JIPI (Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi) Vol. 11 No. 2 Tahun 2026
ISSN (online): 2528-021X
Page: 670-684

CONCEPT, CHARACTERISTICS, AND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK OF THE ISLAMIC LIBRARY FOR ISLAMIC EDUCATION AND DA'WAH: A NARRATIVE-THEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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Receive : 25 Oct 2026
Accepted : 22 Nov 2026
Published: 26 Nov 2026
DOI : 10.30829/jipi.v11i2.32431

Abstract
Islamic libraries are usually studied in a single context, such as mosque libraries, manuscript collections, or particular institutions, so an integrated conceptual picture is lacking and the Islamic foundations that distinguish them from libraries in general are seldom examined. This article synthesises the concept, definition, and characteristics of the Islamic library and explains the urgency of its management for Islamic education and da'wah. A qualitative narrative-thematic literature review was used. Sources were identified through a documented search with inclusion and exclusion criteria, recorded in a review matrix, briefly appraised for design clarity and closeness to the object of study, and analysed thematically, yielding 17 unique Indonesian sources (2010–2026). Islamic foundations (the Qur'an, hadith, and the history of Islamic libraries) and international library and management theory served as a conceptual framework, not as data. Four complementary dimensions of the concept emerged, with different strengths of evidence; the institutional-epistemological dimension rests on a single source. The proposed definition distinguishes the Islamic library from the general library through the values of amanah, tabayyun, adab, and itqan and the responsibility to safeguard the authenticity, authority (sanad), and continuity of knowledge. The planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) framework is presented as a conceptual hypothesis: only one source applies it explicitly and none tests causality. The findings are limited to mosque libraries and Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

Keywords: Islamic library; library management; literature review; Islamic education; da'wah; POAC

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education and da'wah are, in essence, continuous processes of transmitting, preserving, and developing Islamic knowledge. These processes require institutions that do not merely store sources of knowledge but also manage them so that they are easy to locate, remain authentic, and are used responsibly. Ideally, the Islamic library is positioned both as an

information centre and as an institution that safeguards the authenticity, authority, and continuity of Islamic knowledge (Usman, Ramli, & Himayah, 2025). An ideal library is also understood as a place where information and knowledge are selected, acquired, organised, stored, preserved, used, and lent (Mohammad Mansyur, 2021), so that its function is systemic and does not stop at the provision of reading rooms and bookshelves.

This role is evident across various types of institutions. Mosque libraries serve as public spaces for sharing, synthesising, and developing knowledge (Khaddafi & Hasan, 2024; Zuhdi, 2010); libraries in educational settings support literacy and lifelong learning (Pohan, Zulaikha, & Afrina, 2025); and libraries serve as a medium for Islamic literacy da'wah (Kusmindar, 2018; Sumarno, Sobirin, & Suryandari, 2026). Several case studies report that this ideal role has not always been realised, owing, among other things, to librarians' limited competencies and inadequate software support for Arabic script (Himayah, 2026), the dominance of donated collections and unsystematic collection development in mosque libraries (Almah & Himayah, 2026), low reading interest (T. Rahmawati, Yanto, & Sumarto, 2025), and limited funding and staffing (Arya Atho'ilah & Aldi Pratama, 2025)(Utama, Zebua, & Handayani, 2025). Because these findings come from limited contexts, they are read as indications rather than as a general portrait of Islamic libraries.

Previous studies have addressed parts of this problem separately: collections and preservation (Almah & Himayah, 2026; Himayah, 2026; Usman et al., 2025); mosque libraries (Draditaswari, Hidayah, Arvy, Kristansi, & Paramitaswari, 2024; Harahap & Faturrahman, 2024; Khaddafi & Hasan, 2024; Kusmindar, 2018; Zuhdi, 2010); competencies, literacy, and reading behaviour (Dafrizal, Yuldelasharmi, Zulfitri, & Sa'adiah, 2025; Marleni, Iswanto, Perdana, & Rizkyantha, 2024; T. Rahmawati et al., 2025; Sholikhah, Prasetya, Vratiwi, & Rizkyantha, 2024); and library management in educational institutions (Mohammad Mansyur, 2021; Pohan et al., 2025; Sirojuddin & Rossyidah, 2023; Sumarno et al., 2026; Utama et al., 2025). Most focus on a single type of library, a single institution, or a single aspect of management, so that no synthesis integrating them is yet available.

Beyond their limited scope, these studies seldom explain what makes a library Islamic apart from its collection. The term "Islamic library" is often used operationally to refer to a library holding Islamic collections, which risks rendering it indistinguishable from libraries in general. Yet the Islamic scholarly tradition has its own values and concepts, such as amanah, tabayyun, sanad, and adab, which are relevant to the selection, organisation, and provision of information services. Management, which appears only in the final sections of many studies, is likewise rarely connected to these foundations. If this problem is left unaddressed, the Islamic library may function merely as an administrative unit or a book repository.

