

# Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC)'s Notation 297 on Islam: A Critics and View from Indonesian Point of View

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## Abstract

*Two points must be considered on utilizing notation classification on Islam. One is that Indonesia is the largest Islamic country in the world, in which about 90% of 220 million people are Muslims. The other is that Indonesian libraries have been using Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) since early 1950s. From Indonesian librarians point of view, the term used in 15<sup>th</sup> edition is not appropriate that is Mohammedanism and the notation given is very limited for the second largest denomination in the world. The term then changed to Islam albeit the available notations were still felt not enough for the organization of Islamic books. This paper traces and describes the effort by Indonesian librarians and Islamic libraries to improve the notation 297 of the various editions of the DDC since 1973 to 1987. In 1987 the joint declaration between Minister of Religious Affairs and Minister of Education and Culture issued an adaptation and expansion of the DDC. This version is widely used especially in public and Islamic-based-schools, Islamic higher education institutions, Islamic colleges but not in non-Islamic-denomination academic and special libraries. In 2005 the National Library of Indonesia issued its version based on DDC 22<sup>nd</sup> edition and the details of this version are explained. Based on the various versions, the authors proposed that the future adaptation and expansion should be based on the original DDC version and with that adaptation then the proposed expansion match with the international usage and practice could contribute to future DDC editions.*

**Key words:** Islam; Dewey Decimal Classification; Cataloguing; Organization of information; Indonesia

## 1. Introduction

Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world, in which more than 90% out of her 220 million people are Muslims. Traditional Islamic schools known as pesantren, has been founded since the Islamic arrivals in early 13<sup>th</sup> century. During the Dutch administration until 1945 not many formal Islam educational institutions were founded and it is not quite known how the Islamic library was at that time. Perhaps the exception is the Ahmadiyah Beweging Indonesia (Ahmadiyah Movement) library founded in 1930 in the then Batavia (presently Jakarta) (Sulistyo, 1994)

Although Indonesia declared her independence in 1945, until 1945 the Indonesian people and government busied with military and guerrilla struggle against the Dutch army. By early 1950, Indonesian Islamic schools, institutions and universities began to flourish. Right now there are more than 40 State Islamic institutions, some of them recently changed into State Islamic universities as well as more than 100 private Islam university, college, institutes and other higher institutions established by various organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Nahdlatul Ulama and so forth. Presently, there are more than 10,000 Islamic based schools established. With the assumption that each educational institutions established their own libraries and each are using Dewey Decimal Classification (hereafter called DDC) then the Islamic notations for these school and academic libraries become important.

## 2. DDC and Notation on Islam

The late Mr. J.N.B. Tairas, one of the senior cataloguers and a pioneer in teaching cataloguing in Indonesia, in various lectures always mentioned that the DDC has been used in Indonesia since 1920s. However he never supported his claims with historical evidence.

DDC began to be used officially in Indonesia in 1952 when the first Course for Library Technicians was established in Jakarta. The course duration was scheduled for one year, and later extended into one and half, then two years and since 1959 became a three-year library education course. The course then was taken by the university and now known as the Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Humanities University of Indonesia.

Since 1952, DDC became almost unofficial library classification used in academic, school, public and some special libraries. The other classification scheme used was Universal Decimal Classification. With this use of DDC in an Islamic country, then it is natural that the notations on Islam become the objective of studies and criticism.

### (a) DDC 15<sup>th</sup> Edition (1951)

This is the first DDC used in Indonesia and translated into Indonesian language. In that edition, there was no notation for "Islam" but instead the term "Mohammedanism" was used at notation 297. The term Mohammedanism for Islam is wrong and early Indonesia librarians criticised the use of this term. The notation on the 15<sup>th</sup> edition is as follows:

- 297 Mohammedanism**  
Includes Sacred Book (Koran)
- .8 Bahaim**

### (b) DDC 16<sup>th</sup> edition (1958)

In this edition, the term Mohammedanism was changed into Islam. Compared with the 15<sup>th</sup> edition, the notation expansion was still based on notation 291. In 16<sup>th</sup> edition, the notation for Islam is as follows:

