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Cataloguing in Transition: Experiences, Challenges, and Outcomes of RDA Implementation in UAE Academic Libraries

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences, challenges, outcomes, and perceptions associated with the implementation of RDA in academic libraries of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). A survey method was employed, and data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. Using a snowball sampling technique, responses were obtained from 76 library professionals. After data screening, 58 valid responses from libraries that had implemented RDA were retained for analysis. The study reveals that library professionals hold highly positive views regarding the implementation of RDA. Respondents reported favourable experiences in applying RDA and acknowledged its contribution to improving the consistency, accuracy, and quality of bibliographic records. The study also found that RDA enhances resource discovery, interoperability among library systems, and the management of diverse information resources. Although respondents encountered certain challenges, particularly in applying RDA to different resource formats, interpreting RDA rules, and managing time requirements, these challenges were perceived as moderate and did not significantly hinder implementation. Besides, respondents strongly supported continued investment in RDA-related training and recognized RDA as an essential standard for modern academic library cataloguing. The results provide valuable insights for library administrators, policymakers, and cataloguing professionals seeking to strengthen metadata management and bibliographic control in the digital information environment.

Keyword: Resource Description and Access, Cataloguing, Academic Libraries, UAE Academic Libraries, Metadata Management, Bibliographic Control, Library Professionals.

1. Introduction

The advancement of digital information resources and the emergence of new formats of scholarly communication have transformed the landscape of library cataloguing and metadata management. Traditional cataloguing standards, particularly the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition (AACR2), were developed primarily for print-based collections and gradually became inadequate for addressing the complexities of the digital information environment (Goldsmith and Adler, 2013; Mansor and Ramdzan, 2014). In response to these evolving requirements, Resource Description and Access was developed as

a new international cataloguing standard to facilitate the description and discovery of information resources in both physical and digital formats.

Resource Description and Access (RDA) was introduced as a successor to AACR2 and officially released to the library community in June 2010. Developed on the conceptual foundations of the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) and Functional Requirements for Authority Data (FRAD), RDA provides a flexible framework for describing resources and establishing relationships among entities, thereby enhancing resource discovery and user access. According to El-Sherbini and Curran (2011), RDA represents a more robust and adaptable cataloguing standard that is better suited to the electronic information environment and extends its usefulness beyond traditional library settings. The development of RDA emerged from growing concerns regarding the limitations of AACR2 in managing digital resources and supporting modern metadata practices. Discussions surrounding the revision of AACR2 gained momentum during the International Conference on the Principles and Future Development of AACR held in Toronto in 1997, where participants emphasized the need for a fundamentally new cataloguing framework rather than a simple revision of existing rules. An initial attempt to develop AACR3 received considerable criticism for failing to adequately address emerging theoretical and practical issues in bibliographic control. Consequently, the cataloguing community supported the development of a new standard, leading to the creation of RDA (Chapman, 2010, as cited in Cross, 2014).

RDA was specifically designed to accommodate the requirements of the digital environment and to support interoperability among diverse metadata systems. Dandan et al. (2019) noted that RDA moves beyond the traditional Anglo-American perspective and the library-centric approach of earlier cataloguing codes by providing a framework applicable across various information communities. Since the launch of the RDA Toolkit in 2010, the standard has gained widespread international recognition and has been adopted by numerous countries, including the United States, Canada, Australia, and several European nations. Many other countries have subsequently initiated implementation programmes or are actively evaluating its adoption within their library systems. Academic libraries have been among the foremost institutions embracing RDA due to their increasing reliance on digital collections, electronic resources, institutional repositories, and integrated discovery systems (Monyela, 2020). The implementation of RDA has brought significant changes to cataloguing workflows, metadata creation practices, staff training requirements, and library management systems (Ahonsi, 2014; Atilgan, 2015). While numerous studies have documented the benefits of RDA in improving bibliographic record quality, resource discovery, interoperability, and linked data readiness, libraries have also encountered challenges related to staff training, technological infrastructure, interpretation of RDA guidelines, and the transition from AACR2-based practices.

