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State of the art of Resource Description and Access and Library Information Science in UAE and Gulf in Global Context

Abdul Aleem[1]*, Dr. Geeta G. Gadhvi[2]

PhD Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, India

Associate Professor and Head (Retd.), Department of Library and Information Science, Gujarat University, Ahmedabad, India

Email: abdulaleem506@gmail.com

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to investigates the state of the art of Resource Description and Access (RDA) and its implementation in Library and Information Science (LIS) within the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the Gulf region in a global context. The study discusses the principles, structure, and conceptual foundations of RDA, including its relationship with FRBR, FRAD, and the IFLA Library Reference Model. It further explores the reasons for adopting RDA in academic libraries, such as improved bibliographic control, interoperability, metadata management, and resource discovery. The paper also reviews the awareness, knowledge, and professional competencies of LIS professionals regarding RDA implementation. Major challenges identified include inadequate training, lack of ICT infrastructure, financial constraints, limited access to the RDA Toolkit, and insufficient institutional support. The study highlights that RDA adoption in the UAE and the wider Arab region remains limited and largely at an early stage despite increasing awareness through conferences and professional initiatives. Based on a qualitative review of secondary literature, the paper provides insights for library administrators, policymakers, educators, and cataloguing professionals to strengthen metadata practices and improve bibliographic control in academic libraries.

Keywords: Resource description and access (RDA), Library information science (LIS), American library association (ALA), international federation of library associations and institutions (IFLA), cataloguing, academic libraries, bibliographic records.

1. Introduction

The emergence of digital technologies and the rapid expansion of electronic information resources have fundamentally transformed the nature of cataloguing and bibliographic control in libraries worldwide. Academic libraries are no longer limited to managing printed collections; instead, they increasingly handle electronic resources, digital repositories, multimedia collections, and online databases. In this evolving information environment, traditional cataloguing standards such as the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition (AACR2) have become inadequate for meeting the demands of modern bibliographic control and resource discovery. Consequently, Resource Description and Access (RDA) emerged as a new international cataloguing standard designed to address the limitations of AACR2 and support the requirements of the digital and networked information environment (Tillett, 2011; Mansor and Ramdzan, 2014) [1, 2].

RDA is a flexible and principle-based content standard developed to improve the description and access of information resources in both physical and digital formats. Unlike AACR2, which was primarily designed for traditional card catalogues and linear bibliographic displays, RDA focuses on user-centred resource discovery and interoperability across diverse information systems (Monyela, 2020; Yeboah et al., 2025) [3, 4]. The standard is grounded in the conceptual models developed by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, including the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR), Functional Requirements for Authority Data (FRAD), and the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM), which collectively enhance the representation of relationships among bibliographic entities and improve metadata management in library systems (IFLA, 2016; Riva et al., 2017)[5, 6]. Furthermore, RDA supports linked data applications and semantic web technologies, thereby enabling libraries to participate more effectively in the global information ecosystem (Ahonsi, 2014) [7]. The adoption of RDA has gained considerable attention among academic libraries across the world because of its ability to enhance bibliographic consistency, resource discovery, and international interoperability. Studies conducted in various countries indicate that libraries are gradually transitioning from AACR2 to RDA in order to align their cataloguing practices with emerging digital standards and

evolving user expectations (Dunsire, 2016; Panchyshyn et al., 2019) [8, 9]. RDA implementation has been observed in several developed and developing countries, including the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, Iran, Germany, and Nigeria, although the level of adoption varies significantly depending on institutional preparedness, technological infrastructure, financial support, and the competencies of Library and Information Science professionals (Cross et al., 2014; Rahman et al., 2021; Xaba and Shongwe, 2025) [10 11, 12].

Against this background, the present study examines the state of the art of Resource Description and Access and Library and Information Science in the UAE and Gulf region within a global context. The study aims to explore the principles, implementation trends, challenges, and professional competencies associated with RDA adoption in academic libraries. It further seeks to identify the institutional, technical, and professional factors influencing the successful implementation of RDA in the UAE. By contributing empirical and conceptual insights into the current status of RDA in the region, the study intends to support library administrators, policymakers, educators, and cataloguing professionals in strengthening metadata management practices and improving bibliographic control.