Several values that may distinguish the management of Islamic libraries from that of libraries in general can be derived from the Islamic scholarly tradition. First, amanah (trustworthiness): the Qur'an commands that trusts be rendered to those entitled to them (Q.S. al-Nisa' [4]: 58), so that collections, waqf funds, and the trust of library users are regarded as trusts for which the library is accountable. Second, tabayyun (verification): the command to verify information before acting upon it (Q.S. al-Hujurat [49]: 6) is consistent with the functions of source selection and evaluation. Third, sanad and scholarly authority: clarity of the chain of transmission is regarded as part of the preservation of religion, as cited in the Muqaddimah of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim; in the library context, this principle is closely related to attention to the author, edition, and origin (provenance) of texts. Fourth, adab: the ethics towards knowledge, teachers, and sources of knowledge discussed in classical literature such as Ta'līm al-Muta'allim

(Bakhromzod, 1949) and reflected in the treatment of collections and services. Fifth, itqan: diligence and meticulousness in work, as in the narration of al-Bayhaqi, which is relevant to quality standards of management. The linking of these values to library practice is the authors' conceptual formulation, not a finding of the sources analysed.

Management was classically formulated (Fayol et al., 1949) in five elements, namely planning, organising, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. Esti, Herawati & Novitasari (2020) condensed these into four functions: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC). Library management texts, for example Evans and Alire (2013), use such functions to structure information organisations. This article adopts POAC for three reasons: its formulation is concise and readily mapped onto library practice; one source in the corpus, namely Sumarno et al. (2026), uses it explicitly, providing a point of convergence between theory and data; and its four functions are consistent with the Qur'anic emphasis on planning for the morrow (Q.S. al-Hasyr [59]: 18), orderly ranks (Q.S. al-Saff [61]: 4), tangible work (Q.S. al-Taubah [9]: 105), and accountability for deeds (Q.S. Qaf [50]: 18). This correspondence is interpretive and illustrative rather than the result of exegetical (tafsir) study. The choice of POAC also means that the elements of coordination and leadership in Fayol's formulation are not discussed, which constitutes a limitation of this article.

By way of comparison, library science has strong general foundations. Ranganathan's five laws (1931) assert that books are for use, every reader has his or her book, every book has its reader, the time of the reader must be saved, and the library is a growing organism. The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (2022) emphasises, among other things, equitable access and intellectual freedom. These foundations are used as a baseline: the basic functions of the Islamic library, namely collecting, organising, and providing services, do not differ from those of libraries in general. What therefore needs to be demonstrated is what the Islamic perspective adds, and this question is addressed in the Results and Discussion section.

This article addresses three research questions: (1) how is the library conceptualised from an Islamic perspective; (2) what are the definition and characteristics of the Islamic library; and (3) what is the urgency of Islamic library management for education and da'wah? Its objectives are to describe this concept, to formulate the definition and characteristics, and to explain the urgency of management. The novelty of this article lies in three aspects: (a) it links a synthesis of contemporary Indonesian literature with Islamic foundations and management theory as an interpretive framework; (b) it formulates a definition of the Islamic library that is explicit about its distinguishing values; and (c) it maps the strength of evidence for each dimension and management function so that claims do not exceed the data. Theoretically, this article offers a foundation for Islamic library and information studies. Practically, it assists managers, educators, and da'wah practitioners in formulating policies on collections, librarian competencies, services, and literacy programmes, and it sets out an agenda for further empirical research.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach in the form of library research, presented as a narrative-thematic literature review. This approach was chosen because the aim of the study was to synthesise the concept, characteristics, and urgency of Islamic library management from existing studies rather than to collect field data. A similar approach was used in some of the sources reviewed, including Pohan et al. (2025); Usman et al., (2025). This article is not a

systematic review: the search and selection procedures are reported transparently so that they can be traced, but no claim of comprehensiveness comparable to a systematic review protocol is made. Two types of material were used for different purposes, namely (1) a data corpus of 18 sources obtained through the search and analysed thematically, and (2) a conceptual foundation comprising Islamic texts, history, management theory, and international library science, which served as an interpretive and comparative framework rather than as data to be synthesised. The review was conducted in 2026.

The search and selection followed the protocol in Table 1. Each source was recorded in a matrix with ten columns, namely number, author and year, title, objective, method, theory or concept, main findings, strengths and limitations, relevance to sub-topic A/B/C, and usable quotations or ideas. The matrix contains 18 entries grouped into three sub-topics, namely (A) the concept of the library from an Islamic perspective (5 entries), (B) the definition and characteristics of the Islamic library (6 entries), and (C) the urgency of Islamic library management for education and da'wah (7 entries). Because Kusmindar (2018) is listed under both sub-topics A and C, the number of unique sources analysed is 17.