In the United Arab Emirates, university libraries have experienced substantial growth and modernization over the past decade, driven by investments in higher education, digital transformation initiatives, and the expansion of research-intensive institutions. As these libraries continue to adopt international standards and advanced information technologies, the implementation of RDA has become increasingly important for ensuring effective organization, retrieval, and sharing of bibliographic information. Despite the growing adoption of RDA in academic libraries worldwide, empirical evidence regarding its implementation experiences within UAE academic libraries remains limited. Against this background, the present study aims to examine the experiences of library professionals in

using RDA cataloguing, identify the challenges encountered during its implementation, explore the outcomes of RDA adoption on cataloguing practices and library services, and propose recommendations for strengthening RDA implementation in UAE academic libraries. The results of the study are expected to contribute to the understanding of contemporary cataloguing practices and provide insights for policymakers, library administrators, and cataloguing professionals involved in the ongoing development of metadata standards and bibliographic control systems.

2. Review of Literature

The adoption and implementation of Resource Description and Access have attracted considerable attention from library and information science researchers worldwide. One of the earliest large-scale evaluations of RDA was coordinated by three national libraries in the United States the Library of Congress, the National Agricultural Library, and the National Library of Medicine between July and December 2010. The project involved 23 additional institutions representing diverse library environments and provided valuable insights into the practical implications of RDA adoption (Boehr, 2012). In the United States, Cronin (2011) examined the full-scale implementation of RDA at the University of Chicago, focusing on key issues associated with adoption and exploring the potential implications of RDA for the future development of metadata infrastructure. Similarly, Sanner (2012) investigated RDA training initiatives and cataloguing department heads' perceptions of RDA implementation in American academic libraries. The findings highlighted the importance of professional training and institutional preparedness for successful implementation.

Several studies have documented the experiences of libraries that transitioned from AACR2 to RDA. The National Library of Australia was among the first national libraries to implement RDA in early 2013 (Parent, 2014). Following this initiative, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University also adopted RDA. Parent (2014) analyzed RMIT's implementation experience, focusing on staff training, policy development, automated conversion of AACR2 records, lessons learned, and recommendations for institutions planning future adoption. Likewise, Lisius (2015) emphasized the continued relevance of both AACR2 and RDA, arguing that cataloguers should maintain access to and familiarity with both standards during the transition period. The relationship between AACR2 and RDA has also been extensively discussed in the literature. Although RDA introduced new conceptual models and descriptive elements, records created under RDA remain compatible with AACR2 records, facilitating a smoother transition for libraries.

In Asia, significant efforts have been undertaken to promote and implement RDA. Dandan et al. (2019) reviewed RDA research and practice in China, particularly the initiatives of the National Library of China (NLC). The study analysed a survey of Asian libraries conducted by the NLC in 2018 and highlighted various RDA promotion activities undertaken across the region. In Singapore, the National Library Board decided to implement RDA in May 2012 and officially adopted the standard on 1 April 2013 (Choi, 2013). Similarly, Israel implemented RDA in 2013 as part of its efforts to modernize bibliographic practices and enhance interoperability (Goldsmith and Adler, 2013). Research has consistently identified training and localization as critical components of successful RDA implementation. Plassard and Dunsire (2017) noted that translations and training programmes constitute the two principal pillars supporting global RDA adoption. However, Dandan et al. (2019) observed that the promotion of RDA in many Asian countries remains challenging due to economic constraints, technological limitations, and varying levels of professional expertise. The