- 297 Islam**  
Including Christian apologetics against Islam [*formerly \*239.9*]  
Divide 297.2-297.7 like 291.2-291.7,  
e.g, propagation of the faith 297.7
- .1 Sources**  
Divide like 291.8, e.g., Koran 297.12
- .8 Sects**  
Including Sunnites, Shiites, Twelvers, Seveners, Ismailis, Ahmadiya
- .89 Bahai faith**  
Including Babism

### (c) DDC 17<sup>th</sup> edition (1965)

In this edition, the notation for Islam was revised, corrected and expanded. The notation division is based from 291.

### (d) DDC 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> edition (1971, 1979)

In 18<sup>th</sup> editions, the notation for Islam is showed as follows:

- 297 Islam and religions derived from it**
  - ..06 Organizations**  
Class religious organizations in 297.65

**SUMMARY**

- 297.1 Sources, relationships, attitudes of Islam
- .2 Islamic doctrinal theology (Aqaid and Kalam)
- .3 Islamic forms of worship and other practices
- .4 Personal religion in Islam
- .5 Islamic moral theology
- .6 Islamic leaders and organization
- .7 Islamic activities
- .8 Islamic sects and other religions

**(e) DDC 20th edition (1989)**

In this edition, the term Islam changed into "Islam and religions originating in it". The notations covered the following aspects:

**297 Islam and religions originating in it**

*See Manual at 291*

**SUMMARY**

- 297.1 Sources, relationships, attitudes of Islam
  - .2 Islamic doctrinal theology (Aqaid and Kalam)
  - .3 Islamic forms of worship and other practices
  - .4 Personal religion in Islam
  - .5 Islamic moral theology
  - .6 Islamic leaders and organization
  - .7 Islamic activities
  - .8 Islamic sects and other religions
- .06 Organizations**  
Class management in 297.6, religious organizations in 297.65
- .07 Education, research, related topics**  
Class here Islamic religion as an academic subject  
Class comprehensive works on Islamic religious education, religious education for the purpose of encouraging believers in religious life and practices in 297.7

Facet approaches to Islam from 18th through 20th edition was not quite proper. On notation 297.3 Worship, the further notation showed some mistakes. Notice the following notation:

**297.3 Islamic forms of worship and other practices**

- .32 Divination
- .33 Occultism
- .36 Sacred times

**(f) DDC 21st and 22nd edition (1996, 2003)**

The notation on Islamic are more detailed and there are some changes. For example notation 297.06 (Organizations) is relocated to 297.65. Notation for the subject is also changed from "Islam and religions derived from it" into "Islam, Babism, Bahai Faith". So the notation on Islam appeared as follows:

**297 Islam, Babism, Bahai Faith**

Standard subdivision are added for Islam, Babism, Bahai Faith together for Islam alone

**SUMMARY**

- 297.01-.09 Standard Subdivisions
- .1 Sources, relationships, attitudes of Islam
- .2 Islamic doctrinal theology (Aqaid and Kalam)
- .3 Islamic forms of worship and other practices
- .4 Personal religion in Islam

- .5 Islamic moral theology
- .6 Islamic leaders and organization
  - .7 Islamic activities
  - .8 Islamic sects and other religions
- [.06] Organizations and management
  - Do not use for management; class in 297.6
  - Organizations relocated to 297.65
- .07 Education, research, related topics
  - .071 Education
    - Class here Islamic religion as an academic subject
    - Class comprehensive works on Islamic religious education, religious education to inculcate religious faith and practices in 297.77
    - See Manual at 291.75 vs 200.71*
  - .09 Historical, geographic, person treatment
    - Class here comprehensive religious works on Islamic fundamentalism
    - Class political science aspects of Islam in 320
    - For Islamic fundamentalism in a specific sect or reformmovement, see 297.8*
    - See also 909.097 671 for Islamic civilization*
    - See Manual at 320.55 vs 297.09, 322.1*
  - .092 Persons
    - Class interdisciplinary works on caliphs as civil and religious heads of state with the subject in 940-990, e.g., Abu Bakr 953.020 92