The study is based entirely on secondary data collected from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, theses, dissertations, and official publications of organizations such as the ALA, IFLA, and the RDA Toolkit. Relevant literature was retrieved from major academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and ProQuest. The collected literature was systematically reviewed and analysed using qualitative content analysis to identify major themes, trends, challenges, and research gaps related to RDA implementation in academic libraries.

2.0 Principles and Structure of RDA

Resource Description and Access is a modern cataloguing standard developed to replace the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, Second Edition (AACR2) in order to effectively address the evolving digital and networked information environment (Tillett, 2011; Mansor and Ramdzan, 2014) [1, 2]. Unlike AACR2, which was primarily designed as a display-oriented standard for card and early online catalogues, RDA functions as a content standard that provides flexible guidelines and instructions for describing and accessing all types of information resources in both traditional and digital formats (Monyela, 2020; Yeboah et al., 2025) [3, 4]. According to Tillett (2011) [1] “RDA is built on the traditions of AACR. The Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (JSC) recognized during the 1990s that

AACR2 was not a code that would serve 21st-century users. It was structured around card catalogues and linear displays of citations, created before the internet and well-formed metadata that could be used by computer systems". Besides these, RDA is a set of principles, rules, and guidelines for creating metadata that supports effective resource discovery Oliver (2010) [13]. Monyela (2020) [3] explained that metadata created using RDA is designed to support users in accomplishing key bibliographic tasks, namely:

- Find – to enable users to locate resources that match specific search criteria, such as works by a particular author or on a given topic.
- Identify – to help users confirm that a retrieved resource is the one they are seeking and to distinguish it from similar resources.
- Select – to assist users in choosing the most appropriate resource based on their information needs, format, or content.
- Obtain – to facilitate access to or acquisition of the selected resource, whether in physical or electronic form.

According to Monyela (2020) [3], these user tasks reflect RDA's user-centred approach and enhance effective resource discovery in modern library catalogues. Chapman (2010) [14] highlighted earlier that the logical and clearly defined structure of RDA enhances its usability and supports effective bibliographic control across all types of media. Similarly, Van Rensburg (2017) [15] mentioned that the RDA Toolkit functions as an online platform that enables seamless navigation through hyperlinked instructions, allowing users to move easily from one guideline to another during the cataloguing process. Ahonsi (2014) [7] affirmed, "RDA aids in simplifying cataloguing rules, and transforming cataloguing by bringing it in-line with twenty-first-century Web technologies".

RDA always promotes consistency, accuracy, and clarity in bibliographic data, ensuring that records are understandable and interoperable across diverse systems and cultural contexts (Ahonsi, 2014; RDA Toolkit, 2020) [7, 16]. Flexibility is a fundamental feature of RDA. Rather than imposing rigid rules, RDA provides principles that allow libraries to adapt cataloguing practices according to local needs, user communities, and available resources (Chapman, 2010; Choi; 2013) [14, 17]. This adaptability supports various types of libraries such as academic, public, and special libraries, and accommodates both minimal and full-level cataloguing. International applicability is another key principle of RDA. Designed for global use regardless of language, script, or cultural context, RDA is particularly well suited to share bibliographic

environments and collaborative cataloguing (RDA Toolkit, 2020) [16]. Furthermore, RDA supports the transition toward linked data and the semantic web by positioning library metadata for integration with broader information ecosystems beyond traditional library catalogues (Ahonsi, 2014) [7].

The structure of RDA is grounded in conceptual models developed by the IFLA, specifically the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR), the Functional Requirements for Authority Data (FRAD), and more recently the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM) (IFLA, 2016) [5]. These models provide a theoretical framework for defining the entities, attributes, and relationships within the bibliographic universe (Riva, et al., 2017) [6]. RDA facilitates clearer representation of relationships among different versions and formats of a resource by organizing bibliographic data around entities like Work, Expression, Manifestation, and Item (IFLA, 2016) [5]. Notably, it also includes entities for Agents (persons, families, and corporate bodies) and Subjects, thereby strengthening authority control and enhancing resource discovery.