growing adoption of RDA reflects the increasing need for libraries to adapt to a rapidly evolving bibliographic and metadata environment. Experiences from different countries demonstrate that while RDA offers substantial benefits in terms of resource discovery, interoperability, and metadata management, its implementation requires careful planning, staff development, and organizational commitment. In Gauteng Province, South Africa, Xaba and Shongwe (2025) investigated the status of RDA implementation in academic and public libraries. The study reported that between 2013 and 2016, RDA was partially adopted in most academic libraries and in some public libraries. Adoption was mainly motivated by the need to align with international cataloguing standards, whereas non-adoption was largely attributed to the complexity of RDA and the lack of adequate IT infrastructure and resources. The research also found that national organizations such as the Library and Information Association of South Africa, the National Library of South Africa, and the Interest Group for Bibliographic Standards played an important role in promoting RDA awareness and guidance. Based on the adoption timeline, libraries were categorized as innovators, early majority, and laggards, representing different stages of RDA implementation.

Recent developments in RDA have increasingly emphasized linked data environments, entity-relationship modelling, and semantic web technologies through alignment with the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM). The revised RDA Toolkit introduced in 2020 reflects these developments by supporting more flexible metadata creation and facilitating interoperability with emerging bibliographic frameworks such as BIBFRAME and linked open data environments. Consequently, academic libraries implementing RDA are increasingly positioning themselves for participation in future metadata ecosystems and next-generation discovery systems.

In the context of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), several leading academic libraries have adopted RDA and are currently at different stages of implementation. During this transitional period, many libraries continue to create both AACR2 and RDA records, although the proportion of newly created AACR2 records has steadily declined. Institutions such as the American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates University, and Zayed University have actively embraced contemporary cataloguing standards and metadata practices. Furthermore, numerous conferences, workshops, and professional development programmes have been organized across the UAE to promote awareness and facilitate the effective implementation of RDA. Despite these developments, empirical studies examining the experiences, challenges, and outcomes of RDA implementation in UAE academic libraries remain limited. This gap in the literature provides the rationale for the present study.

3. Objective of the Study

1. To know the experiences of library professionals in using RDA cataloguing in UAE academic libraries;
2. To identify the challenges associated with the implementation of RDA in UAE academic libraries;
3. To explore the outcomes of RDA implementation on cataloguing practices and library services; and
4. To propose recommendations for strengthening RDA implementation in UAE academic libraries.

4. Methodology

The present study was conducted to investigate the experiences, challenges, outcomes, and perceptions associated with the implementation of Resource Description and Access (RDA) in academic libraries of the United Arab Emirates. The target population comprised academic libraries attached to universities, colleges, and other higher education institutions across the UAE. A survey research method was employed to collect primary data from library and information science professionals involved in cataloguing and technical processing activities. A structured questionnaire was developed based on an extensive review of the relevant literature and previously published studies on RDA implementation. Prior to the main survey, a pilot study was conducted among five librarians working in UAE academic libraries to assess the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the questionnaire. Based on their feedback and suggestions, minor modifications were made, and the final version of the questionnaire was prepared.

According to the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Library Map of the World (2022), there are 94 academic libraries in the UAE. Considering the geographical dispersion of institutions and the need for efficient data collection, the questionnaire was administered through Google Forms. A snowball sampling technique was adopted; whereby initial participants were requested to share the survey link with other eligible professionals working in academic libraries across the country. A total of 76 responses were received during the survey period. Following data screening and validation, it was found that only 58 respondents were employed in libraries that had implemented RDA, whereas the remaining 18 respondents represented institutions that had not yet adopted the standard. Although snowball sampling proved effective for reaching cataloguing professionals working in geographically dispersed academic institutions across the UAE, the use of a non-probability sampling technique may introduce sampling bias. Participants were recruited through professional networks, and therefore the sample may not fully represent all academic libraries in the UAE. Consequently, the findings of the present study should be interpreted with caution and may not be generalized to all UAE academic libraries.