Table 1 Source Search and Selection Protocol

Element	Description
Search objective	To identify publications on the concept, characteristics, and management of Islamic libraries (mosque libraries and Islamic educational institutions) for sub-topics A, B, and C
Databases or sources	Google Scholar, Consensus AI, Google AI, Elsevier
Keywords	Library management, Islamic library
Time span and language	Published 2010–2026; Indonesian and English
Search period	28 September – 8 November 2026
Inclusion criteria	(1) discusses mosque libraries, Islamic libraries or Islamic educational institutions, or library management in the context of education, da'wah, or literacy; (2) scholarly publication with an identifiable design or method; (3) full text openly accessible
Exclusion criteria	Opinion or popular writing without a method; duplicate publications; publications that do not address libraries or information management.
Selection outcome	28 initial records; after screening, 18 matrix entries corresponding to 17 unique sources were obtained.

Each source was briefly appraised against three criteria: (1) clarity of research design; (2) closeness to the object of study, that is, whether the source examines the library or its management directly (direct) or examines users, graduates, or study programmes (supporting); and (3) institutional context, namely mosque, Islamic educational institution, or general education. The appraisal was not used to exclude sources but to determine their weight: supporting sources were not used as the primary basis for the definition or institutional characteristics. The results show that 13 of the 17 sources examine the library or its management directly, whereas four sources Dafrizal et al. (2025); Marleni et al. (2024; D. N. Rahmawati, Rukayah, & Ardiansyah (2022); Sholikhah et al., (2024) serve as supporting context. Ten direct sources have an explicitly Islamic context, while the other three are set in schools, madrasahs, or general education Mohammad Mansyur (2021; Pohan et al., (2025); Utama et al., (2025). By design, the sources comprise five literature or conceptual studies, six qualitative field studies or case studies, three quantitative or survey studies, one mixed-methods study, one historical study, and one community service report. All sources come from the Indonesian context. Years of publication range from 2010 to 2026, with 16 of the 17 sources (94%) published within the last ten years.

Thematic analysis was carried out in four steps. First, the main findings of each source were coded and grouped according to their relevance to sub-topic A, B, or C. Second, similar codes were merged into themes, for example the authority and continuity of knowledge, scholarly public space, collection characteristics, librarian competencies, and information literacy; the relationships between themes and sources are presented in Table 2 so that they can be checked. Third, the themes were synthesised and compared across contexts and designs to answer the research questions. Fourth, each theme was assigned an evidence-strength label: strong when supported by at least three direct sources with at least two different designs; moderate when supported by two direct sources, or by one direct source reinforced by supporting sources; and limited when resting on a single direct source without supporting sources. The mapping of findings onto the POAC functions followed explicitly stated placement rules and distinguished placements stated by the sources from those representing the authors' interpretation.

The credibility of the analysis was maintained through (a) a structured matrix that provides an audit trail from quotation to theme, (b) the separation of direct and supporting sources and the labelling of evidence strength, and (c) the separation of the data corpus from the conceptual foundation. This article does not claim source triangulation: the comparison of library types (mosque, school, madrasah, and higher education) and of various research designs is intended to identify patterns across contexts, not to test the validity of the findings.

Potential selection bias and self-citation should be acknowledged. Source selection was purposive, based on the three sub-topics, and is therefore neither neutral nor representative of the entire literature. One of the authors of this article (Muhammad Ramli) co-authored Usman et al., (2025), and two other sources Almah & Himayah, 2026; Himayah (2026) come from the same circle of authors as that source; together these account for 3 of the 17 sources. To limit their influence, all three were appraised using the same criteria as the other sources, no conclusion rests on these three alone without being labelled as limited evidence (the institutional-epistemological dimension), and claims about the authenticity and authority of knowledge were checked against an independent conceptual foundation.

Further limitations are as follows. First, the search did not follow a standard systematic review protocol, so the analysis does not represent the entire literature. Second, several sources are conceptual studies or single case studies, so their results cannot be generalised. Third, four supporting sources do not examine the library as an institution. Fourth, all sources come from Indonesia and focus on mosque libraries and Islamic educational institutions, so generalisation to "Islamic libraries" at large is restricted to these contexts; Arabic- and English-language literature was not included in the corpus and was used only as a conceptual foundation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented according to the three research questions and organised by theme rather than source by source. Table 2 shows the relationships between themes and sources together with their strength of evidence. The themes supported by the largest number of direct sources are the educational and da'wah function and the scholarly public space. The themes with the thinnest evidence are the authority and continuity of knowledge (one direct source) and the explicit linkage of management functions to the POAC framework (two sources). The limitations of each group of sources have been summarised in the Method section and are not repeated in every paragraph.