Worship notation of Islam at 18th through 20th editions are not appropriate. These inappropriateness could be seen at notation 297.3 which states as follows:

**297.3 Islamic forms of worship and other practices**

- .32 Divination
- .33 Occultism
- .36 Sacred times

However in 21st and 22nd editions the inappropriateness was corrected, albeit some of the facets are still not proper according to categories in Islamic religion, for example Islamic worship became part of Islamic ethics and religious experience, life, practice as shown below:

**297.5 Islamic ethics and religious experience, life, practice**

- .53 Sawm (Fast)
- .54 Zakat
- .56 Specific vices, virtues, moral issues
- .57 Religious experience, life, practice

Although the 21st and 22nd editions are more detailed, the facet distribution are still not appropriate according to Islamic religion, for example Zakat is part of Islamic Worship, in these editions the notation was 297.5. We believe that it is more proper if the notation is relocated to 297.35 as part of Sacred places and pilgrimages. Also, the mixing notation of God, Angels, human beings and jinn is not proper according to Kalam in Islamic religion. With those mistakes and a proper understanding on Islam, the Indonesian librarians proposed some changes as shown below.

### 3. Revision and Expansion of Notation 297 in Indonesia

#### (a) Mr Kartawinata

Based on the existing UDC and because of the scarcity of DDC edition at that time, Mr. A. Kartawinata (1952) proposed an expansion, which was revised again in January 1953. The expansion was sent to libraries in Indonesia, even to the Ministry of Religious Affairs which sequently distributed it to its branches in Indonesia, Institute of Islamic and Yogyakarta Islamic Library in Yogyakarta, then one of the best Islamic library in the nation. Alas, nobody commented on it hence until now no library in Indonesia utilized it (Mansoer, 1978).

#### (b) Badan Wakaf Perpustakaan Islam Yogyakarta (Yogyakarta Islamic Library)

Yogyakarta Islamic Library initiated the revision of the 15th edition by establishing a Komisi Klasifikasi (Classification Commission) and officially agreed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs proposed expansion in 1958. The result was *Klasifikasi Pengetahuan Agama Islam Perluasan notasi 297 DDC* (Scientific classification on Islamic knowledge notation expansion 297 of DDC). The Classification Committee consisted of 15 members including *ulamas* and librarians chaired by Professor Faried Ma'ruf, an outstanding Indonesian scholar. The Commission proposed some changes on notation 297 (Table1).

Table 1 Comparison between Yogyakarta Islamic Library and DDC 15<sup>th</sup> edition on Islam

Notion	Yogyakarta Islamic Library	DDC 15 <sup>th</sup> edition
297.01	Works on Islam	Philosophy and theory
.02	Works on views of Islam toward schools of thought	Compendium outline
.06	Society attitude toward Islamic society	Societies
.07	Islamic views on specific sciences	Study, teaching
.08	Apologies	Collection

Source: Badan Wakaf (1958), Mansoer (1978)

Mansoer (1978) regretted that the Commission had based its work on DDC 15<sup>th</sup> ed., instead of the 16<sup>th</sup> edition. It was presumed that by the time the Commission began its works, the DDC 16<sup>th</sup> edition was not available due to its scarcity, limited distribution and high price. The Commission also compared the 15<sup>th</sup> edition with Universal Decimal Classification as proposed by Mr Kartawinata.