Since the focus of the study was on the implementation and use of RDA, the responses from non-adopting institutions were excluded from further analysis. Consequently, the final sample consisted of 58 LIS professionals representing academic libraries that had implemented RDA. The collected data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were employed to analyse respondents' demographic characteristics and their perceptions regarding experiences, challenges, outcomes, and overall views of RDA implementation in UAE academic libraries. Notably, the internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the instrument was 0.89, indicating acceptable reliability and internal consistency of the measurement scale.zs

5. Results

5.1 Demographic Information

Demographic information includes gender distribution, professional designation, educational qualifications, work experience, and experience with RDA cataloguing among respondents, as shown in Table 1. With regard to gender, the majority of respondents were male (68.9%, *n*

= 40), while female professionals accounted for 31.1% (*n* = 18). In terms of professional designation, Chief Librarians constituted the largest group, representing 43.1% (*n* = 25) of the respondents. Library In-Charges accounted for 37.9% (*n* = 22), while Assistant/Deputy Librarians comprised 18.9% (*n* = 11). The predominance of senior-level professionals indicates that the study benefited from the perspectives of individuals actively involved in library administration, policy implementation, and cataloguing decision-making processes.

Regarding educational qualifications, nearly half of the respondents (44.8%, *n* = 26) possessed a Master's degree in Library and Information Science. Additionally, 24.1% (*n* = 14) held both an MLIS and an M.Phil. degree, while 31.0% (*n* = 18) had earned a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science. Analysis of professional experience reveals that a substantial proportion of respondents were highly experienced library professionals. More than two-fifths (43.1%, *n* = 25) had over 20 years of professional experience, followed by 25.8% (*n* = 15) with 16–20 years of experience. Respondents with less than 10 years and 11–15 years of experience represented 18.9% (*n* = 11) and 12.0% (*n* = 7), respectively. These results indicate that the majority of participants possessed extensive practical experience in library operations and cataloguing practices.

With respect to experience in RDA cataloguing, the largest group of respondents (36.2%, *n* = 21) reported having more than 10 years of experience with RDA. Furthermore, 29.3% (*n* = 17) had between 4 and 6 years of experience, while 25.8% (*n* = 15) had 7-10 years of experience. Only 8.6% (*n* = 5) had relatively limited experience of 1-3 years. This distribution demonstrates that most respondents were well acquainted with RDA cataloguing and had substantial exposure to its application in academic library environments. From these results, it is clear that the respondents were highly qualified and experienced professionals, providing a strong foundation for assessing the experiences, challenges, and outcomes of RDA implementation in UAE academic libraries.

Table - 1: Demographic Profile of the LIS Professionals (N=58)

Demographic variables		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender	Male	40	68.9
	Female	18	31.1
Designation	Chief Librarian	25	43.1
	Library In-Charge	22	37.9
	Assistant/Deputy Librarian	11	18.9
Qualification	Master in Library and Information Science	26	44.8
	MLIS+ MPhil in Library and Information Science	14	24.1
	Ph.D. in Library and Information Science	18	31.0
Working experience	Less than 10 years	11	18.9
	11-15 years	7	12.0
	16-20 years	15	25.8
	More than 20 years	25	43.1
Years of experience with RDA cataloguing	1-3 years	5	8.6
	4-6 years	17	29.3
	7-10 years	15	25.8
	More than 10 years	21	36.2

5.2 Experiences of Using RDA Cataloguing

Table 2 shows the respondents' experiences of using RDA cataloguing in UAE academic libraries. The responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. The mean scores indicate the extent of respondents' agreement with each statement, while the standard deviation values reflect the degree of variation in their responses. The study reveals a generally positive perception of RDA among the respondents, with all mean scores exceeding 3.90. The highest mean score was recorded for the statement "RDA supports more accurate description of library resources than previous standards" (M = 4.53, SD = 0.63), demonstrating strong agreement that RDA enhances the accuracy and comprehensiveness of bibliographic descriptions. This was followed closely by the statement "Continuous use of RDA has enhanced my cataloguing skills and professional competence" (M = 4.47, SD = 0.66), signifying that respondents perceive RDA as a valuable tool for professional development and skill enhancement.

