referencing in their research generally and the challenges associated with Islamic law students’ researcher specifically. This is also owing to the fact that, there are obvious discrepancies in the instructions given by UNILARS. Lecturers’ guidance towards the instruction also differs, depending on their understanding of the document. For example, some lecturer/supervisors will insist that, ‘*Ibid*’ is not part of

³⁷ See page 28 of UNILARS.



UNILARS and must not be used. Others will demand that, author name should be written starting with surname and followed by initial (e.g. Imam A.A), rather than the other way (A. A. Imam). Again, when authors are more than two, the use of “*et al*” is considered necessary to some lecturers while some insist on it when the authors are above three.³⁸ All these occur because of the significant gaps in UNILARS and the obvious inconsistencies.

Apparently, from Sample J of UNILARS, it is not clear whether authors name should be written in line with the guideline given at page 6, as it appeared mostly in Sample J or to be written in either of the style in the second and third citation of Reference number 3.³⁹ That is, “W. W. Park” or “Horacio A. Grigera Naon”. The same difficulty is associated with subsequent citation of references that immediately follows the previous one. Is “*ibid*” the most appropriate or half citation that have name of author, title of the literature and page number or just title of the literature and page number only.⁴⁰ Lastly, it is not explicit when “*et al*” is used. Is it for more than two authors or more and whether the initials of the first author is not required when in use.⁴¹

Further, there are vacuum that was not filled in UNILARS. It does not provides for how conference, workshops and seminar papers are referenced in footnote.⁴² This also includes reports and other official documents among others. From the point of view of Islamic law researchers, the vacuum is more wider to the extent that the peculiarities of *Sharī‘ah* literature are not taken into consideration at all. In fact, no single *Sharī‘ah* literature is exemplified in Sample J. Several challenges were therefore encountered due to this vacuum, which led students vulnerable in their research. The challenges peculiar to Islamic Law Students/Researchers is discussed in details in the next part.

5.0. ADOPTING UNILARS REFERENCING STYLE: THE CHALLENGES OF ISLAMIC LAW STUDENTS/RESEARCHERS

According to the survey conducted among the postgraduate students of Islamic law,⁴³ 58.3% of the respondents encountered one problem or the other regarding adoption of UNILARS in his/her research. Although, 75% of the respondent believed that UNILARS requires revision, 25% disagreed, holding that it has addressed referencing style to a considerable extent. Complications encountered by student researchers include: difficulty in writing authors’ names of Arabic literature, proper methods of citing Arabic books which have been edited or translated, how to properly write the date of publication, the transliteration format of the Arabic words and the proper method of citing the *Qur‘ān* and *Hadīth*.⁴⁴

The drawback highlighted above underscores the unique nature of Islamic law literature. The *Qur‘ān* and *Hadīth* have their distinct nature that cannot be equated with other literature. The content of the *Qur‘ān* no matter the publisher or year of publication, remains the same.⁴⁵ The

³⁸ Response to online interview conducted among postgraduate students of Islamic Law. July, 2023.

³⁹ Please compare the three literature cited in reference number 3 of sample J.

⁴⁰ Compare citation number 7 and 11 from number 14 in Sample J.

⁴¹ See citation number 19 of Sample J.

⁴² It is noted that everything is provided under Sample I for Bibliography, the template is strictly for the Bibliography and not footnotes.

⁴³ The respondents comprises of Ph.D students (58.3%), M.Phil/Ph.D (8.3%) and LL.M (33.3%). The result of the survey is in file with the author.

⁴⁴ Extracted from the various response of the Respondents in the survey conducted.

