



The Concept of Libraries in Islamic Education: An Analysis of Ahmad Tsalby's Thought in the Book At-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze Ahmad Tsalby's thought in At-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah regarding the concept of libraries in Islamic education, which are positioned as an integral part of the educational process. This research employs a library research method, with the primary data source being At-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah written by Ahmad Tsalby, while secondary data sources are obtained from books and relevant scholarly journal articles. The data were analyzed using content analysis techniques to identify Ahmad Tsalby's conceptual ideas concerning the functions of libraries within the framework of Islamic education. The findings reveal that, according to Ahmad Tsalby, Islamic libraries have four main functions: as a means for the development of knowledge, as guardians of the Islamic intellectual tradition, as centers of dynamic scholarly activity, and as a foundation for the formation of ethics and morals toward knowledge. These findings indicate that libraries function not merely as places for storing collections, but also as educational institutions that support the achievement of Islamic educational goals through the development of scholarly traditions and the internalization of Islamic values. Therefore, the concept of libraries proposed by Ahmad Tsalby remains relevant to be contextualized in the management of libraries within contemporary Islamic educational institutions.

KATA KUNCI

Perpustakaan Islam
Pendidikan Islam
Ahmad Tsalby
At-Tarbiyah Islamiyah
Fungsi Perpustakaan

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pemikiran Ahmad Tsalby dalam kitab At-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah mengenai konsep perpustakaan dalam pendidikan Islam yang diposisikan sebagai bagian integral dari proses pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian kepustakaan dengan sumber data primer berupa kitab At-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah karya Ahmad Tsalby, sedangkan sumber data sekunder diperoleh dari buku dan artikel jurnal ilmiah yang relevan. Data dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis konten untuk mengidentifikasi gagasan konseptual Ahmad Tsalby mengenai fungsi perpustakaan dalam kerangka pendidikan Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa menurut Ahmad Tsalby perpustakaan Islam memiliki empat fungsi utama, yaitu sebagai sarana pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan, penjaga tradisi intelektual Islam, pusat aktivitas keilmuan yang hidup, serta landasan pembentukan etika dan akhlak terhadap ilmu. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa perpustakaan tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai tempat penyimpanan koleksi, tetapi juga sebagai institusi edukatif yang mendukung tercapainya tujuan pendidikan Islam melalui pengembangan tradisi keilmuan dan internalisasi nilai-nilai Islam. Oleh karena itu, konsep perpustakaan yang dikemukakan Ahmad Tsalby memiliki relevansi untuk dikontekstualisasikan dalam pengelolaan perpustakaan pada lembaga pendidikan Islam kontemporer.



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1. Introduction

The library in the world of education has an important function for every educational institution it serves. In the context of the history of Islamic education, the library is positioned as a strategic space for the dissemination and development of knowledge, as it is where active learning processes take place (Usholicchah dkk., 2024). Furthermore, the library also serves as a place for scholars, intellectuals, and Muslim students to conduct research, develop, and pass on knowledge across generations (H. Ilhami & Hajiri, 2021). Based on this understanding, Islam does not view the library merely as a storage facility, but rather as an important medium for integrating knowledge with Islamic values.

The Islamic education system does not merely serve an academic function, but has a primary goal of shaping the ideal Muslim, because seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim as emphasized in the Quran in Surah Al-Mujadalah verse 11: "O you who have believed, when you are told, 'Make room in assemblies,' then make room; Allah will make room for you. And when you are told, 'Arise,' then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is acquainted with what you do." Likewise, in the hadith narrated by Anas bin Malik, he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim." Based on these two sources, seeking knowledge is an obligation that every Muslim must fulfill. In the Islamic perspective, knowledge is not only for the benefit of worldly life, but also serves as provision for the hereafter.

The phenomenon in the era of Society 5.0 has brought about massive changes in the lifestyle patterns of society, and these changes have affected public perceptions of libraries. Today, libraries are often seen as less relevant institutions because access to books and information can be obtained digitally without having to physically visit the library, simply by using a smartphone through existing applications (Mubarokah dkk., 2023).