2.1 RDA in Academic Libraries: Reasons and Global Perspectives

In the realm of bibliographic control, RDA has emerged as a major advancement, particularly in academic library settings where accurate, reliable, and technologically driven cataloguing is essential (Nicholson, 2013; Mansor and Ramdzan; 2014; Panchyshyn e al., 2019) [18, 2, 9]. As academic libraries increasingly manage digital, electronic, and diverse information resources, RDA provides a modern framework that supports both traditional and emerging metadata standards (Kalwara et al., 2017) [19]. It enhances resource discovery, interoperability, and international standardization of bibliographic records, thereby aligning library catalogues with global information systems (Abdullah et al., 2018) [20]. Tillett (2007) [1] explained that RDA is designed to make cataloguing rules simpler, function as a content standard across different metadata schemas, and enhance consistency in bibliographic records. It also seeks to resolve existing challenges in content metadata, support international use of the rules, and empower cataloguers to exercise professional judgment in determining when additional descriptive information is required for a resource. In this context, many researchers have emphasized the importance of adopting RDA in libraries as a replacement for AACR2. Adopting RDA is justified for several reasons, including its ease of use, global applicability, and ability to generate comprehensive records, user-friendly nature, and forward-looking approach to cataloguing.

According to EL-Sherbini and Curran (2011) [21], in today's electronic-based libraries, space limitations are no longer a primary concern; instead, the focus has shifted to resource discovery, where the use of abbreviations can hinder effective information retrieval. Further, they mentioned "RDA addresses this shift by providing guidelines, not rules that libraries can customize based on the needs of their users and the level of cataloguing they can afford to provide. RDA strives toward becoming an international standard for metadata both inside and outside of the library community" (8p.). RDA enhances the usefulness of bibliographic records in digital catalogues by allowing related resources and different editions of the same work to be grouped together for better online display and access (Kottman, 2012) [22]. El-Sherbini (2011) [23] stated "many of the new discovery tools currently on the market serve only as a temporary bandage to underlying data problems that can be permanently remedied by thorough RDA implementation". According to Park and Tosaka (2015) [24] and Panchyshyn et al. (2019) [9], libraries adopt RDA because they depend largely on bibliographic records supplied by the Library of Congress, which follows RDA guidelines. This reliance encourages other libraries to align their cataloguing practices with RDA in order to maintain consistency and interoperability in shared bibliographic data. Dunsire (2016) [8] highlighted that the libraries adopt RDA due to its global applicability. They argue that RDA enables libraries to manage digital collections and online resources more effectively while also supporting international cooperation and standardization in cataloguing practices.

However, the level of RDA adoption in academic libraries varies widely, depending on factors such as institutional readiness, staff training, system compatibility, authority support and financial support. This section therefore reviews the current status, benefits, and implementation trends of RDA in academic libraries worldwide. In Gauteng Province, South Africa, Xaba and Shongwe (2025) [12] 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. According to

Cross et al. (2014) [10], 34% of Canadian libraries had not yet begun implementing RDA, 56% had adopted it partially, and only 10% had fully implemented it. This suggests that RDA adoption in Canada was still in a transitional phase during the study period. The findings indicate that greater institutional support and enhanced professional training are necessary for more widespread and consistent implementation of RDA across Canadian libraries. Nicholson (2013) [18] examined the implementation of RDA for authority control at the National Library of Scotland, focusing on training and review procedures. Although organizational restructuring delayed full adoption, the study highlighted progress achieved through revised cataloguing practices. It also described plans for phased RDA training using a variety of educational resources.