Respondents also agreed that RDA has improved the consistency of their cataloguing practices (M = 4.41, SD = 0.67), highlighting the role of RDA in promoting standardized and uniform bibliographic records. Similarly, the statement "I feel confident in creating bibliographic records using RDA" received a high mean score (M = 4.29, SD = 0.71). It is therefore evident that most respondents possess the necessary knowledge and expertise to apply RDA effectively in their cataloguing activities. The statement "I find RDA guidelines easy to understand and apply in cataloguing work" achieved a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.78), reflecting a positive perception of the usability and practicality of RDA guidelines. Although respondents generally agreed with this statement, the comparatively higher standard deviation suggests some variation in individual experiences, possibly due to differences in training, familiarity, or institutional support.

Table - 2: Respondents' Experiences of Using RDA Cataloguing in UAE

S. No.	Statements	Mean	SD
1	I find RDA guidelines easy to understand and apply in cataloguing work	4.12	0.78
2	RDA has improved the consistency of my cataloguing practices	4.41	0.67
3	The transition from AACR2 to RDA was smooth in my institution	3.98	0.89
4	I feel confident in creating bibliographic records using RDA	4.29	0.71
5	RDA supports more accurate description of library resources than previous standards	4.53	0.63
6	Continuous use of RDA has enhanced my cataloguing skills and professional competence	4.47	0.66

Among all the statements, the lowest mean score was observed for "The transition from AACR2 to RDA was smooth in my institution" (M = 3.98, SD = 0.89). While the score still indicates agreement, it suggests that some respondents experienced challenges during the transition process. Therefore, these results clearly show that respondents hold favourable views regarding their experiences with RDA cataloguing. The high mean scores across all statements indicate that RDA is perceived as an effective cataloguing standard that improves accuracy, consistency, and professional competence while fostering confidence among cataloguers. Despite some challenges encountered during the transition from AACR2, the

overall findings suggest that RDA has been successfully integrated into cataloguing practices within UAE academic libraries.

5.3 Challenges of RDA Implementation

The researchers sought to identify the challenges encountered by LIS professionals while cataloguing using RDA. The study reveals that respondents experienced a moderate level of challenges in implementing and applying RDA, with mean scores ranging from 3.18 to 3.86, as shown in Table 3. Among the identified challenges, the statement "Applying RDA to different resource formats requires considerable effort" received the highest mean score (M = 3.86, SD = 0.79), making it the most prominent challenge reported by the respondents. The relatively low standard deviation reflects a considerable degree of agreement among respondents regarding this issue.

The statement "Learning and interpreting RDA rules is challenging" received a mean score of 3.72 (SD = 0.84), demonstrating that respondents encountered difficulties in understanding and applying the detailed provisions of the RDA standard. Similarly, "Time constraints make RDA cataloguing more difficult than traditional cataloguing standards" recorded a mean score of 3.67 (SD = 0.88), highlighting the additional time and effort required for RDA-based cataloguing activities. Respondents also agreed that "Lack of adequate training has hindered effective implementation of RDA" (M = 3.41, SD = 0.96). This result reflects the need for more comprehensive and continuous professional development programmes to support effective RDA implementation. Likewise, the statement "Technical and system-related limitations create obstacles in RDA implementation" achieved a mean score of 3.35 (SD = 0.93), demonstrating that technological constraints and system compatibility issues remain concerns in some institutions. The comparatively higher standard deviation reflects differences in respondents' experiences, which may be attributed to variations in technological infrastructure and library management systems across institutions.