This shift has had a significant impact on the function of libraries, with their role increasingly reduced to that of mere repositories for books and documents. As we know, libraries today are seen as somewhat outdated, with the perception that visiting a library is a waste of time almost as though there is no longer any point in going. Technology has, in a sense, rendered libraries almost obsolete, as practically everyone can now read books easily without ever needing to set foot in a library.

Nevertheless, the ease of access to information through digital platforms is not always matched by learners' ability to critically and valuably filter and select knowledge (I. Ilhami dkk., 2024). This indicates that the library's role as a learning facility has not been fully optimized.

From a historical perspective, during the classical era, libraries were, in fact, utilized as centers for learning and intellectual development, which stands in stark contrast to the condition of Islamic libraries in the modern era (Hasanah & Sukri, 2023). This then raises the question: How can Islamic educational libraries not only adapt technically but also remain steadfast in upholding the substantial orientations of Islamic education? The hope is that libraries can become catalysts for the creation of knowledgeable, well-mannered learners imbued with the moral awareness needed to utilize their knowledge for good.

Drawing upon the thought of Islamic educational figures as references for deeper study represents an effort to reconstruct Islamic libraries in accordance with Islamic values. One such prominent figure who has given considerable attention to Islamic education is Ahmad Tsalby, especially through his work *at-tarbiyah al-Islamiyah*. In this book, he offers perspectives on Islamic education rooted in the intellectual tradition of Islam, particularly the emphasis on integrating knowledge, character, and the aims of Islamic education. The ideas born from Ahmad

Tsalby's thought provide important conceptual foundations for comprehensively understanding the position and function of libraries in Islamic education.

Previous research has tended to focus more on libraries in the context of information management or the digitization of library services. However, studies that frame libraries as an integral part of the construction of Islamic education based on the thoughts of leading Islamic educational figures remain relatively scarce.

Specifically, the thought of Ahmad Tsalby in *At-Tarbiyah Al-Islamiyah* is more often analyzed in the context of general Islamic educational concepts, while its relevance to the development of the library's position within Islamic education is rarely discussed.

Hence, to find solutions within Ahmad Tsalby's thought in *at-tarbiyah al-Islamiyah* regarding the issues facing Islamic libraries, his theories become vital to explore. The focus of this research is thus to understand how the concept of the library is understood within the framework of Islamic education according to Ahmad Tsalby, as well as its relevance in addressing contemporary challenges in Islamic education. By examining Ahmad Tsalby's thought, it is hoped this will provide a conceptual contribution in developing libraries as educational institutions oriented not only toward producing knowledgeable individuals but also those with noble character.

2. Literature Review

The significance of research regarding libraries in the era of modernity reflects scholars' deep concern about the phenomenon of library degradation in preserving intellectual tradition, literacy culture, and the development of knowledge. This has drawn attention at both the global and national levels, as the strategic role of libraries as preservers of intellectual tradition through the transmission of knowledge to the next generation is increasingly eroding (Bonang & Fitriyah, 2022). In the classical Islamic period, libraries were central to Islamic scholarly activities, directly integrated with Islamic education through research and the cultivation of both moral and spiritual values in students (Wasto dkk., 2023). As stated by Ibn Taymiyyah, seeking knowledge is an act of worship for Muslims; deeply understanding knowledge is a form of devotion to Allah SWT. Furthermore, studying knowledge is jihad, teaching it to those who do not yet know is charity (shodaqoh), and discussing knowledge is a form of praise (tasbih) (Arifin, 2018). In the context of contemporary Islamic education, the contribution of libraries is drifting further from its true purpose, as the presence of Islamic libraries in educational institutions is evolving into mere symbolism. In reality, Islamic libraries are intended to facilitate intellectual activity (Rodin, 2022). Many historical studies of Islamic libraries demonstrate that they have been centers of knowledge production that have given rise to many Muslim intellectuals, such as Al Khawarizmi with his work *Al-Kitab al-Jabr wa al-Muqabalat* and Ibn Sina with his works *Qanun fi Thib* and *Asy Syifa*.

Modern Islamic libraries should revive the spirit of Islamic scholarship by hosting activities such as reading, copying, discussion, and direct learning, so that the development of the epistemology of knowledge within Islam can continue sustainably. For example, in the classical period, the integration of libraries with mosques facilitated the acquisition of knowledge alongside the cultivation of Islamic spiritual values (Azfaruddin dkk., 2024). This also positioned Islamic libraries as the venues most frequently used for intellectual dialogue, all while upholding Islamic values.