3.0 LIS Professionals' Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills

Resource Description and Access represent a significant shift from traditional cataloguing standards, requiring a higher level of technical expertise and conceptual understanding from Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals. The awareness, knowledge, and skills of those responsible for bibliographic management and metadata development are therefore crucial to the successful implementation of RDA in academic libraries. In this context, Yeboah et al. (2025) [4] mentioned, "The level of awareness of the RDA standard is crucial to its widespread adoption and implementation". Significantly, Haliru and Sokari (2016), Isibika et al. (2021), and Yeboah et al. (2023) [25, 26, 4] stated that awareness alone is not sufficient for the adoption of RDA. They emphasized that library professionals must enhance their RDA-related skills by attending training programmes and workshops to improve their readiness for its implementation.

Mansor and Ramdzan (2014) [2] examined the awareness, familiarity, and understanding of RDA as a new bibliographic standard among Malaysian cataloguers. The study found that while the majority of respondents had heard of RDA, their overall understanding was limited to basic concepts. Many cataloguers acknowledged that their knowledge of RDA was insufficient for practical application. The results highlighted a strong need for structured RDA training and professional development. Most respondents expressed interest in learning more about advanced RDA-related frameworks such as the International Cataloguing Principles, FRBR, and FRAD. They also indicated their willingness to participate in short, intensive workshops to improve their RDA skills and competencies. Oehlschläger (2012) [27] noted that the "British Library and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) collaborated to raise awareness of RDA among library professionals prior to providing

formal training to cataloguers". Without proper awareness and expertise, implementation is not possible. Kottman (2012) [22] examined the situation at the University of Kansas, where the cataloguing staff engaged in webinars, reviewed earlier presentations, and stayed up-to-date about RDA implementation through OCLC email listservs. Through these professional development activities, the cataloguing team gained a clearer understanding of the differences between RDA and AACR2, which supported their transition toward the new cataloguing standard.

In Nigeria, many scholars have conducted studies on the awareness levels of librarians and cataloguers regarding RDA. A study by Haliru and Sokari (2016) [25] examined the need for RDA training among librarians in Northwestern Nigerian university libraries. The study revealed that librarians' proficiency in RDA was very low. It emphasized that comprehensive training in all aspects of RDA is essential for improving cataloguing practices. The authors therefore recommended that librarians should receive formal training on the effective use of RDA for cataloguing information resources. Aboyade and Eluwole (2018) [28] investigated the application of RDA in Nigeria, focusing on cataloguers' awareness, perceptions, and challenges. The study highlighted that cataloguers and librarians in Southwest Nigerian university libraries were knowledgeable about RDA and showed strong enthusiasm toward its adoption. However, for the successful deployment of RDA in Nigeria, the study suggested that libraries must receive sufficient funding to train librarians on RDA, purchase an RDA toolkit, and provide a reliable power system. Saliu (2021) [29] conducted a survey on the awareness and use of RDA among librarians in Nigerian libraries. The study revealed that although most librarians were aware of RDA and its role in resource description and access, this awareness did not translate into actual utilization, as the majority had not yet applied RDA in their cataloguing work.

Lee (2022) [30] investigated the current status of RDA adoption in Korea and explored university librarians' perceptions of its implementation. The result shows that librarians viewed RDA as highly complex and abstract, with very few successful implementation examples in the country. Participants also reported that staff shortages and limited budgets made RDA adoption difficult for their libraries. Author suggested that improving awareness, training, and institutional guidelines, along with establishing pilot libraries and national-level support systems, would facilitate smoother and effective implementation of RDA in Korean university libraries. Panchyshyn et al. (2019) [9] assessed the level of awareness and use of RDA among cataloguers in American public libraries. The study found that although many cataloguers were

familiar with RDA, their level of practical knowledge varied significantly between rural and urban library settings. Notably, about 22% of respondents had not heard of RDA before participating in the survey, highlighting a major gap in professional awareness. The study emphasized the need for more training opportunities and financial support to ensure consistent RDA adoption across public libraries. It also suggested that LIS schools should strengthen RDA education for future cataloguers. The results warned that without adequate training, public library cataloguers risk falling further behind in adapting to evolving RDA and linked data frameworks.