#### (c) International Book Year (IBY) Committee

The year 1972 marked by the International Book Year and as part of its activities, the Library Development Agency set up various committees, among this was the Commission on Expansion and Adaptation of Islam notation at DDC (hereafter called Commission 1972). The commission was headed by the State Islamic Institution, Syarif Hidayatullah. The commission used various resources such as DDC 18<sup>th</sup> edition, revised by Yogyakarta Islam Library, classification on Islam commonly used in United Arab Republic and *Scheme of the Institute of Islamic Studies* compiled by McGill University Library. Discussion and interviews was conducted by distinguished Islamic scholars and librarians. The results are not quite satisfactory as Mansoer pointed out that the results was almost similar with the 1958 Commission proposal (Table 2).

Table 2 Comparison between IBY Committee 1972 and 1958 Commission

Notion	Commission 1958	IBY Committee 1972
Development	297.9	297.6
Philosophy	.91	.61
Propagation	.92	.62
Methods	.921	.621
History of	.922	.622
Special	.93	.63
Societal structure	.931	.631
Politics and state structure	.932	.632
Islam and the society	.935	.636
Islam and politics	.936	.636

Source : Mansoer (1978)

The Commission's work in 1972 was suitable for special classification not for a general classification as shown by DDC. The results is not quite specific compared to DDC 18<sup>th</sup> edition. In fact, the 18<sup>th</sup> edition in certain aspects is more elaborate and comprehensive. For example the notation for translation of Al-Quran according to Commission 1972 is 297.121 while the DDC 18<sup>th</sup> ed., is 297.122 599 221 (Table 3).

Table 3: Al-Quran Translation

Notation	IBY Commission 1972	DDC 18 <sup>th</sup> edition
Alquran translation	297.121	297.122 5 Translations. Add "Languages" notation from Table 6 to base number 297.122 5. Notation Bahasa Indonesia from Table 6 is - 992 21

In expanding the notation 297, there are two alternatives. First, expand notation 297 DDC 18<sup>th</sup> edition by expanding more specific Islamic aspects regarding Islam and second, follow the instruction given by DDC 18<sup>th</sup> edition regarding notation 230-280, that is, if local emphasis, more and shorter numbers to specific religion is needed, it is optional to class it within 230-280 and its sources in 220. In that case class Bible and Christianity in 297. Instead the IBY Committee 1972's effort to expand notation 297 is no better then the previous work by Commission 1958 (Mansoer, 1978), while on the other hand the DDC 18<sup>th</sup> edition provided possibilities to expand the notation for Islam at 230-280 and for the relocation of Christianity to 297. On the hand Mansoer criticised the 18<sup>th</sup> edition on its inappropriateness to certain aspects such as Islamic doctrines, moral and services.

#### (d) Institut Pendidikan Darussalam Gontor (Education Institute Darussalan Gontor)

In 1975 this Institute, an Islamic religious institute in Gontor (East Java) issued a special classification for Islam based on the classification devised by Mahmud Shaniti from Egypt. The version was translated and used solely at Institut Pendidikan Darussalam Gontor and has been revised ever since (Shaniti and Kabish, 2003).

#### (e) Pusat Perpustakaan Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Central Library)

In 1985, this Centre published *Klasifikasi Islam: adaptasi dan perluasan klasifikasi DDC notasi dasar n 297* (Islam classification: adaptation and expansion of Dewey Decimal Classification notation 297). The work was developed over 3 seminars conducted between 1983 to 1985 on notation 297. The new approach is shortening notation 297 into X yielded notation 2x0 for Islam and positioned it at the first position, hence 2x0

preceding 210, 220, 230 etc. This approach was not new because the 1972 IBY Commission had devised the same approach, shortening 499.221 for Indonesian language and 899.222 1 for Indonesian literature into 4x0 and 8x0 respectively. This practice was joined by various libraries such as *Bibliografi Nasional Indonesia* (Indonesian National Bibliography) published by the National Library of Indonesia.

#### (f) Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education and Culture

In 1987 the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education issued a joint declaration regarding the adaptation and expansion Dewey Decimal Classification Islam Section based on IBY 1972 version and revised by Jakarta State Islamic Institution. This classification is used in Indonesia currently.