Many studies have given significant attention to the transformation of contemporary Islamic libraries, as most changes have occurred only in technical areas, such as library digitization, which facilitates access without the need to physically visit libraries (A. Abbas, 2023; Mansir, 2022). This situation has led to the weakening of Islamic libraries as centers of scholarly discussion; in fact, Islamic libraries in contemporary Islamic educational institutions are facing serious issues, such as book collections being limited only to certain titles without direct integration with the learning process (Firdaus dkk., 2025). While studies in the area of Islamic religious education have been widely conducted mainly on the ideas of Islamic thinkers concerning educational goals, learning methods, and curricula (N. Islam, 2023; Rosyadi & Usman, 2021; E. Saputra, 2021). Ahmad Tsalby is also noted as a significant educational figure who specifically discusses the concept of tarbiyah (education), the development of Islamic civilization based on knowledge, and the formation of enlightened individuals (Dedi Ardiansyah

dkk., 2023). Overall, most of these studies focus only on the pedagogical and normative aspects of Islamic education. On the other hand, discussions about Islamic libraries tend to emphasize historical institutional aspects and the adaptation of library management to digital technology, such that the philosophical concept of libraries remains implicit and is rarely linked to the intellectual frameworks of major Islamic education thinkers such as Ahmad Tsalby (Mutmainah dkk., 2024). Therefore, there is a need for an in-depth study of Ahmad Tsalby's thoughts about libraries to map the philosophical and epistemological dimensions of libraries within the context of contemporary Islamic education.

3. Research Methodology

The researcher used the conceptual analysis research type (Safitri dkk., 2025). The data sources were both primary and secondary. The primary source was Ahmad Tsalby's book *At Tarbiyah Al Islamiyah Nadnuha wa Falsafuha* published in 1978 from Jami'ah al-Qohiroh, Cairo, Egypt. Secondary sources included the book *Gold Thoughts of Islamic Educational Thinkers: From Classical to Modern* by Afif Yanuar, 2018; *The History of Islamic Education: The Significance of Islamic Education's Legacy for the Development of Contemporary and Future Islamic Education* by Zaini Dahlan, 2018; *School Library Management: Theory and Practice* by Rahmat Fadhli, 2021; as well as relevant scientific journal articles and other literature pertinent to the research theme.

Data collection techniques applied were documentation, with the researcher as the main instrument. The research stages included preparation (such as arranging equipment, compiling references, planning timelines), reading, and taking notes (Zed, 2008). The researcher's strategy in collecting data involved searching for, reviewing, and organizing relevant reading materials centered on the research theme, then reassessing and expanding reference materials before commencing the writing process (Zed, 2008).

The data analysis method used was content analysis to systematically examine Ahmad Tsalby's thoughts on the concept of the Islamic library (Krippendorff, 2018). This analysis also employed a philosophical interpretive approach to understand the meaning of Ahmad Tsalby's ideas within the context of Islamic education. The units of analysis in this study were Ahmad Tsalby's ideas, concepts, and statements related to Islamic education, scholarly traditions, and intellectual development as contained in *At Tarbiyah Al Islamiyah Nadnuha wa Falsafuha*. The analysis process followed several steps: (1) identifying sections of text relevant to the research theme, (2) categorizing main ideas related to the concept of Islamic education and knowledge development, (3) interpreting the meaning of Ahmad Tsalby's thoughts within the framework of Islamic education, and (4) drawing conclusions about the relevance of these concepts for advancing the role of libraries in Islamic education.

To strengthen the interpretation of the data, researchers also performed source triangulation by comparing analysis results with secondary literature discussing Islamic educational thought and studies of libraries in Islamic intellectual tradition (Creswell, 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. *The Concept of the Library in Ahmad Tsalby's Islamic Educational Thought*

If analyzed conceptually, Ahmad Tsalby's notion of the library as a vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge shows that access to knowledge is regarded as a fundamental foundation in building the intellectual tradition of Islam. This perspective aligns with modern library theory, which emphasizes the principle of democratizing access to information, wherein libraries serve to open opportunities for learning to all levels of society without social or economic barriers (Hamida & Sein, 2023).