After the Philippine Professional Regulatory Board for Librarians (PRBFL) approved RDA, Acedera (2014) [31] evaluated the preparedness of librarians in Mindanao, Philippines, to adopt and implement it. The study revealed that although most librarians were aware of the PRBFL's adoption of RDA, their level of readiness varied. Librarians who had received sufficient RDA training felt more confident and comfortable using the standard, whereas those with little or no training demonstrated lower preparedness. A major issue identified was the limited access to the RDA Toolkit in most libraries, which hindered its practical application. The study therefore emphasized the need for expanded training opportunities and improved access to RDA tools to support effective adoption. Isibika et al. (2021) [27] examined the changing skill requirements of librarians in Tanzanian academic libraries. The findings identified the essential competencies needed for modern library service delivery and highlighted several barriers to effective professional training.

Recent study by Udoh (2025) [32] investigated the training and skill requirements necessary for the implementation of RDA in public university libraries in South-East Nigeria. The study found that librarians required comprehensive training in various aspects of RDA, including migration from AACR2, metadata development, database management, and the use of metadata standards such as Dublin Core and MODS. The findings further revealed that RDA implementation remained at a very limited stage, as most libraries were still in the planning phase and lacked preparedness in acquiring RDA toolkits and related software. Major barriers identified included inadequate funding, lack of access to modern technologies, and insufficient professional motivation among librarians.

The literature demonstrated that while many LIS professionals are aware of RDA, their technical proficiency and practical expertise in using the standard remain limited. The primary obstacles affecting their preparedness include restricted access to the RDA Toolkit, insufficient ICT skills, and a lack of professional training. Consequently, many libraries still rely on

AACR2 rather than fully implementing RDA. Consequently, the studies emphasize that continuous training and strong institutional support are essential for improving LIS professionals' competence and confidence in applying RDA.

4.0 Challenges and Barriers in RDA Implementation

The adoption of Resource Description and Access (RDA) has revolutionized contemporary cataloguing practices by aligning bibliographic standards with the digital and metadata-driven environment. However, despite its global relevance, the shift from conventional standards such as AACR2 to RDA has not been easy, as noted by many researchers worldwide. The author studied and examined the opinions and expectations of cataloguers in Turkish libraries regarding RDA implementation. The study revealed that more than half of the participants lacked an adequate understanding of RDA vocabularies, element sets, and terminology, indicating limited awareness and preparedness. Many participants also reported that the transition to RDA created stress within their libraries and workplaces. The results further highlighted system-level challenges, particularly the need to upgrade integrated library systems to support RDA adoption. The authors noted that most Turkish libraries still rely on AACR2 and MARC, and the absence of a national cataloguing policy and standardized subject and authority lists further complicates implementation. In addition, cataloguers face challenges in cooperation and in-service training, although recent professional initiatives have been undertaken to raise awareness of RDA in Turkey. According to Richard et al. (2024) [33], majority of Nigerian university libraries have not yet incorporated RDA into their cataloguing practices, even though it was introduced in June 2010 and has been widely adopted by libraries in developed countries since 2013.

Yushiana and Emilia (2014) [34] reported that Malaysian cataloguers have a limited understanding of FRBR and FRAD in relation to RDA, which acts as a major barrier to RDA adoption. The study revealed that most cataloguers are only familiar with the basic principles of RDA and FRBR, indicating a low level of preparedness. A high percentage of neutral responses reflected their lack of confidence and conceptual clarity about RDA. Many respondents were uncertain whether RDA could be encoded using MARC21 or Dublin Core, showing weak technical awareness. Their confusion regarding the use of "access point" instead of "heading" further highlighted gaps in their understanding. Based on these results, authors suggested that the need for systematic RDA training and professional development in Malaysian libraries for successful adaptation. Luo et al. (2014) [35] observed that the language used in RDA posed difficulties in China, as many of the instructions are lengthy and complex,

making them hard to understand for non-native English speakers. In response, the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) revised RDA based on the *U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee's Report and Recommendations*. However, instead of fully meeting the report's objective of presenting RDA guidelines in clear, simple, and unambiguous English, the revision largely focused on breaking long instructions into several shorter sentences, which did not significantly improve overall clarity or usability.