Table - 3: Challenges Faced by Library Professionals in Using RDA Cataloguing Standards

S. No.	Statements	Mean	SD
1	Learning and interpreting RDA rules is challenging	3.72	0.84
2	Lack of adequate training has hindered effective implementation of RDA	3.41	0.96
3	Limited institutional support affects the successful adoption of RDA	3.18	1.02
4	Applying RDA to different resource formats requires considerable effort	3.86	0.79
5	Time constraints make RDA cataloguing more difficult than traditional cataloguing standards	3.67	0.88
6	Technical and system-related limitations create obstacles in RDA implementation	3.35	0.93

The lowest mean score was recorded for the statement "Limited institutional support affects the successful adoption of RDA" (M = 3.18, SD = 1.02). Although respondents acknowledged this issue, the lower mean score places institutional support among the less significant challenges compared to the other factors examined. The comparatively high

standard deviation reflects considerable variation in responses, showing differences in the level of institutional support available across UAE academic libraries.

5.4 Outcomes of RDA Implementation

The results shown in Table 4 reveal highly positive perceptions regarding the outcomes of RDA implementation. Among the various outcomes examined, the statement "RDA supports the future development of linked data and modern metadata environments" received the highest mean score (M = 4.57, SD = 0.61). This result shows strong agreement among respondents regarding the role of RDA in supporting emerging metadata frameworks and future-oriented developments in bibliographic control. The relatively low standard deviation demonstrates a high level of consensus among respondents. The statement "RDA has improved the quality of bibliographic records in my library" received the second-highest mean score (M = 4.48, SD = 0.65), highlighting respondents' strong belief that RDA contributes to the creation of more accurate, detailed, and reliable bibliographic records. Similarly, "RDA facilitates better resource discovery for library users" achieved a mean score of 4.39 (SD = 0.69), reflecting respondents' agreement that RDA enhances access to information resources by improving search and retrieval capabilities.

Table - 4: Respondents' Perceptions of the Outcomes of RDA Implementation in UAE

S. No.	Statements	Mean	SD
1	RDA has improved the quality of bibliographic records in my library	4.48	0.65
2	RDA facilitates better resource discovery for library users	4.39	0.69
3	RDA enhances interoperability and data sharing among library systems	4.31	0.73
4	RDA contributes to more effective management of diverse information resources	4.36	0.68
5	The implementation of RDA has increased overall cataloguing efficiency in my library	4.22	0.77
6	RDA supports the future development of linked data and modern metadata environments	4.57	0.61

Respondents also expressed positive views regarding the contribution of RDA to information resource management and interoperability. The statement "RDA contributes to more effective management of diverse information resources" recorded a mean score of 4.36 (SD = 0.68), while "RDA enhances interoperability and data sharing among library systems" received a mean score of 4.31 (SD = 0.73). These findings demonstrate that respondents recognize the value of RDA in supporting efficient resource organization and facilitating data exchange across library systems and platforms. Among all the statements, "The implementation of RDA has increased overall cataloguing efficiency in my library" received the lowest mean score (M = 4.22, SD = 0.77). Although comparatively lower than the other outcome measures, the score still reflects a high level of agreement. The slightly higher standard deviation indicates some variation in respondents' experiences regarding the impact of RDA on cataloguing efficiency, possibly due to differences in institutional practices, staffing levels, and technological infrastructure.

The study established that respondents perceive RDA implementation as highly beneficial for academic libraries. The consistently high mean scores across all outcome-related statements reflect strong agreement that RDA has improved bibliographic record quality, enhanced

resource discovery, supported interoperability, strengthened information resource management, and prepared libraries for future developments in linked data and metadata environments. These results affirm the positive impact of RDA implementation on cataloguing practices and library services in UAE academic libraries.