The second function of Islamic libraries, according to Ahmad Tsalby, is as guardians of the traditions and scientific heritage of Islam. The appreciation and admiration of Muslims for libraries sparked a strong spirit to establish them. Moreover, they devoted great love and the same level of appreciation for libraries as they had previously given to books. For example, there is the story

of the Khurasan army, who raided the house of Ibn Al-Amid. After overpowering his servants and guards, Ibn Al-Amid fled to the government building, leaving his home and all its contents to them. When Ibn Al-Amid returned, it was not out of concern for anything but his books, which encompassed all fields of knowledge and every form of wisdom and literature he possessed. Seeing his books intact and untouched relieved his heart, and he said to his guard, "I bear witness that you are truly fortunate. All other warehouses can be replaced, but this warehouse (the library) cannot be replaced" (Tsalby, 1978). Islamic libraries are widely seen as repositories for the great works of scholars and collections of various ancient manuscripts from centuries past; thus, in addition to serving as storage, they also function as means to sustain the intellectual heritage of Islam. In this context, the preservation of knowledge occurs through the reading of manuscripts, books, and documents that continue to be studied and contextualized with every change of era according to prevailing needs (Nugraha & Laugu, 2021). Conceptually, this preservation function shows that libraries in Islamic tradition are not only archive repositories but also mechanisms for the continuity of the intellectual tradition. In contemporary library science, this function is known as the preservation of knowledge, which is an effort to maintain the continuity of intellectual heritage so it can remain accessible and studied by future generations (A. S. Saputra dkk., 2023).

The third function of the library, according to Ahmad Tsalby, is as a center of knowledge or a living repository of knowledge. For instance, the library of Sabur bin Ardashir (d. 416 AH) was a gathering place for researchers and readers. It often saw large numbers of scholars engaging in discussion and debate. Among them was Abdul Ala Al-Ma'arri, who loved the library and preferred to stay there while in Baghdad (Tsalby, 1978). Islamic libraries serve as meeting points for scholars, intellectuals, and students seeking knowledge, illustrating why libraries are considered centers of living knowledge: such activities demonstrate that libraries function as spaces for intellectual dynamism (N. Abbas dkk., 2024). This dynamism contributes to the development of science and civilization. Ultimately, this process supports the broad advancement of society. Therefore, Muslims should revive the spirit of intellectualism by preserving the Islamic intellectual tradition, such as by holding scientific discussions in libraries. By making libraries places of active learning, knowledge can flourish rapidly (Nasution dkk., 2023). Analytically, the concept of the library as a center of living knowledge reveals that libraries in the Islamic tradition have a strong social-intellectual function. This aligns with the contemporary approach, which sees libraries as learning commons academic interaction spaces that facilitate collaboration, scholarly discussion, and collective knowledge production (Florencia dkk., 2023).

The fourth function of the library according to Ahmad Tsalby is to serve as the foundation for the formation of ethics and morals in relation to knowledge. Arabs honored and respected books with all their heart. Books were seen as tireless teachers, friends who never deceive, and the most loyal companions. There is a story of a scholar summoned by the caliph: when the caliph's messenger returned, he reported that the scholar was meeting with wise people and would come once finished. However, when the scholar arrived, the caliph asked who those wise people were. The scholar replied that the wise people were the books he was reading, which blessed them with their knowledge, insights from the past, reason, education, wisdom, and leadership (Tsalby, 1978).

Ahmad Tsalby believed that knowledge is not morally neutral but must be accompanied by manners and ethical responsibility in its use. Thus, the Islamic library is not only a place for intellectual development but also a place for integrating knowledge with Islamic values, emphasizing scientific honesty, respect for sources of knowledge, and the use of knowledge for the benefit of the community. As Abiddin Nata stated, the proper use of knowledge ensures the sustainability and continuity of society's life, because a society without knowledge will fall into misguidance and lose direction (Arifin, 2018). This principle aligns with the goals of national education as stated in Law No. 20 of 2003, which aims to develop students' potential to become faithful, devout, and noble individuals; healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens (UU No. 20 Tahun 2003, t.t.). Ahmad Tsalby's perspective shows that mastery of knowledge in Islamic education cannot be separated from the ethical dimension. In the context of contemporary education, this idea aligns with the approach to

academic integrity, which stresses the importance of scientific honesty, respect for knowledge sources, and moral responsibility in the use of knowledge (Habiburrahim dkk., 2021).