El-Sherbini (2018) identified several key obstacles to RDA implementation at the Ohio State University Library (OSUL) in the United States. The study highlighted challenges such as the ambiguity of FRBR entities, particularly "expression" and "manifestation," and the lack of clarity in certain RDA instructions, including inconsistencies in correcting typographical errors. It also highlighted that the OSUL LIS system was unable to display RDA records properly and that navigating the RDA Toolkit was difficult for cataloguers. Similarly, the continued use of MARC 21 posed compatibility issues, as its structure does not fully support the requirements of linked data and the semantic web. These findings emphasized the technological and conceptual barriers to effective RDA adoption. Monyela (2019) [3] investigated cataloguing techniques in South Africa, focusing on the Cape Town Metropolitan Libraries (CCTML). The study identified that RDA could not be implemented within their existing cataloguing system because it did not support several required MARC tags. The system provided only a limited MARC template that included the most commonly used fields, such as 100 for author and 245 for title. As a result, the lack of comprehensive MARC support posed a significant barrier to the effective adoption of RDA in these libraries. Another study by Monyela (2020) [3] explored the adoption of RDA as a new cataloguing standard and the challenges faced by libraries in Sub-Saharan Africa, where many still use AACR2. The study revealed that although RDA implementation is gradually increasing, it is hindered by issues such as poor power supply, weak internet connectivity, limited ICT skills, lack of training, inadequate funding, and incompatible LIS systems. It also noted that the high cost of the RDA Toolkit and insufficient understanding of RDA principles further slow its adoption. To overcome these barriers, the author recommended alternative power sources, improved training programmes, collaborative library consortia, and stronger financial and technological support. The study also highlights the major obstacles to RDA implementation and suggests practical solutions for libraries in the region.

A very recent study conducted by Mantegh et al. (2024) [36] on the challenges associated with implementing Resource Description and Access in academic libraries in Iran. The findings

revealed that the major barriers to RDA implementation included difficulties in transitioning to new library software, insufficient knowledge and training regarding RDA, internal communication problems within libraries, data incompatibility, lack of institutional authority for RDA application, and challenges faced by library users. The study recommended the development of correspondence tables and comprehensive software manuals to support librarians and cataloguers in the effective implementation of RDA. Archer-Capuzzo and Post (2025) [37] examined the barriers faced by cataloguers in using RDA and their perspectives on the transition to official RDA in North Carolina. The study revealed that many cataloguers experienced difficulties during the transition process, particularly due to unequal access to professional resources and support. Çakmak and Disli (2025) [38] evaluated the Turkish translation process of the RDA Reference and identified several linguistic and structural challenges affecting its implementation. The study revealed issues such as terminological inconsistencies, semantic difficulties arising from differences between English and Turkish, and problems related to the technical language used in RDA. It also highlighted challenges associated with translators' familiarity with RDA terminology and librarians' language proficiency.

The literature clearly demonstrates that, despite RDA's emergence as a crucial and widely accepted cataloguing standard, its adoption remains limited in many developing and underdeveloped regions. The major obstacles include inadequate funding for RDA Toolkit subscriptions, lack of professional training, insufficient ICT skills, and weak technological infrastructure, such as unreliable electricity and limited internet connectivity. Several studies also highlight the complexity of RDA language and the concepts of FRBR and FRAD, which further discourage cataloguers from implementing the standard. The transition from AACR2 to RDA has also been hindered by the absence of national cataloguing policies and limited administrative support. Therefore, the literature indicates that adequate training, financial commitment, and technological preparedness are the most important prerequisites for the successful and sustainable implementation of RDA in libraries worldwide.