#### (g) National Library of Indonesia

In 2005, the National Library produced *Klasifikasi Islam: adaptasi dan perluasan notasi 297 Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC or Islam classification" adaptation and expansion notation 297)*, however the notation changed from the original notation on DDC 22nd edition (Table 4).

Table 4: The National Library of Indonesia Version on Notation 297

Notation	National Library of Indonesia version	DDC 22 <sup>nd</sup> edition	Notes
297	Islam	Islam, Babism, and Bahai Faith	Different
.1	Koran and related sciences	Sources of Islam	Slightly different
.2	Hadith and related sciences	Islamic doctrinal theology (Aqa'id and Kalam)	Different
.3	Aqaid and Kalam	Islamic worship	Different
.4	Fiqh	Sufism	Different
.5	Morality and mysticism ( <i>Akhlak</i> ) and Tasawuf	Islamic ethics and religious experience, life, practice	Basically the same
.6	Social and culture	Islamic leaders and organization	Different
.7	Development (perkembangan)	Protection and propagation of Islam	Different
.8	Aliran dan Sekte	Islamic sects and reform movements	The same
.9	Islamic history and biography	Babism and Bahai Faith	Different

Source: Sulistyono, L (2007)

There is no explanation why the notation of Babism and Bahai faith were not included. The possible explanation is that both Islam-derived-sects are not popular in Indonesia and possibly the word *babism* is rather awkward because the term *babi* is pork in Bahasa Indonesia which is *haram* for the Muslims.

## 4. Remarks

The Indonesian librarians and library users felt uneasy with the notation 297 in DDC which they viewed as not correct and inappropriate and needs revision and expansion. The efforts toward revision and expansion has been made since 1963 albeit few were widely used in Indonesian libraries. Those widely used are 1972 IBY version and the 1985 joint decision between Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education and Culture. The 1972 version was accepted because of its new revision and available documents. The joint decision of 1987 version is the unofficially formal classification of notation 297 and also well accepted because of its 2x0 approach, which is considered well suited to Islamic schools because of its first position preceding another notation.

The effort by the National Library of Indonesia is considered appropriate to various scholars and *ulamas*, however, because it does not match with the current DDC 22<sup>nd</sup> edition, it is predicted that it is unable to be accepted by other libraries in other parts of the world. Changing certain notation from the existing notation to new one will cause difficulty and perhaps uproar among world librarians. The authors opined that if there are efforts to revise and expand the 297 notation, then it should be based on the existing notations.

As the largest Muslim country in the world, it is time for Indonesia to set up a national body to oversee the expansion and revision of notation 297 so that it matches with the DDC philosophy and latter on coordinated with the OCLC Online Computer Library Center to be published in the *Dewey Classification Additions, Notes and Decisions*. Analogue with the expansion of certain DDC notation, a paper has proposed to expand and revise certain notations regarding Indonesian languages, literature and history (Sulistyo, 2007).

Other suggestion is that there will be better communication and co-operation among Southeast Asia librarians regarding the Islam notation (297) especially from the Muslim dominated countries such as Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia. Indonesian librarians could learn and utilize the 294.3 notation expanded by the National Library of Thailand to be used in Indonesia as the Buddhism is one of the officially recognized religion in Indonesia. Right now there are Buddhist schools and universities, however, no research on the classification used by those libraries apart from simple basic classification issued in 1986!

## 5. Conclusion

The notation 297 for Islam as noted in DDC has been revised various times since the 15<sup>th</sup> through 22<sup>nd</sup> edition, from 1953 through 2005, albeit not all revisions are used nationwide. There are two types of libraries using notation 297, those which stick to the DDC edition and those which used various revision. With such condition, it is proposed that there is a national-wide-body in charge of the revision as long as it is based on the same DDC notations, but the contents could be different. Also it is hoped that there is greater co-operation among Islam libraries together with the national libraries with respect to the Southeast Asian nations to develop a common 297 DDC notation based on Islam and supported by facet concepts.

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