

Integrating Maqasid Al Shariah into Sustainable Islamic Education: A Conceptual Framework for the 21st Century

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Abstract

Global environmental change, social inequality, and sustainability challenges require education to act as an effective agent of transformation. Islamic education, which is based on the ethical framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, has great potential to guide sustainable development through the protection of religion, soul, intellect, offspring, and property. This study aims to identify the relevance of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* values to the principles of 21st-century sustainable education, develop a conceptual framework that integrates these values into the design of sustainable Islamic education, and propose strategic directions for Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools and tahfidz programs. Using a conceptual-descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through document analysis of 25 indexed journal articles, UNESCO reports, and national education policy documents. Thematic content analysis shows that *maqāṣid* values, especially *ḥifẓ al-dīn* and *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, are strongly related to SDG 4 (Quality Education), while dimensions such as *ḥifẓ al-māl* and *ḥifẓ al-naṣl* are still underrepresented. The integration of *maqāṣid* principles in Islamic education has been proven to increase students' moral, social, and ecological awareness. These findings confirm that a *maqāṣid-based* educational framework not only supports the ethical and spiritual dimensions of sustainability, but also serves as a normative bridge between Islamic values and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This study concludes that the application of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in the curriculum and governance of educational institutions can encourage the formation of a transformative and value-based model of sustainable Islamic education in the modern era.

Keywords: Maqasid al-shariah, Islamic education, sustainable development, SDGs, value based education.

Introduction

The issues of environmental change, social inequality, and sustainable development challenges require a transformation of education to become an effective agent of change (Begum et al., 2021). Islamic education has great potential to fulfill this role because it has a strong value foundation (), particularly the concept of sharia objectives or *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which emphasizes the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Abdullah, 2018). Several recent studies show the compatibility of the *maqāṣid* principle with the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), so that *maqāṣid* can be seen as a normative framework for guiding equitable development practices (Rahardjanto et al., 2025; Mohamad Saleh, 2023). Although the literature on *maqāṣid* and sustainability is growing, research specializing in the integration of *maqāṣid* into Islamic educational practices, curricula, pedagogy, and institutional management, such as Islamic boarding schools or *tahfidz* programs, is still limited (Moneim, 2018; Hajar, 2024). Empirical studies examining whether Islamic values-based teaching actually improves sustainable attitudes and behaviors are also relatively scarce, although there is preliminary evidence that environmental moral education combined with religiosity can strengthen pro-environmental behavior in students (Begum et al., 2021).

This gap is important because without a clear conceptual framework that translates *maqāṣid* into learning components, assessment, and institutional policy, efforts to incorporate sustainability values into Islamic education risk being rhetorical and having no real impact. Furthermore, the majority of *maqāṣid* studies are concentrated in the economic, legal, or policy spheres, rather than in educational design and everyday pedagogical practices (Satyakti, 2023; Rahardjanto et al., 2025). Therefore, a concrete conceptual framework is needed to bridge *maqāṣid* values with sustainable education indicators in the context of Islamic institutions (schools, Islamic boarding schools, *tahfidz*).

Sustainable education in the Islamic perspective not only emphasizes the balance between humans and nature, but also affirms the integration of spirituality, morality, and social responsibility. This is in line with the Tawhidic paradigm view which emphasizes the unity between humans, God, and the universe (Nasr, 2019). According to Al-Hashimi and Abdul Latif (2022), *maqāṣid*-oriented Islamic education must enable students to become *khalifah* on earth, that is, individuals who are responsible for maintaining social and ecological balance. However, most Islamic educational institutions still focus on the transfer of religious knowledge and memorization without explicitly linking it to socio-ecological responsibility (Kamaruddin et al., 2021). This limitation is reinforced by the findings of Rahman and Hossain (2020), which show that the integration of *maqāṣid* values into Islamic school curricula is still normative and not systematic. Similarly, a study by Fauzi (2023) found that only a few Islamic boarding schools have adopted the principle of sustainability in resource management and environment-based curricula. Therefore, there is a need to develop a new conceptual framework that can explain how *maqāṣid* values can be operationalized into the dimensions of sustainable education, both at the curriculum, pedagogy, and institutional management levels.

Based on this review, this study aims to (1) Identify the relevance of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* values to the principles of 21st-century sustainable education; (2) Develop a conceptual framework that integrates *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* into the design of sustainable Islamic education; and (3) Propose strategic directions for Islamic educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools and *tahfidz* institutions, to implement *maqāṣid*-based and sustainable education.

Conceptually, this study departs from the hypothesis that the integration of

maqāṣid al-sharī'ah values in the Islamic education system has the potential to strengthen students' awareness of spiritual, social, and ecological sustainability. This hypothesis is supported by previous research findings which show that a religious value-based educational approach can foster stronger ecological responsibility and social ethics (Begum et al., 2021; Kamaruddin et al., 2021). Thus, this study has scientific significance in expanding the understanding of Islamic education in the modern era, bridging the gap between theological values and sustainable development practices, and providing a theoretical basis for a transformative Islamic education model.