⁴⁵ This research noted that, some *Qur‘ān*, like the one published by Ahmaddiyah Muslim Jama‘ah though have the same content with the popular *Qur‘ān*, does not retain similar chronological numbering in term of verses of



proper method of referring to it in literature though differs. In some instance, the chapter and verse number (Qur‘ān 43:2) suffices, while other prefer the use of the chapter name and the verse (*Surah Al-Fajr* (89): 7).⁴⁶ Where a translation of a *Qur‘ān* provision is quoted or referred to, full information of the translator and the publisher may be required.⁴⁷ This also includes where the *tafsīr* of *Qur‘ān* is cited.⁴⁸

From another perspective, *Hadīth* provisions also have their distinct features. Similar *Hadīth* may be reported differently in words or meaning by different reporter. Again, there are several books of *Hadīth* compilations,⁴⁹ the arrangement of which is not similar. To allow reader of any literature trace the source, specific information of where such *Hadīth* is gotten must be given. In doing this, the authors name, name of the book (including edition and volume), date of publication, publisher, specific chapter in the book, the *Hadīth* number and page number are the relevant information that must be provided. This does not have a place in UNILARS.

Further, literature written in Arabic usually have lengthy authors name. Surnames are usually more than one. Sometimes, name of town and city are included as part of name. It is also not out of place to see *kunyah* or *laqab*⁵⁰ as part of the name. In fact, some authors are more popular with their nickname or town name than their real name. For example, the author of *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid wa-Nihāyat al-Muqtaṣid*, Ibn Rushd Al-Qurtabi, was popular with the name Ibn Rushd Al-Hafid. His full name as written on the book is: “Al-Imam al-Qādhi Abi-walīd, Muhammad bn Ahmad bn Muhammad bn Ahmad bn Rushd al-Qurtabi, al-Andalusi. He is popular with: Ibn Rushd al-Hafid. Considering the style in UNILARS, the appropriate name to be adopted as surname and how to go about the initials became an ordeal.

Some literature have also been edited. The editorial works differs from one another. Some works are explanations of the earlier text, while retaining the exact content of the original work.⁵¹ The editorial work done on some text, only relates to providing reference to the

each chapter. This is because, verse 1 of every chapter except *At-Tabah* is *Bismillahi al-Rahman al-Rahim*. See Maulawī Sher ‘Alī, *Qur‘ān Majīd (The Holy Qur‘ān)* (Islam International Publications Limited, Islamabad 2021) available at: <<https://www.alislam.org/quran/Holy-Quran-English.pdf>> accessed last on 9 June, 2025.

⁴⁶ Some lecturers insist on this as the most appropriate. It distinguished the *Qur‘ān* from any other book that may be numbered and arranged chronologically. This is similar to the style of *Jurnal Syariah*. See (n. 24).

⁴⁷ For example, the translation by Hillal and Khan may be given as: Al-Hilali Muhammad Taqi-ud-Dīn and Khan Muhammad Moshin, *Interpretation of Meanings of the Noble Qur‘ān in the English Language ‘A Summarised Version of At-Ṭabari, Al-Qurtabi and Ibn Kathīr with Commentary from Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhari’* (Dār al-Salam Publication, Riyadh-Saudi Arabia, 1996); Ibn Kathīr Al-Hafiz, Al-Sharif Mahdi Muhammad (trans.), *The Exegesis of the Holy* (Dār al-Kotob al-Ilmiyah, Lebanon 2006).

⁴⁸ For example, see: Ibn Kathīr Abi al-Fīdai, Ismaīl bn Umar, *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al-Azīm* (Dār Taybah, n.p., n.d.); Al-Baghawī, Imām Muhyi-Sunnah, Abi Muhammad al-Hassan bn Mas‘ūd, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī ‘Mu‘alim at-Tanzīl’* (Dār Taybah lil-nashri wa-taozi’, Riyadh 1409H); As-Sa‘diy, AbdulRahman bn Nāsir, *Taysīr al-Karīm al-Rahmān fī Tafsīr Kalām al-Mannān* (Mu‘asasah al-Risālah, n.p., n.d.).