Table 2 Theme–Source Matrix and Strength of Evidence

Theme	Direct sources	Supporting sources	Strength of evidence
Authority, authenticity, and continuity of knowledge	Usman et al. (2025) ; Himayah (2026) partially (indexing of ancient manuscripts)	–	Limited
Scholarly public space and community empowerment	Khaddafi & Hasan, (2024); Harahap & Faturrahman (2024); Zuhdi, (2010); Draditaswari et al., (2024)	–	Strong (mosque context)
Educational and da'wah function	Kusmindar, (2018); Sumarno et al., (2026); Draditaswari et al. Draditaswari et al., (2024);Sirojuddin & Rossyidah, (2023); Mohammad Mansyur, (2021); Utama et al., (2025); (Pohan et al., (2025)	–	Strong
Collections and specialised management	Usman et al., (2025); Khaddafi & Hasan, (2024); Himayah, (2026); Almah & Himayah, (2026)	–	Strong
Staff competencies and numbers	Himayah (2026; Pohan et al. (2025); Utama et al., (2025)	Marleni et al., (2024)	Strong
Information literacy and literacy culture	Draditaswari et al. (2024); Harahap & Faturrahman, (2024); Sirojuddin & Rossyidah, (2023); Zuhdi, (2010); Utama et al., (2025)	Dafrizal et al., (2025); T. Rahmawati et al., (2025); Sholikhah et al., (2024)	Strong
Resource challenges (funding, technology, donations, interest)	Almah & Himayah, (2026); Himayah, (2026); Sumarno et al. (2026); Utama et al. (2025)	T. Rahmawati et al., (2025)	Strong
Management functions explicitly linked to POAC	Sumarno et al., (2026); Utama et al., 2025)(2026)	–	Moderate

Note. Evidence-strength labels follow the rules set out in the Method section. Strength of evidence does not imply representativeness of all types of Islamic libraries.

The concept of the library from an Islamic perspective: four dimensions

The literature does not offer a single formulation of the concept of the library from an Islamic perspective. Read together, the themes in Table 2 form four complementary dimensions.

The institutional-epistemological dimension positions the Islamic library both as an information centre and as a guardian of the authenticity, authority, and continuity of Islamic knowledge (Usman et al., 2025). This dimension is supported by only one direct source, a literature review without new empirical data, and is therefore rated as having limited evidence; it is more appropriately read as a theoretical framework that requires testing. To prevent it from remaining a slogan, its three key terms need to be clarified. Authenticity concerns the integrity and validity of texts, which in library practice is reflected in selection criteria for Islamic materials, the differentiation of editions, and the verification (taṣḥīḥ) of Qur'anic manuscripts (carried out in Indonesia by the Lajnah Pentashih Mushaf Al-Qur'an of the Ministry of Religious Affairs). Authority concerns the scholarly standing of authors, editors, and publishers; it corresponds to the principle of sanad and is reflected in the organisation of classical texts and the authority control of Arabic author names. Continuity concerns the sustainability of transmission, which is reflected in the preservation and digitisation of manuscripts (Usman et al., 2025) and in funding, for example through waqf (Laugu, 2005). Accordingly, collection selection, organisation, and preservation are not value-neutral activities, since all three safeguard the chain of Islamic knowledge. This operational elaboration is the authors'

interpretation, drawing on the summary in (Usman et al., 2025) and on the value foundations set out in the Introduction, rather than a claim tested by the sources.

The social dimension is evident in studies of mosque libraries. Through a systematic literature review, Khaddafi & Hasan (2024) identified mosque libraries in Indonesia as public venues for the dissemination of knowledge, information synthesis, research, and intellectual development, as well as partners in da'wah, character education, and community development. Field evidence from Harahap & Faturrahman (2024) at Masjid Dirgantara broadens this concept: collections are not limited to religious literature but also include general literature that broadens the congregation's horizons. Zuhdi (2010) views the mosque library as an instrument for building a learning society that requires adequate collections and services, and Draditaswari et al., (2024) report a literacy programme that strengthened the use of a mosque library in Central Lombok. The evidence for this dimension is strong, but it is confined to mosque libraries.

The educational and da'wah dimension is demonstrated by the historical study of Kusmindar, (2018) on the contribution of the Istiqlal Mosque Library to Islamic education during the New Order era, which documents its role in Islamic education, its position as a reference point for Islamic libraries, and its pioneering of a digital library. In Islamic higher education, Sumarno et al. (2026) position the library as an information centre that supports students' da'wah literacy. Because the periods and contexts of both studies are specific, their findings cannot be directly assumed to describe general conditions; nevertheless, the two different designs (historical and qualitative field research) show a consistent pattern.

