

**OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE AS AN INTEGRATED LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:
A STUDY ON THE SUITABILITY AND APPLICABILITY OF KOHA OPEN SOURCE
(KOHA OSS) FOR ACADEMIC LIBRARY SERVICES**



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Enhanced Executive Summary

(Abstract of the research) – 1 page only

KOHA OSS has many features that are suitable for managing academic libraries particularly in Malaysian environment. Comparing it with some of the proprietary library management software used by some of the academic libraries in Malaysia, KOHA OSS has many similar features that are used by the propriety library management software to manage the academic libraries. This is because of the fact that, KOHA OSS is being built by a community of open source which consists of experts who are interested in the development and maintenance of the software. The purpose of this research is to explore the suitability and capability of KOHA OSS as a library management information system specifically for academic libraries in Malaysia. In order to achieve the purpose, the functional and non functional features of KOHA OSS are explored, analyzed, and discussed. As a result of these tasks, conclusion will be made on the suitability and capability of KOHA OSS to be used in the academic libraries. The main reason behind this research is to refute the opinion of many librarians that open source library software, in particular KOHA OSS, is not suitable and capable to be used for the management of academic libraries. And in addition to that, this research also attempts to convince the library community that KOHA OSS can overcome the financial burden faced by many libraries in trying to computerize their library management. In relation to this, KOHA OSS would only incur very minimal monetary investment as compared to proprietary software but the downside of it is that the librarians have to take responsibility in implementing and maintaining the information system. This research also found out that today's librarians have to be more creative in exploring other opportunities to improve their information services for the sake of their users and therefore opportunity like KOHA OSS should not be missed by librarians. In that aspect, librarians should also expand their capabilities in relation to technical knowledge and skills in information technology so that they can capitalize on many more opportunities available.

INTRODUCTION *(1 to 2 pages only)*

In the era of 1990s, there have been drastic developments in the field of open source software (OSS). There were many open source software that have been developed around the world to solve organizational information system problems.

In general, OSS refers to a joint and collaborated development effort of software product in a particular field that is conducted in a spirit of sharing the product for free within the community of developers and users. The sharing encompasses all elements of the software product in particular the source code in which it can be voluntarily modified by the community of developers with the intention to improve the software product and then redistribute again to the community of developers and users. The improvement of the software product is done overtime by any of the developers or users within the community who have the ideas for improvements regarding the functional requirements or the technical requirements and capabilities of the software. By doing this, the software product would evolve to become a full-fledged product that can be adopted by any party if it is found suitable for their applications. Therefore, OSS benefits everybody in the community whether they are developers or users and therefore provides an economical alternative as compared to propriety software that requires hefty budget in order to implement it.

OSS is developed based on open standards to ensure they are integrated and interoperable between different platforms. These developments have occurred in all areas including the library and information management field. Since a decade ago, most of the libraries around the world resorted to using proprietary integrated library management software for managing information and library resources for providing services to library customers. This scenario began to change when the world financial crisis in which libraries around the world were