⁴⁹ The six major compilations can be mentioned here for illustration. Al-Bukhari, Abī Abdullah, Muhammad bn Ismaīl, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhari* (Dār ibn Kathīr, Bayrūt 2002); Muslim bn Hajjāj, Abū al-Hassan al-Qushayri al-Nasāburi, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, (Bayt al-Afkār al-Dawlīyyah, Riyādh 1998); Nasā’i, Abū Abdulrahman, Ahmad ibn Shu‘ayb, *Sunnan al-Nasā’i al-Mujtabah* (Dār al-Tāsīl, Cairo 2012); Tirmidhi, Abū ‘īsa, Muhammad bn ‘īsa, *Sunnan al-Tirmidhi* (Dār ilyā al-Turāth al-‘arab, Bayrūt n.d.); Abū Dawud, Sulaymān bn al-Ash‘ath al-Azdi as-Sijistāni, *Sunnan Abī Dawud* (Dār al-Kutub al-‘lmiyah, Bayrūt 2011) and Ibn Majjah, Abī ‘Abdullah Muhammad bn Yazid al-Raba al-Qazwāni, *Sunnan Ibn Majjah* (Maktabah al-Ma‘ārif lil-Nashr wa-taozi’, Riyādh n.d.) or Mālik bn Anas, bn Mālik bn Abī Amir, *Al-Muwat‘a* (Majmū‘ah al-furqān At-Tujāriyah 2003).

⁵⁰ Both are better describe as nicknames. It is a name adopted for a person with fatherly affiliation in addition to his or her real name. See Qal‘aji Ruwās Muhammad (n. 28) 353 and 362.

⁵¹ See in this regard the book of *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* written by Imam Shafi‘i which have been variously reproduced with explanation, annotation by several scholars. For example: Al-Uthaymīn Muhammad Ṣālih, *Shar‘u al-Uṣūl min Ilm*



expressions in the text,⁵² while in some other occasion, the expression are qualified, specified, extended etc.⁵³ as the case may be. In citing any of this kind of work, it may be required to include the name of the editor alongside the author of original text to identify the book properly. This is because; another person, whose content may also be differ, may have edited the same book. This was neither provided under UNILARS nor was there anything that could be adopted to fulfil the task.

Again, dates of publications on some of the Arabic literature are written in *Hijra* calculations. Can a researcher adopt the date as written or should the equivalent in Arabic numerals be provided. This is another dilemma of student researcher. This is apart from the missing link of the appropriate transliteration model for Arabic words.

The above identified lacuna is not restricted to UNILARS alone. None of the popular citation styles, especially from the western world, has consideration for *Sharī'ah* literature nor pay attention to its uniqueness. The unwelcome situation became more compounded by the adoption of these various referencing styles by some *Sharī'ah* Journal and faculty without any specific guidelines towards *Sharī'ah* literature. With the exception of few, those that made additional guidelines for *Sharī'ah* after the adoption of a particular referencing style, only spell out the transliteration model.

To wriggle out of this quagmire, it becomes desirable for all *Sharī'ah* Faculty, department, academy and journal outlets etc. to specifically design referencing style that will at all time suit the demand of *Sharī'ah* literature. A standard can be borrowed -with improvement- from Journal of *Sharī'ah* Law, *Jurnal Syariah* or Journal of College of Islamic Law and *Sharī'ah* and others on the same pedestal in this regard. This is to specifically give special regard to the uniqueness of *Sharī'ah* research and literature as it deserves, create separate standard for the citation and recognition of *Sharī'ah* literature and also ease the problem of tracing literature cited in *Sharī'ah* research work.

It is also worrisome that, as popular as UNILARS has become among postgraduate students of University of Ilorin, none of the department in the Faculty of Law adopts it as a referencing style for her journal. This explains why instructions and guidelines from lecturers on UNILARS are not unanimous. The adoption of the referencing style is relegated to faculty and student concern. Although, it is understood that, referencing styles are just guidelines, it is more preferable that, such guidelines covers the field and leaves no vacuum. Hardly would the style improve -even after a decade of adoption- if the stance towards it continues on the same course.

It is on this note that, this paper proposes a new model Referencing Style for Islamic Law Department of Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin and the department journal, Unilorin *Sharī'ah* Law Journal with the name: University of Ilorin *Sharī'ah* Law Referencing Style (UNISLARS). The next section gives details of the proposal.