5.0 Status of RDA in the UAE / Arab Region

RDA implementation across the United Arab Emirates and the wider Arab region remains inconsistent and is generally at an early or partial stage. Although some prominent institutions and national initiatives have begun adopting RDA concepts and offering related training, many academic and public libraries are still in the awareness or pilot phase rather than fully implementing the standard. Awareness of RDA has been actively promoted through

conferences and regional training events, including ALA and industry presentations in Dubai and Sharjah, as well as sessions at the Sharjah International Library Conference (Osman, 2021) [39]. Besides, the RDA Toolkit team has prioritized translations and resources for non-English users, including Arabic, which is critical for regional adoption. However, despite these initiatives reflecting growing institutional interest and providing training opportunities, they have not yet resulted in widespread or consistent RDA implementation across the region (Osman, 2021).

After a critical review of the literature on RDA adoption in the UAE and the wider Arab region across various databases, only a limited number of studies were identified. Although some relevant studies may exist in print or online sources, the researcher was unable to locate them. However, Osman (2016) [40] examined the readiness and challenges of implementing RDA in Arab libraries within the context of the global shift from print-based to digital information environments. The study revealed that, unlike libraries in the United States and Europe, many Arab libraries continue to place a strong emphasis on printed collections, which hinders the adoption of modern cataloguing standards. It also examined the extent of RDA use in the Arab region and questioned libraries' preparedness to transition from MARC 21 to emerging frameworks such as BIBFRAME. According to Osman (2016) [41], interest in RDA among Arab library professionals has been increasing, as reflected in the growing number of regional conferences, workshops, and surveys addressing the standard. Notably, several national and academic libraries in the Arab region, including the Lebanese National Library, the Qatar National Library, and selected academic libraries in Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, and Iraq, began implementing RDA between 2013 and 2015. The findings identified system compatibility, training requirements, and budget constraints as major barriers to implementation. The study emphasized the need for capacity building, phased testing, and strategic planning to enable Arab libraries to participate more effectively in the global cataloguing community. Mantegh et al. (2024) [37] revealed that 35% of academic librarians in academic libraries in Iran possessed adequate familiarity with RDA standards, while the majority (65%) lacked sufficient knowledge about them.

6.0 Limitations of the Study

The study is primarily based on secondary data collected from books, journal articles, conference proceedings, dissertations, related to Resource Description and Access. Since no primary data were collected directly from librarians, cataloguers, or academic libraries in the UAE and Gulf region, the findings are dependent on the availability and scope of existing

literature. Another limitation of the study is the limited availability of recent empirical research specifically focusing on RDA implementation in the UAE and Arab academic libraries. In addition, the rapid evolution of digital cataloguing technologies, linked data environments, and metadata standards may lead to changes in RDA practices over time. Therefore, the findings of this study should be interpreted within the context of the reviewed literature and the period in which the data were collected. Future research may include surveys, interviews, and case studies involving LIS professionals and academic libraries in the Gulf region to provide more comprehensive and updated insights into RDA adoption, challenges, and professional competencies.

7.0 Conclusion

Resource Description and Access has emerged as an important international cataloguing standard designed to meet the changing requirements of the digital information environment. The reviewed literature indicates that RDA enhances bibliographic control, resource discovery, interoperability, and metadata management in academic libraries. Although many libraries worldwide have gradually adopted RDA, its implementation remains uneven due to challenges such as inadequate training, limited ICT infrastructure, financial constraints, lack of institutional support, and insufficient professional competencies among LIS professionals. The study also reveals that the implementation of RDA in the UAE and the wider Gulf region is still at an early stage, with limited empirical research available on the subject. While awareness of RDA is increasing through professional initiatives, conferences, and training programmes, many academic libraries continue to face technical, organizational, and administrative barriers to effective adoption. Therefore, strengthening professional training, improving technological infrastructure, ensuring institutional support, and developing strategic policies are essential for the successful implementation of RDA in the region. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the current status, challenges, and global perspectives of RDA implementation in academic libraries. The findings may assist library administrators, policymakers, educators, and cataloguing professionals in developing effective strategies for improving metadata practices and strengthening bibliographic control in the contemporary digital information environment.

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