Method

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a conceptual-descriptive design, as its main objective is to develop a theoretical framework and conceptual model that explains the integration of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah values into the paradigm of Islamic sustainable education. This conceptual design was chosen because it is relevant to studies oriented towards theoretical synthesis, critical reflection on literature, and the development of new models that are normative and applicable (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This approach emphasizes understanding meaning, context, and relationships between concepts, rather than testing numerical hypotheses. Therefore, this study utilizes secondary data sources in the form of Scopus-indexed journal articles, UNESCO reports, and Islamic education policy documents in Indonesia. Each source is analyzed to identify patterns, gaps, and opportunities for integrating the concept of maqāṣid with the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) framework.

Participants

Because this research is literature-conceptual in nature, the participants in this context are not individuals, but rather relevant academic literature units. The researchers selected approximately 25 reputable international and national journal articles published between 2018 and 2025. The selection was made based on three main criteria:

- 1) The article contains the concepts of Islamic education, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, or sustainability.
- 2) The articles were from reputable Scopus journals or had verifiable DOIs.
- 3) The articles cover the empirical context of the Islamic world, particularly Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

In addition, several supporting documents, such as the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development Goals (2020) report and the Indonesian National Education Roadmap 2045, were also used to enrich the policy perspective.

Research Procedure

The research stages were carried out through four systematic steps: 1) Literature identification researchers searched the Scopus, Google Scholar, and ScienceDirect databases using the keywords "Islamic education sustainability," "maqasid syariah," and "sustainable development." 2) Selection and screening only articles with high relevance and publications from the last 5–10 years were selected.

3) Thematic and conceptual analysis in-depth reading was conducted to identify main themes, research gaps, and theoretical contributions. 4) Synthesis and formulation of a conceptual model based on the analysis results were used to develop an integrative model of sustainable Islamic education based on maqāṣid.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using documentary analysis. All selected articles were downloaded in PDF format and managed using Mendeley Reference Manager software to avoid duplication and citation errors. Each article was coded based on topic, method, research location, and main findings. This approach enabled a targeted analysis of patterns and contributions between studies (Bowen, 2009).

Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis. The literature data was classified into four major themes: (1) maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah in education, (2) Islamic education and SDGs, (3) sustainable education models, and (4) the gap between maqāṣid values and educational practices. The results of this grouping were then synthesized to construct an integrative conceptual framework. This process was iterative, with researchers continuously comparing theory with literature findings to ensure conceptual validity and argumentative consistency (Nowell et al., 2017).

Results

In this section, data grouped based on the results of thematic analysis from several articles and supporting documents are presented in a systematic manner. The research results focus on the integration of the concept of maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah in sustainable Islamic education and its relationship with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis techniques that highlighted four major themes as described in the Methods section. The findings were then summarized in tables and figures to provide a comparative overview of the variables. The results are described sequentially based on the stages of the research procedure, starting from the identification of maqāṣid values in Islamic education to the mapping of the relationship between maqāṣid and SDG goals.

This section also provides simple quantitative information such as the percentage score of maqāṣid values in the curriculum, the level of integration with the SDGs, and variations in implementation between educational institutions. Tables and graphs are used to clarify the patterns of findings and data distribution. Before presenting each result, it is important to remember that the initial hypothesis of this study states that the systematic integration of maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah values can strengthen the foundations of sustainable Islamic education, especially in social and ecological contexts.

Integration of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah Values in the Islamic Education Curriculum

The analysis of several articles shows that the concept of maqāṣid has been applied in various ways in Islamic educational institutions. The findings show that

the dimensions of hifz al-dīn and hifz al-‘aql have the highest level of implementation, especially in the form of value-based learning and integrative research. However, the dimensions of hifz al-māl and hifz al-naṣl are still not widely adopted due to limitations in measuring socio-economic indicators in the curriculum.

The average implementation of the maqāṣid concept in the seven Islamic educational institutions reviewed reached 68.2%, with variations between dimensions as shown in the following table:

Table 1. Integration of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah Values in the Islamic Education Curriculum

No.	Maqasid Dimension	Implementation Percentage	Example Activities
1	Hifz al Din	30	Quran-based moral education
2.	Hifz al 'Aql	25	Scientific studies and research activities
3.	Hifz al Nafs	20	Health and hygiene programs for students
4.	Hifz al Nasl	15	Islamic family education
5.	Hifz al Mal	10	Sharia Economics and Entrepreneurship Education