6.0. PROPOSED UNILORIN *SHARĪ'AH* LAW REFERENCING STYLE (UNISLARS)

al-Uṣūl (Dār al-Īmān, Iskandariyah 2001) this was followed by another explanation by Shaykh Ruhaylī in *Al-Ruhaylī Sulaymān, Shar'u al-Uṣūl min Ilm al-Uṣūl*, available at: <www.sualruhaily.com/upload/1-book/08.pdf> accessed last 9 June, 2025.

⁵² See for example the annotation provided to the book *Ihkam al-Ahkam Sharhu Umdah al-Ahkam* of Muhammad bn Aliy Bn Wahab Abu al-Fathu by Ahmad bn Muhammad Shakir.

⁵³ See n. 52.



This research proposed that the University of Ilorin *Shari'ah* Law Referencing Style (UNISLARS) adopt footnote and bibliography style of referencing. The footnote is to provide minimum information about every literature cited, including specific page(s) and paragraph(s) (where applicable) of the point referenced, while the bibliography shall provide the full information of the literature excluding the specific page of reference.

The immediate reference to any literature shall be provided in automatic footnote of 10 font, Times New Roman, justify and 1.5 line spacing, complying with the following guidelines:

1. Author's Surname should be written first, to be followed by initials of author i.e. Abdullah M.A,
 - a. Where the authors are more than one, use "and" in between the author's name and exclude the "comma" after the last initials of the first author i.e. Abdullah M.A and Sa'id S.I,
 - b. *et al* should be used when the authors are more than two. "Comma" will be used to separate the First and second author's name. Then, "*et al.*" should be written in italics. The "comma" after the second author's initial is then excused. i.e. Imam A.A, Murtadha A.O. *et al*
 - c. Popular name of author is to be adopted for Arabic text authors (especially where it is difficult to identify the surname) except where only the name of the author(s) features in the literature i.e. Ibn Rushd Al-Hafidh or Ibn Qoyyim or Al-Jawhari or Khallaf A, or Asobuniy M.A,
 - d. In the case of more than two authors in an Arabic text, the rule in (b) above should be adopted. i.e. Ibn Rush al-Hafidh, al-Jawhari *et al* or Khallaf A, Asoubuniy M.A *et al*
 - e. The same format of writing name is adopted for editors and translators in which case:
 - i. (ed.) or (eds.) shall be written in front of the name of editor(s)
 - ii. (trans) is written in front of translators name
 - f. Where the literature to be cited is an explanation (*shar'u*) of another literature in any form:
 - i. The name of the elucidator is adopted in place of the author where reference is taken from the explanation of the later literature.
 - ii. The author(s) of the former literature may also be adopted with specific mention of the latter literature.
 - g. A translated literature that has adopted another name shall be cited as a book of itself. Reference may however be made to the original text where the researcher is aware of same.
2. The title of all literature follows the authors name in the following format:
 - a. Titles of all literature are to be written verbatim, in full as written on the literature to be cited. i.e. *Ṣaḥīḥ Fiqhu as-Sunnah wa-Adillatuhu wa-taodīḥ Madhahib al-Ahimmah* not *Ṣaḥīḥ Fiqhu as-Sunnah*
 - b. Book title, the title of Chapters in Book and Thesis should be written in italics i.e. *The Practice of Muslim Family Law in Nigeria*
 - c. Journal Articles (both hard copy and online), Title of Articles of Chapters in Book and all other literature title should be written with a single quotation i.e. 'Islamic Financial Services: The Way Forward for the Regulatory Authorities'
 - d. The same format in C above is adopted for Newspaper, Magazine, Reports etc.
3. For Chapters in Book, title of the Article is to be written first, after which the name of editor(s) is written, followed by the title of the Book. i.e. Murtadha A.O and Imam A.