The user dimension emphasises that the concept of the library cannot be separated from the capabilities of its users. Sholikhah et al., (2024) measured the information literacy of 40 Islamic library and information science students using the Empowering 8 model and found it to be in the high category (score 3.10), whereas Utama et al., (2025) associated school library planning aligned with the curriculum and learners' interests with improved information literacy, although this association was not tested statistically. For the Islamic library, this dimension is consistent with the value of tabayyun: users need to be able to find, evaluate, organise, and use information responsibly. Part of the evidence comes from university students and school learners rather than from the library as an institution, so this dimension is concluded with caution.

The sources reviewed do not always provide a formal definition of the Islamic library. The definition in this article is formulated from three foundations: the library as a place where information and knowledge are selected, acquired, organised, stored, preserved, used, and lent (Mohammad Mansyur, 2021); the responsibility to safeguard the authenticity, authority, and continuity of Islamic knowledge (Usman et al., 2025); and its function as a centre of both religious and general knowledge (Harahap & Faturrahman, 2024). This formulation was then supplemented with the conceptual foundation so that it would not simply be a definition of a general library with the word "Islamic" added. On this basis, the Islamic library is defined as follows.

> *The Islamic library is an information management institution that collects, organises, preserves, and provides access to sources of Islamic knowledge and their supporting knowledge, with management guided by the values of amanah, tabayyun, adab, and itqan and by the responsibility to safeguard the authenticity, authority (sanad), and continuity of knowledge, and directed towards building literacy, supporting Islamic education, and serving as a medium of da'wah.*

Its difference from the general library can be formulated at three levels. First, its basic functions, namely collecting, organising, preserving, and providing services, are the same as those of libraries in general and are consistent with the five laws of Ranganathan (1931); this acknowledgement is important so that the Islamic library is not understood as an institution standing outside the library profession. Second, the Islamic library adds an epistemic responsibility: selection and organisation criteria are linked to the authenticity and authority of knowledge, not solely to user needs. Third, its purpose is transformative, namely to support Islamic education and da'wah, with management ethics framed by amanah and adab.

This epistemic responsibility gives rise to a tension that merits open discussion, because the Manifesto (IFLA/UNESCO, (2022) emphasises equitable access and intellectual freedom. Mission- and authority-based selection is common in special libraries; what must be ensured is that such criteria are stated in a transparent collection policy and do not turn into arbitrary restrictions on access. How Islamic libraries balance the two has not been addressed by the sources reviewed and constitutes an agenda for future research.

Characteristics of the Islamic library

The synthesis yields four characteristics that distinguish the Islamic library, namely the characteristics of its collection, human resources, literacy culture and services, and functional orientation.

The first characteristic is the collection. Usman et al. (2025) emphasise criteria for Islamic literature collections, the organisation of classical collections, and the digitisation of manuscripts, whereas Khaddafi & Hasan, (2024) show the diversity of mosque library collections, which encompass the Qur'an, hadith, tafsir, fiqh, aqidah, and sirah, and even Islamic-themed fiction, alongside bulletins, manuscripts, magazines, and audio-visual materials. The technical consequences are evident in Himayah (2026): Islamic collections create a need for specialised management in cataloguing, transliteration, indexing, and the use of technology, constrained by limited software support for Arabic script, the indexing of ancient manuscripts, librarian competencies, and funding. Within the value framework set out in the Introduction, this need can be read as a consequence of the principle of sanad: consistent author names, editions, and transliteration preserve the traceability of texts. With regard to collection development, (Almah & Himayah, 2026), using an exploratory mixed-methods design, identified problems of policy, the dominance of donated collections poorly matched to needs, minimal technology, and unsystematic collection development. They formulated a six-stage model, ranging from an analysis of the community's literacy needs to continuous evaluation. The cataloguing study and the collection development study complement each other in depicting the characteristics of the collection.

The second characteristic concerns the competencies of library managers. Using a Likert-scale questionnaire, Marleni et al. (2024) showed that competencies in collection development, library management, services, information systems, organisation, and preservation were considered necessary by employers of graduates of the Islamic Library and Information Science Study Program at IAIN Curup. The findings of (Himayah, 2026) on constraints in librarian competencies and the emphasis of Pohan et al., (2025) on librarian training reinforce this argument. Because Marleni et al. examined graduates rather than institutions, their findings are read as a depiction of professional demands. In terms of values, competence here encompasses both technical skills (Arabic, transliteration, preservation) and the integrity of managers (amanah and adab); this formulation is the authors' interpretation.