4.2. *Integration of Library Concepts with the Goals of Islamic Education*

A thorough study of the book at-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah reveals that according to Ahmad Tsalby, the Islamic library has four important functions that are vital for its ongoing sustainability. The library serves as a crucial instrument integrating knowledge with Islamic values. The strategic function of Islamic libraries, which aligns with the goals of Islamic education to unite intellectual, spiritual, and moral dimensions in the educational process, forms a bridge between mastery of knowledge and internalization of Islamic values (Alkindi, 2023). The tendency of Islamic libraries today to become purely reductive and technical, as seen in the modern era, has a serious impact on the management of Islamic libraries in contemporary Islamic education. This has resulted in libraries functioning only administratively, whereas Ahmad Tsalby emphasizes the optimization of Islamic libraries to foster traditions of literacy, the culture of Islamic scholarship, and the formation of academic ethics (Saefrudin, 2021; Sukmawati dkk., 2023).

The findings of the analysis from Ahmad Tsalby's at-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah show how the management of the Islamic education system, especially Islamic libraries, should be implemented. First, Islamic libraries are used as centers for the dissemination of knowledge because in classical Islamic times, books were still manuscripts, which were very expensive and almost impossible for the poor to own. Second, Islamic libraries serve as guardians of Islamic intellectual heritage, as they house and preserve the great works of Muslim scholars and intellectuals, ensuring these works are passed down to future generations. Third, Islamic libraries function as centers of knowledge, where scientific activities such as discussions and debates among scholars historically took place. Fourth, libraries serve as foundations for the formation of ethics and morals towards knowledge (Tsalby, 1978). When these four functions are analyzed more deeply, they form an integrative pattern between the intellectual and moral dimensions in Islamic religious education. Furthermore, the function of disseminating knowledge in classical times reflected the principle of equitable access to knowledge amidst the limited possession of manuscripts. The function of safeguarding intellectual heritage represents efforts to sustain the tradition of Islamic scholarship. Meanwhile, the function of the library as a center of knowledge demonstrates that libraries were not passive spaces, but rather active spaces for scholarly debate and discussion. The ethical function asserts that, in Tsalby's view, the mastery of knowledge is always linked to moral responsibility.

In practice, Ahmad Tsalby's ideas can be implemented through literacy programs based on Islamic values, integrating curation of library collections that support the strengthening of academic ethics, organizing scientific discussions within the library environment, and developing the library as a collaborative learning space that not only provides reading resources but also fosters the character of students (Aini, 2024). Thus, the Islamic library becomes a center for the cultivation of an ongoing intellectual tradition within the practice of contemporary Islamic education.

Consequently, the analysis of Ahmad Tsalby's thought on Islamic libraries leads to the development of an integrative Islamic library model through the integration of aspects of literacy, intellectual tradition, academic dynamics, and character-building that is then reconstructed in the context of contemporary Islamic education.

4.3. *Conceptual Implications for the Development of Libraries in Islamic Education*

The findings from the analysis of Ahmad Tsalby's at-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah reveal that his library concept has significant implications for the development of libraries in Islamic educational institutions, because in classical Islamic times, libraries functioned much like modern scientific institutions do today, while also fulfilling the traditional roles of a library. For example, the Sabur bin Ardashir library was a gathering place for researchers and readers, and often saw large groups of scholars coming together to discuss and debate (Tsalby, 1978). This shows that since the classical era, Islamic libraries have been positioned as educational tools directly integrated

with the process of knowledge development, not just as symbolic administrative units in Islamic education management.

Ahmad Tsalby's ideas also align with the concept of Resource Based Learning (RBL), which emphasizes learning that explores various learning resources independently and critically (Suyatman dkk., 2021). In this context, teachers are no longer positioned as the sole center of learning, but instead encourage students to actively access a variety of knowledge resources. As such, libraries hold a strategic position in enabling students to develop their literacy skills, critical analysis, and independent information seeking.