5.5 Perception towards RDA

The study reveals a highly positive perception of RDA among the respondents, with all mean scores exceeding 4.30. The statement "My institution should continue to invest in RDA-related training and development" received the highest mean score (M = 4.62, SD = 0.58). The statement "RDA is essential for modern academic library cataloguing" recorded the second-highest mean score (M = 4.55, SD = 0.63). Respondents also expressed strong support for the wider adoption of RDA. The statement "I would recommend the adoption of RDA to libraries that have not yet implemented it" achieved a mean score of 4.47 (SD = 0.66). Likewise, the statement "The benefits of RDA outweigh the challenges associated with its implementation" received a mean score of 4.34 (SD = 0.71), demonstrating that respondents generally viewed the advantages of RDA as greater than the difficulties encountered during its implementation.

Table - 5: Respondents' Perceptions towards RDA in UAE Academic Libraries

S. No.	Statements	Mean	SD
1	The benefits of RDA outweigh the challenges associated with its implementation	4.34	0.71
2	My institution should continue to invest in RDA-related training and development	4.62	0.58
3	RDA is essential for modern academic library cataloguing	4.55	0.63
4	I would recommend the adoption of RDA to libraries that have not yet implemented it	4.47	0.66

Thus, the findings clearly show that LIS professionals hold highly favourable perceptions towards RDA. The consistently high mean scores across all statements reflect strong confidence in the value of RDA, its importance for modern academic library cataloguing, and its contribution to improving bibliographic control and resource discovery. Furthermore, respondents strongly support continued institutional investment in RDA training and advocate its adoption by libraries that have not yet implemented the standard. These findings confirm the broad acceptance of RDA among library professionals in UAE academic libraries.

6. Suggestions for Improvements

An open-ended question was included in the questionnaire to solicit respondents' suggestions for improving the implementation and utilization of RDA in UAE academic libraries. A wide variety of suggestions were received from the respondents, reflecting their diverse experiences and professional perspectives. To facilitate meaningful analysis, the researchers carefully reviewed and consolidated the responses. Similar suggestions were grouped together and categorized into major thematic areas.

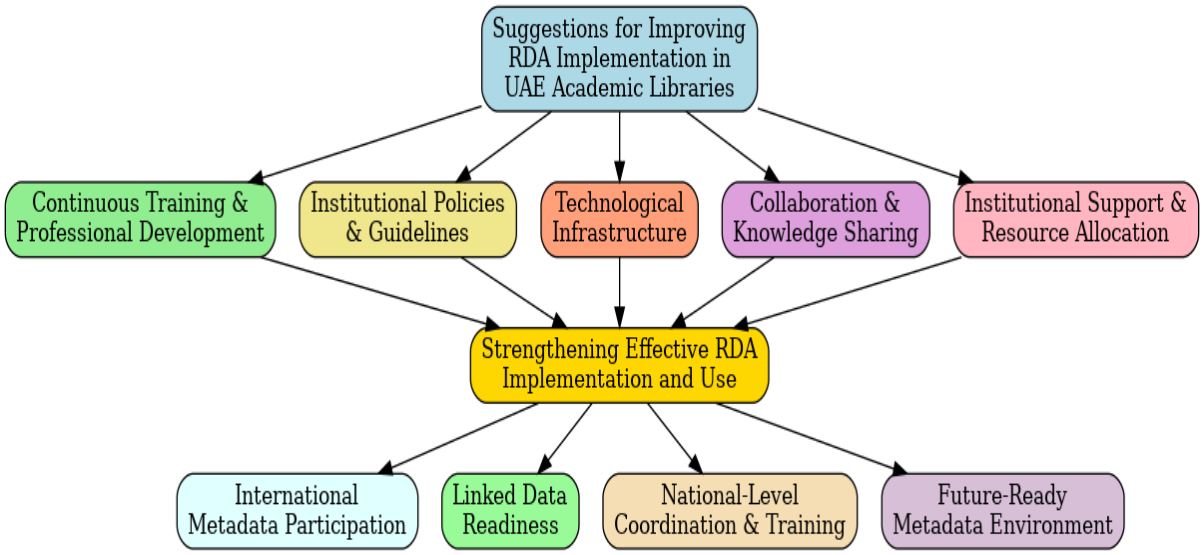

Figure 1: Key Areas for Strengthening RDA Implementation in UAE Academic Libraries