The third characteristic is an orientation towards literacy culture and services. (T. Rahmawati et al., 2025), in a case study of a study programme at IAIN Curup, found that literacy culture faces obstacles in the form of low reading interest and a tendency to access information instantly, so that institutional strategies are needed to strengthen academic literacy. In line with this, (Dafrizal et al., 2025), through a survey of 71 respondents, found that digital reading showed high engagement, whereas traditional and academic reading remained positively associated with academic achievement, and recommended integrating digital competencies with the Islamic scholarly tradition. With regard to services, Zuhdi, (2010) emphasises the need for adequate collections and services so that mosque libraries become part of a learning society. Because Dafrizal et al. (2025; T. Rahmawati et al. (2025) focus on study programmes and students, both are used as supporting evidence.

The fourth characteristic is a functional orientation that goes beyond general information services. Kusmindar (2018) shows that the Islamic library can perform educational and da'wah functions through the provision and dissemination of sources of Islamic knowledge, whereas Sumarno et al. (2026) position the library as an information centre that supports students' da'wah literacy. This orientation, together with the safeguarding of the authenticity of knowledge (Usman et al., 2025), constitutes the value-based distinction of the Islamic library compared with libraries in general.

The urgency of management for Islamic education

These characteristics will not materialise by themselves. Mohammad Mansyur, (2021) asserts that optimised management is necessary to support learning because the library is part of the learning resources in schools and madrasahs; although it is a conceptual study, this argument provides a strong basis for the view that, without sound management, library activities are not integrated. Usman et al. (2025) show that library planning is aligned with the curriculum and students' interests, that implementation includes collection management, circulation services, and integration with classroom learning, and that constraints include funding, staffing, and interest; the object of study is a general senior high school, and the link between management and literacy was not tested statistically.

In the context of Islamic educational institutions, Sirojuddin & Rossyidah (2023), at MA YSPIS Gandrirojo Rembang, demonstrate the importance of digital library management in supporting a literacy culture in madrasahs. Pohan et al. (2025), through library research, conclude that collection planning, service development, librarian training, and digitisation contribute to literacy, lifelong learning, and quality education (SDG 4). Support from Islamic higher education comes from T. Rahmawati et al. (2025) regarding the need for institutional strategies to strengthen academic literacy, as well as from Almah & Himayah, (2026); and Usman et al., (2025), who affirm that collection development requires a clear policy. Sirojuddin and Rossyidah examined only one madrasah, and Pohan et al. is based on library research, so these sources indicate associations rather than causal relationships.

The urgency of management for da'wah

In the domain of da'wah, Sumarno et al. (2026) is the source that most directly connects management, education, and da'wah. Using a qualitative descriptive approach at the library of Institut Agama Islam Al-Zaytun Indonesia and explicitly employing the POAC framework, the study shows that the POAC functions were applied systematically in managing the da'wah literacy programme, and that library use contributed to students' mastery of Islamic teachings,

communication skills, and ability to adapt to technology, although student visits remained low. Its context is a single higher education institution, so its application elsewhere requires adjustment.

The POAC framework: placement rules and mapping

The findings above are mapped onto the POAC framework (Table 3 and Figure 1). This mapping is the authors' interpretation rather than a claim made by each source, and two controls were therefore applied. First, placement rules: a practice is mapped to planning when it takes the form of a decision or design prior to implementation (policies, needs analysis, alignment with the curriculum); to organising when it involves the arrangement of resources, collections, or staff; to actuating when it involves the delivery of services or programmes; and to controlling when it involves evaluation or monitoring. Second, each placement is marked E when the practice is stated explicitly by the source and I when it is inferred by the authors from the source's findings. A source is placed under several functions only when it actually describes practices in those functions. Utama et al., (2025), for example, is placed under planning and actuating because the source itself mentions both, and not under the other functions.

Table 3 Mapping of Islamic Library Management onto the POAC Framework

Management function	Practices mapped	Sources (E = explicit; I = authors' interpretation)
Planning	Policy and collection development based on user needs; alignment with the curriculum and learners' interests; collection and service planning for quality education	Almah & Himayah (2026) [E]; Pohan et al., 2025[I}; Sumarno et al. (2026)[E]; Utama et al., 2025) [E];
Organising	Organisation of classical and manuscript collections; management of catalogues, transliteration, and indexing; preparation of competent managers	Himayah (2026)[I]; Marleni et al. (2024) [I]; Sumarno et al. (2026) [E]; Usman et al. (2025) [I]
Actuating	Information services and literacy programmes; use of digital libraries; services supporting da'wah literacy	Draditaswari et al. (2024) [I]; Harahap & Faturrahman (2024) [I]; Sirojuddin & Rossyidah, 2023 [I]; Sumarno et al. (2026)[E]; Utama et al. (2025) [E]
Controlling	Continuous collection evaluation; evaluation of da'wah literacy programmes; monitoring of preservation and digitisation efforts	Almah & Himayah (2026) [I]; Sumarno et al., 2026 [E]; Usman et al. (2025) [I]