In the realm of modern Islamic education, these ideas can be implemented through libraries integrated into project-based curricula, such as literature-based or research-based learning assignments (Dinata dkk., 2024). Through this approach, the library functions not only as a repository of book collections but as an active learning space that supports the development of students' critical thinking and research skills. Thus, Ahmad Tsalby's ideas can be contextualized within modern pedagogy. This reinforces the notion that libraries are not merely supporting units, but are inherent components of the Islamic education system.

The strategic role of libraries is also stated in Law No. 43 of 2007 concerning libraries, particularly article 3, which states that libraries function as venues for education, research, preservation, information, and recreation to increase the intelligence and empowerment of the nation (UU No. 43 Tahun 2007, t.t.). This function demonstrates the strategic role of libraries in creating a literate society. The library's role as a repository includes national libraries, university libraries, and special libraries. The research function generally pertains to university libraries but is also relevant for national libraries. The educational function applies only in educational environments. The informational function refers to the library's role as a provider of information needed by its users, whose needs may vary. The cultural function involves preserving the nation's cultural heritage by providing library materials that increase cultural appreciation, such as exhibitions, performances, book reviews, storytelling, and more. The recreational function means that libraries offer not only book collections but also facilities such as board games, computers, TVs, and more, thus optimizing the library's role (Fadhli dkk., 2021).

Based on the above, it is necessary to reorganize Islamic libraries in modern Islamic education not merely as administrative facilities but as the core educational facility, understood as the learning resource center directly integrated with the curriculum, learning activities, and research. Ideally, the library should be the heart of scientific activity in Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs, pesantrens, and universities, where intellectual interactions occur actively and dynamically (M. Islam, 2021). In summary, the library as an integral educational institution impacts the revival of the spiritual and educational essence of Islamic libraries, which have otherwise been reduced to mere archival spaces.

Next, the library becomes a medium for preserving and developing knowledge, especially in supporting the advancement of Islamic intellectual tradition to meet the needs and challenges of the times. Ahmad Tsalby presents an illustration from the classical Islamic era, in which the library was used as a place for scholars and researchers to gather, even to engage in scientific debates. This shows that Islamic libraries in the classical era functioned not only as places to access knowledge, but also as spaces for the production of knowledge. Thus, Islamic libraries gave rise to new ideas through scholarly interactions among Muslim scholars and intellectuals (Aziz dkk., 2023). Islamic intellectual traditions such as the culture of reading, writing, and discussion provided strong encouragement to optimize the function of libraries (Prof. Kamble Sudhakar S. & Mr. Walkar S. K., 2023). Therefore, the conceptual implications of Ahmad Tsalby's view on libraries in Islamic education must go beyond being mere book collections and become academic activities. This can be realized by providing discussion spaces, scientific seminars, book reviews, as well as adequate research facilities. With the advancement of digitalization in educational facilities, libraries can also provide access to scientific digital databases.

In modern education, there is the concept of Library as a Learning Commons: a library model functioning as a space for academic interaction, so libraries are no longer silent and passive rooms, but places that support multidisciplinary collaboration, cooperative learning, and even

intellectual innovation (Fatmawati, 2020). Historically, this concept was already evident in classical Islamic libraries such as Bayt Al-Hikmah. Public libraries in the classical Islamic period already had catalogs like Al-Fihrist, which made it easier for users to find book collections. These catalogs were systematically arranged by topic. They included special slips attached to bookshelves listing the title, collection number, and the condition of the available manuscripts (Tsalby, 1978).

Findings from Tsalby's library conceptualization regarding management of Islamic libraries today such as scientific classification, digital cataloging, inventory, and efficient borrowing systems are not merely modern adoptions. These practices have roots in Islamic scholarly tradition itself, so systematic collection organization and management are part of the scholarly trust that must be maintained (Maknun dkk., 2022). Muslims gave great attention to the construction of public library buildings intended for the masses. Buildings such as specific models in the libraries of Shiraz, Cordoba, and similar places were equipped with various rooms connected by wide corridors. Bookshelves were placed near the walls. Some corridors were dedicated to reading, others to manuscript copying, while others functioned as spaces for discussion circles. There was also a room for music aimed at providing entertainment and refreshing the readers. All these rooms were adorned with luxurious furnishings and the floors covered with carpets, in line with the tastes of Easterners who liked sitting cross legged (Tsalby, 1978). Based on this description, in Ahmad Tsalby's perspective, the ideal design for Islamic libraries includes quiet reading areas, group discussion rooms, multimedia rooms, reference collection areas, as well as digital literacy zones as part of the digitalization of Islamic educational facilities.