- Academic libraries should organize regular training programmes, workshops, and refresher courses on RDA to strengthen cataloguers' knowledge and skills. Special emphasis should be placed on advanced RDA applications, complex resource formats, and emerging metadata practices.
- Libraries should formulate clear institutional policies, procedural manuals, and best-practice guidelines for RDA implementation to ensure consistency and standardization in cataloguing activities across departments and institutions.
- Library management systems and discovery platforms should be upgraded to fully support RDA elements, linked data functionalities, and interoperability requirements. Adequate technological support will facilitate more efficient implementation and utilization of RDA.
- Academic libraries should encourage collaboration through professional networks, workshops, conferences, and communities of practice. Sharing implementation experiences and successful practices can help libraries address common challenges and improve cataloguing quality.
- Library administrators should allocate sufficient financial, technological, and human resources to support RDA implementation. Strong institutional commitment is essential for sustaining effective cataloguing practices and achieving long-term benefits.
- UAE academic libraries should actively engage with international cataloguing and metadata communities to remain informed about emerging developments in RDA, linked data, and bibliographic standards.
- Given the strong agreement regarding RDA's role in supporting linked data and modern metadata frameworks, libraries should begin preparing for future integration with linked data technologies and semantic web applications.

7. Limitations and Future Research

The results of this study should be interpreted in light of several limitations. First, the study employed a snowball sampling technique and included a relatively small sample of 58 respondents, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to all academic libraries in the UAE. Second, the study relied primarily on self-reported perceptions of library professionals, which may be influenced by personal experiences and subjective judgments.

Third, the investigation focused exclusively on institutions that had already implemented RDA, thereby excluding the perspectives of libraries that are still considering adoption or are in the early stages of implementation.

Future research may employ larger and more representative samples using probability sampling techniques to improve generalizability. Comparative studies involving public, special, and school libraries could provide broader insights into RDA implementation across different library sectors. Further studies may also investigate the impact of RDA implementation on end-user resource discovery, metadata interoperability, linked data readiness, and integration with emerging bibliographic frameworks such as the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM) and BIBFRAME.

8. Conclusions

The study examined the experiences, challenges, outcomes, and perceptions associated with the implementation of Resource Description and Access in academic libraries of the United Arab Emirates. The study reveals that RDA has been widely accepted by library and information science professionals and has become an integral component of contemporary cataloguing practices within UAE academic libraries. The study found that respondents generally reported positive experiences in using RDA. Library professionals acknowledged that RDA has improved the consistency and accuracy of bibliographic records, enhanced their cataloguing competencies, and increased their confidence in creating bibliographic descriptions. Although the transition from AACR2 to RDA was not entirely seamless, respondents expressed favourable views regarding the overall implementation and application of the standard.

The findings further indicate that librarians encountered a moderate level of challenges during RDA implementation. Among the challenges identified, applying RDA to different resource formats, interpreting RDA rules, and managing time requirements emerged as the most significant concerns. Issues related to training, technological infrastructure, and institutional supports were also reported, although their impact was comparatively less pronounced. These findings suggest that while RDA implementation requires considerable effort and professional adaptation, the challenges are manageable and do not constitute major barriers to adoption. With respect to outcomes, the study demonstrates that RDA has contributed positively to cataloguing practices and library services. Respondents agreed that RDA has improved the quality of bibliographic records, facilitated resource discovery, enhanced interoperability among library systems, and strengthened the management of diverse information resources. The strong agreement regarding the role of RDA in supporting linked data and modern metadata environments further highlights its relevance in the evolving digital information landscape. The study also revealed highly favourable perceptions towards RDA. Respondents strongly supported continued investment in RDA-related training and development, recognized RDA as an essential standard for modern academic library cataloguing, and recommended its adoption to libraries that have not yet implemented it.

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