Note. The mapping is the authors' synthesis and not a claim made by each source. Only Sumarno et al. (2026) use POAC in full; Utama et al. (2025) mention planning and actuating

The E and I markers show that placements under the organising function rely most heavily on interpretation, and that only one source uses POAC in full. The six-stage model of Almah & Himayah (2026), from literacy needs analysis to continuous evaluation, can be read as consistent with the POAC cycle, although it concerns collection development specifically. Figure 1 summarises this framework as a conceptual hypothesis: the characteristics of the Islamic library, grounded in the values set out in the Introduction, are directed through management functions towards its functions as a support for Islamic education and a medium of da'wah. For Islamic education, management serves to ensure that collections, services, and managers' competencies are aligned with learning needs; for da'wah, management serves to ensure that authoritative Islamic sources are available, accessible, and disseminated through well-planned literacy programmes.

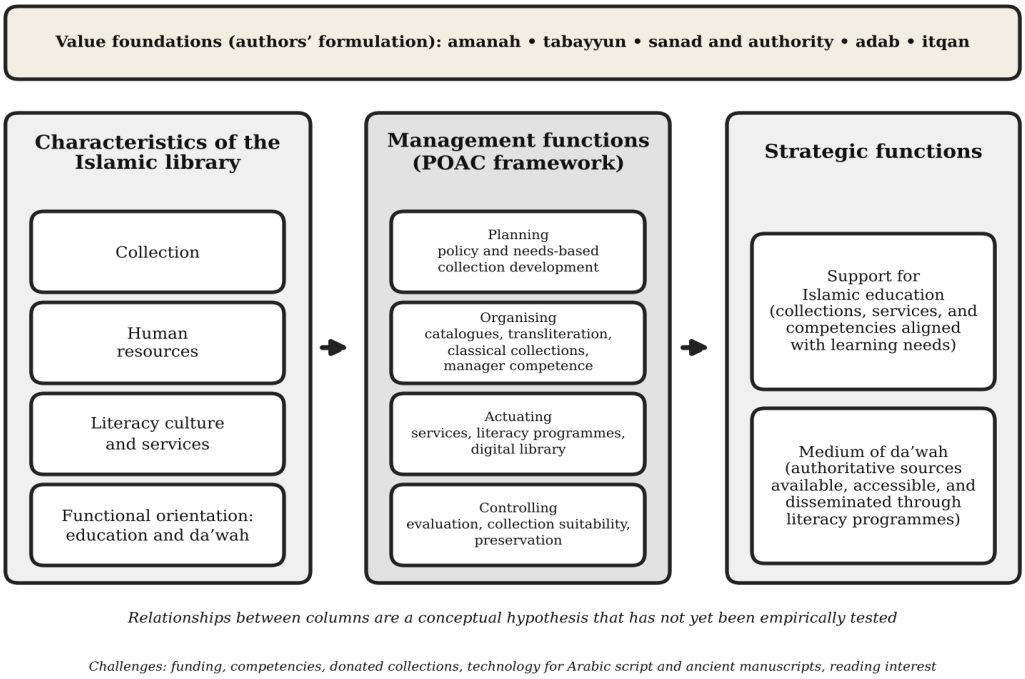


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of POAC in Islamic Library Management (a Hypothesis to Be Tested)

Critical discussion in relation to theory and the international literature

First, in relation to general library science. The four dimensions and four characteristics identified are consistent with the five laws of Ranganathan (1931): needs- and policy-based collection development reflects the second and third laws, literacy and service efforts reflect the first law, and the need for preservation, digitisation, and continuous evaluation reflects the fifth law, namely the library as a growing organism. In other words, most of the findings are not specific to Islam. What is distinctive lies in the epistemic responsibility for authenticity and authority and in the value framework (amanah, tabayyun, adab) that accompanies the educational and da'wah objectives. The contribution of this article is therefore the articulation of this distinguishing layer, not the discovery of new library functions.

Second, in relation to management theory. Only one source applies POAC in full, and no source tests the relationship between management and educational or da'wah outcomes causally. The claim that management is a "pillar" therefore cannot be stated as a finding; it is put forward as a hypothesis. The elements of leadership and coordination in the formulation of Fayol et al. (1949), as well as the concept of amanah in leadership, are not yet represented in the sources reviewed.