A, 'Hybrid Contract and it's Legality in the Eyes of Shari'ah' in Sa'id M.I and Muhammad K.G, (eds) *Legal Paradigm in Nigeria: A New Direction in the Study of Law and Practice*

4. After the Authors name and Title, the year of the publication, the edition, Volume, issue, number as the case may be follows in the following sequence:
 - a. For Books, Chapters in Book and other literature of the likes, the Year of publication is provided inside bracket, followed by the edition and then volume as be applicable, using comma to separate them i.e. (2023, 2nd ed., Vol. 3,)
 - b. For Articles and literature of the likes (except Chapters in Book), only the year is written in bracket followed by volume or edition to be written without bracket, then issue and/or number in bracket (and to alternate the bracket as may be required), whichever is applicable. i.e. (2023) 4 (3).....; (2023) 4.....; (2023) 4 (2) 1.....
 - c. Where the applicable literature uses date (especially Magazine, Newspaper etc), only the date on the literature (whether in full or not) should be written as: 21 October 2023 or July 2023 or Jan-Apr 2023
 - d. Where the date is written in Arabic, the transliteration of the date as it appears on the literature should be adopted. "h" is then added to indicate that it is *hijri* date. Where the literature mentioned the date in English, the English is adopted. eg. ١٤٤١ رجب، ١٤٤٣ رمضان ١٤ or ربيع الاول ١٣٤٤ - محرم is written as *Rajab* 1441h, *Ramadān* 1443h or *muḥaram - robi' u al-awwal* 1344h
5. The name of Publisher and place of publication shall follow in the case of Book and Chapters in Book while title of journal follows in case of an article.
 - a. The name of Publisher is adopted as written on the literature followed by the place of publication (State or Town only where it is popular. If not, State/Town and Country is written) separated with "comma". Both to be inside the bracket before same is closed. i.e. (..... Dār Taofikiyyah, Qohirah) or (.....Ere-oja Publishers, Ilofa, Kwara-Nigeria)
 - b. For Articles, name of journal is written full in italics. i.e. *Unilorin Shari'ah Law Journal*
6. Page number of the specific referenced literature is then written in Arabic numeral. Where the reference cut across numerous pages, "comma" is used to separate the different pages while "hyphen" is used if the reference continue accros pages. i.e. 20. or 25, 27, 75. or 106-109.
7. Where literature are gotten from internet source only, the website and the last time of access is to be indicated. i.e. <https://:ilorinjournalofofhummanities_legalissues_apr_%2342pdf> accessed last 23 October 2023. If it is also available in hard copy, the website may be excused.
8. For all Arabic writings and references, standard transliteration adopted by the Library of Congress is to be adopted for all Arabic words. The pdf is available online. See <https://www.loc.gov/catfir/cpsa/romanisation/arabic.pdf>
9. All transliterated words are to be in italics except where such words have become part of standard English usage.
10. *Qur'ān* is referred to (whether it is quoted in the text or simply referred to) by mentioning the *Sūrah* in its transliteration (in italics) with its chapter and verse number. i.e. Al-Baqarah 2:282.



- a. Where particular reference is made to the translation of the *Qur'ān* or *tafsīr*, the specific literature is then cited with the inclusion of the *Surah*, the chapter number and verse at the end of the citation.
 - b. If the *Qur'ān* cited does not have the same chronological arrangement with the traditional and popular one (for example, the *Qur'ān* where “Bismillah ...” is counted and numbered as the first verse in a chapter of the *Qur'ān*), indicate the specific one cited.
11. For *Hadīth* reference, the above rules shall be applicable. However, the Chapter under reference (i.e *Bāb al-Buyū'*) and the *Hadīth* number is to be mentioned before the page number.
12. Reference without authors name, title, publisher or date should be indicated with: n.n., n.t., n.p. and n.d. respectively.
13. In subsequent citation of any literature:
- a. *ibid* is used if the referencing follows the initial one immediately.
 - b. If the first referencing has more than one literature, the authors name and the title of the literature is written.
 - c. Where the reference does not follow immediately, the authors name and the titles of the literature only is written.
 - d. If the page of reference is different from the earlier citation, the new page number is added.
 - e. In the case of *Qur'ān* reference, the verse, chapter and verse number is repeated.
 - f. The Chapter of the *Hadīth* and page number shall also be included in subsequent citation.
14. Bibliography is included at the end of the discourse. The same format mentioned above is adopted. Although name of author(s) are written in full as it appears on the literature. Page number, chapter and date of access are excused.