In this context, the management capabilities of classical Islamic libraries align with the concept of information literacy (Hadiati dkk., 2024). This signifies an epistemological awareness of the importance of access to structured knowledge. Thus, in Islamic tradition, the library does not merely store knowledge, but also shapes systematic ways of thinking about knowledge. More importantly, the library serves as a place for developing the manners and ethics of Islamic scholarship. In fact, during the classical Islamic period, the library was regarded as an irreplaceable treasure because it preserved the intellectual heritage of the community. Leaders and ministers throughout various periods in Islamic history realized that books and libraries played an important role in enlightening minds as well as shaping society's character (Tsalby, 1978).

The conceptual implication of the library in the perspective of Ahmad Tsalby is oriented towards the formation of scientific character by fostering respect for knowledge, discipline in reading, and intellectual responsibility, all of which are in line with the aims of Islamic education. Although these ideas were born in the context of the classical Islamic period, the principles remain relevant in the digital age. The function of the library can be connected to character education approaches and the development of academic ethics, serving as a learning space that should foster academic honesty, intellectual responsibility, reading discipline, and respect for scholarly works (Kulsum & Muhid, 2022). In the Learning Commons concept, the library is also understood as a space for building academic culture, which, when contextualized within Islamic education, needs to be aligned with ethical values, as inherited in the scholarly culture of classical Islam (Rosalina dkk., 2023). Therefore, digital transformation of libraries must be accompanied by the internalization of academic ethics, so that technological developments not only produce a generation adaptive to change but also reflective in their knowledge use.

Holistically, the concept of the library, according to Ahmad Tsalby, can be viewed as an ideal principle for addressing the transformation of Islamic educational facilities in the modern era. This concept emphasizes the importance of strengthening literacy culture, developing Islamic scholarly traditions, and continuously nurturing scientific character. By positioning the library as an integral part of the Islamic education system, the library is expected not only to be a supporting facility but also the center of intellectual activity. Thus, this idea can be adopted by library administrators in Islamic educational institutions as an effort to revive the spirit of the library.

5. Conclusion

In this study, Ahmad Tsalby, through his book *At-Tarbiyah al-Islamiyah*, holistically sees the Islamic library not merely as a place to store books but as a center for the development of knowledge, faith, and character of students. The library is positioned as an integral part of the Islamic education system, serving as a center for the transmission of knowledge as well as a medium for internalizing Islamic values. In the context of contemporary Islamic education, the library plays a strategic role in encouraging the development of knowledge by providing selective reading sources integrated with the needs of Islamic education. Thus, the library can become a space for fostering Islamic literacy culture that not only develops intellectual capacity but also strengthens the ethical and spiritual dimensions in the learning process.

Findings from this research affirm that the achievement of Islamic educational goals is not determined solely by classroom teaching, but also by the management of educational facilities that support the development of scholarly traditions, one of which is through the library. Integration between the institutional functions of the library and the active engagement of students in utilizing sources of knowledge is a crucial factor in shaping individuals who are knowledgeable, faithful, well-mannered, and socially responsible.

5.1. Implications

Theoretically, this study provides a conceptual contribution in the form of a reconstruction of Ahmad Tsalby's thinking about libraries as educational institutions that have an integrative function between intellectual development, preservation of scientific traditions, academic dynamics, and the cultivation of scientific ethics. This concept shows that libraries in the perspective of Islamic education are not only understood as supporting facilities, but as epistemological instruments in building a culture of science based on Islamic values. Therefore, Ahmad Tsalby's thoughts are highly relevant as a conceptual basis for the development of Islamic educational libraries that are adaptive to the challenges of the modern era without losing their Islamic values orientation.

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Sukma Eka Saputra: Writing original draft preparation; conceptualization; formulation and development of the research objectives. **Basuki Basuki:** Supervision.

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AI Usage Declaration

The authors acknowledge the use of AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT) solely for language editing and improving readability. No AI tools were used to generate research ideas, conduct data analysis, or draw scientific conclusions. The authors take full responsibility for the content of this manuscript.