Third, in relation to the Islamic and international literature. All sources in the corpus come from Indonesia and, insofar as reflected in the matrix, do not use sanad or amanah as an analytical framework for library management; the value formulation set out in the Introduction is therefore the authors' conceptual bridge. Historical studies of Islamic libraries (Bakhromzod, 1949; Laugu, 2005; Pedersen, 1984) show that the safeguarding of texts, endowment (waqf), and copying are long-standing practices that predate the concept of modern management. Examining their continuity with contemporary practice in Indonesia, and comparing them with Islamic libraries in other countries, is a research agenda that this corpus cannot yet address.

Challenges and management implications

A cross-source review reveals a recurring pattern of challenges, namely limited funding, limited staff competencies and numbers, the dominance of donated collections poorly matched to needs, limited technological support for Arabic script and ancient manuscripts, and low reading interest and visits (Almah & Himayah, 2026; Himayah, 2026; T. Rahmawati et al., 2025; Sumarno et al., 2026; Utama et al., 2025). Some of the management implications are general and apply to any library. Table 4 therefore separates general implications from those specific to the Islamic context; the specific implications are the authors' conceptual proposals and require testing.

Table 4 Cross-Source Challenges and Management Implications

Challenge	Sources	General implications	Implications specific to the Islamic context (proposed)
Limited funding	Himayah (2026); Utama et al. (2025)	Budget planning and programme prioritisation	Exploring waqf-based funding schemes and mosque–educational institution partnerships, with amanah-based accountability in the form of reporting on the use of funds
Limited staff competencies and numbers	Himayah (2026); Marleni et al. (2024); Utama et al., (2025)	Librarian training	Strengthening competencies in Arabic script and language, transliteration, cataloguing of Islamic collections, and basic manuscript preservation; fostering the adab and integrity of managers
Dominance of donated collections poorly matched to needs	(Almah & Himayah (2026)	A collection policy that screens donations	A policy that balances the adab of accepting book waqf with criteria of authority and relevance to needs, including a mechanism for redistributing unsuitable donations
Limited technology for Arabic script and ancient manuscripts	(Himayah (2026); Usman et al. (2025)	Use of information technology	Arabic script support and transliteration standards in automation systems; digitisation with metadata recording of author, edition, and provenance
Low reading interest, instant information access, and low visits	T. Rahmawati et al. (2025); Sumarno et al. (2026); Utama et al. (2025)	Engaging and well-planned literacy programmes	Combining digital sources with the Islamic scholarly tradition (e.g., guided study of primary sources), drawing on networks of pengajian or majelis taklim (religious study circles), and training tabayyun within information literacy

Note. Synthesised by the authors from the review matrix; the final column contains conceptual proposals

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, the concept of the library from an Islamic perspective encompasses four complementary dimensions, namely the library as an information centre that safeguards the authenticity, authority, and continuity of Islamic knowledge (limited evidence); as a scholarly public space; as a means of Islamic education and Islamic literacy da'wah; and as an institution attentive to the information literacy of its users (strong evidence for the last three dimensions, particularly in the context of mosques and Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia).

Second, the Islamic library can be defined as an information management institution that collects, organises, preserves, and provides access to sources of Islamic knowledge and their supporting knowledge, with management guided by the values of amanah, tabayyun, adab, and itqan and by the responsibility to safeguard the authenticity, authority, and continuity of knowledge, and directed towards building literacy, supporting Islamic education, and serving as a medium of da'wah. Its characteristics include a collection that requires specialised management, a broad range of required manager competencies, an orientation towards literacy culture and adequate services, and an educational and da'wah functional orientation.

Third, Islamic library management is important because the sources reviewed associate planning, organising, actuating, and controlling with efforts to address challenges of funding, competencies, collections, technology, and reading interest, as well as with educational literacy and da'wah literacy. The role of management as a link between the characteristics and functions of the Islamic library is a conceptual hypothesis, since only one source applies POAC in full and no source tests causal relationships

SUGGESTION

Managers of Islamic libraries are advised to develop transparent collection policies, enhance librarian competencies, utilise information technology that supports Arabic script and ancient manuscripts, and design well-planned literacy programmes. Educational institutions and da'wah practitioners are advised to treat the library as a strategic partner in learning and in the dissemination of Islamic knowledge. Future researchers are advised (1) to conduct empirical research, whether qualitative or mixed-methods, to test the POAC framework and the role of the values of amanah, tabayyun, and sanad in various types of Islamic libraries, including academic libraries; (2) to conduct a systematic review following a standard protocol that includes Arabic- and English-language literature; and (3) to undertake a thematic study of the exegetical (tafsir) and hadith foundations of management and knowledge stewardship.

THANK YOU-NOTE

The authors would like to thank the Postgraduate Program of Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar for its academic guidance during the preparation of this article, the authors of the sources reviewed, whose work formed the basis of this synthesis, and the reviewers and editors of Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan dan Informasi (JIPI) for their feedback, which strengthened this manuscript.

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