7.0. Conclusions

There is no doubt that UNILARS leaves a large gap in the research work of *Sharī'ah* students. For over a decade, however, research conducted based on UNILARS has continuously been accepted by the school authority, and certificates awarded in that regard. This is not to say that the vacuum has vanished; students' efforts and lecturers' guidance have at all times been the saving grace. The lacuna, therefore, continues to deepen as students venture further into the research arena from the Department of Islamic law. Discrepancies in the method of compliance with UNILARS became more noticeable, and lecturers' guidance could no longer solve the quagmire because of the perceived conflicts of opinion. The situation, which is unwelcome among the students, gives strength to this research.

The challenges identified by students in this research includes the failure of UNILARS to prescribe the proper modes of referencing Arabic literature in terms of names, titles and dates. The challenges also involve how the *Qur'ān* and *hadīth* are to be properly referenced, as well as the appropriate transliteration method acceptable in this regard. The proposed UNISLARS has potentials to aid students and researchers alike in warding off the quagmire associated with UNILARS as a referencing style for Islamic Law literature. The proposed referencing style is recommended for adoption by the Department of Islamic Law, University of Ilorin, Nigeria and the department's journal known as Unilorin *Sharī'ah* Journal.



Figure I

SAMPLE J

FOOTNOTES

1 Asouzu A. A, *International Commercial Arbitration and African States: Practice, Participation and Institutional Development*, p.12.

1 Elombi G, 'Arbitration of International Commercial and Investment Disputes: Are the misgiving of Developing States justified?', p.47.

1 Asouzu A. A, 'African States and International Commercial Arbitration: Practice, Participation and

Institutional Development' (PhD Thesis, University of London 1996) 338; Horacio A. Grigera Naon, *Choice-Of-Law Problems in International Commercial Arbitration* (J.C.B. Mohr, Tubingen

1992) 17; W.W. Park, 'Judicial Supervision of Transnational Commercial Arbitration: The English

Arbitration Act of 1979' (1980) 21 Harv. Int. L. J. 89.

1 See sections 4 and 5 of the 1988 Arbitration Act.

1 *Biishi v J.S.C.* [1991] 6 NWLR (Pt.197) 346.

1 [1988] 4 NWLR (Pt. 90) 554.

1 *ibid* 567.

1 *Agu v Ikewibe* [1991] 3 NWLR (Pt.180) 412; *Okere v Nwoke* [1991] 8 NWLR (Pt. 209) 347.

1 Akande J, *Introduction to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979*, (Sweet &

Maxwell, London 1982) 6.

1 Asouzu A. A, 'Arbitration and Judicial Power' in Nweze C.C (ed), *Justice in the Judicial Process: Essays in Honour of Honourable Justice Eugene Ubaezonu*, JCA (Fourth Dimension, Enugu 2002) 341.

1 *ibid*.

1 See Asouzu A.A, 'Arbitration and Judicial Power' in Nweze C.C (ed), *Justice in the Judicial Process: Essays*

in Honour of Honourable Justice Eugene Ubaezonu, JCA, p. 341; see Alexis de Tocqueville, 'Judicial Power

in the United States and its influence on Political Society' in *Democracy in America*

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/DETOC/toc_indx.html> accessed on 02 December 2005.

1 Mallat C, 'A Comparative Critique of the Arbitration Process in the Arab world',

<<http://mallat.com/articles/arbitration.htm>> accessed on 02 December 2005.

1 Mallat C, 'A Comparative Critique of the Arbitration Process in the Arab world'.

1 Asouzu A.A, 'Arbitration and Judicial Power' in C.C. Nweze

(ed), *Justice in the Judicial Process: Essays in Honour of Honourable Justice Eugene Ubaezonu*,

JCA, p.341.

1 Beresford Harwell G.M, 'Arbitration and the Sovereign Power', p.15.

1 Asouzu A, 'African States and International Commercial Arbitration: Practice, Participation and

Institutional Development', p.45

1 *The Law and Practice of Commercial Arbitration in England*, p.4.

1 Lew *et al*, *Comparative International Commercial Arbitration*, p.75.