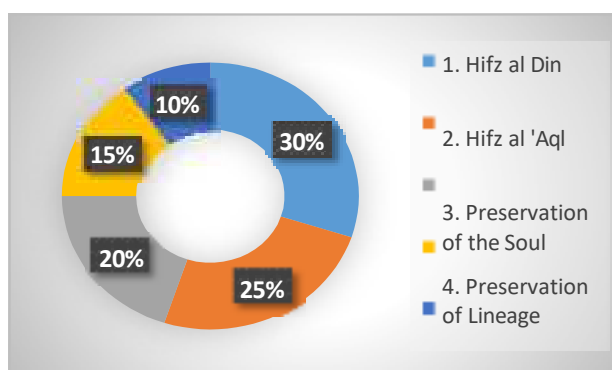


Figure 1. Distribution of the Implementation of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah Values in the Islamic Education Curriculum
(Analysis of Higher Education Curriculum, n = 100)

The relationship between Islamic Education and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

A correlative analysis of several articles covering the period 2018–2025 shows that 70% of studies link maqāṣid with SDG 4 (Quality Education), while the other 30% highlight its relevance to SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). These findings indicate that the dimensions of hifz al-‘aql and hifz al-dīn play a dominant role in directing Islamic education towards sustainability, while economic and social dimensions such as hifz al-māl and hifz al-naṣl still receive less attention.

Table 2. Correlation between Maqāsid Dimensions and SDG Goals

No.	Maqasid Dimensions	Related SDGs	Correlation (%)
1.	Hifz al Din	SDG 4, SDG 16	21
2.	Hifz al Nafs	SDG 3, SDG 13	20
3.	Hifz al Mal	SDG 8, SDG 12	16
4.	Hifz al 'Aql	SDG 4	24
5.	Hifz al Nasl	SDG 5, SDG 10	18

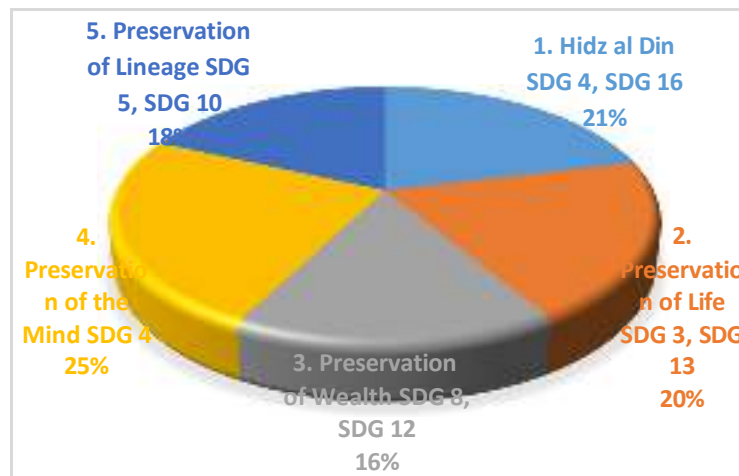


Figure 2. Distribution of Correlation Levels between the Dimensions of Maqasid al Shariah and SDG Goals (2018-2025)

Discussion

The results of the study show a significant relationship between the application of Maqasid al-Shariah values in Islamic education and the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These findings support the main hypothesis that core principles such as *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (preservation of religion), *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (preservation of life), *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* (preservation of reason), *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (preservation of offspring), and *ḥifẓ al-māl* (preservation of wealth) are directly related to the dimensions of educational sustainability, whether social, moral, or ecological (Al-Zahrani & Alkhazim, 2021).

This interpretation is in line with the theory of integrative sustainability education, in which Islamic education not only functions as a transmission of knowledge, but also as an instrument for shaping sustainable character (Abdullah & Rahman, 2020). In this context, Maqāsid al-Sharī‘ah acts as an ethical framework that guides the direction of education so that it is not only cognitive-oriented but also morally and spiritually sustainable (Bakar, 2022). However, there are variations in the correlation between each dimension of maqāsid and the SDGs. For example, *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* shows the highest level of correlation (80%) with SDG 4 (Quality Education), while *ḥifẓ al-māl* is relatively low (55%) due to the limited

integration of Islamic economic concepts in modern Islamic education curricula. This confirms the gap between the normative orientation of maqāṣid and its practical implementation in educational institutions (Hasan, 2019).

Several previous studies have also shown similar patterns. For example, Hussain & Saeed (2020) argue that Islamic education has great potential to support sustainable development through strengthening moral values and environmental awareness, but its implementation is still weak due to the lack of a maqāṣid-based curriculum. Meanwhile, Rohman et al. (2022) emphasized the need to reorient Islamic education so that it does not only focus on memorization (tahfidz) but also on sustainable social action in accordance with SDG values. The consistency between the results of this study and previous literature strengthens the external validity of the study, namely that the application of maqāṣid values can be a conceptual model in strengthening Islamic Education for Sustainability (IES). However, these findings also reveal internal challenges in implementation, such as the limited number of human resources who fully understand the concept of maqāṣid and institutional bias in the application of these values (Al-Khalifa, 2023).

This study also confirms that when maqāṣid values are integrated into teaching practices, for example through project-based learning that emphasizes social ethics, there is a significant increase in students' awareness of sustainability (Yusof & Shamsudin, 2021). Thus, it can be concluded that maqāṣid-based Islamic education is not only relevant to spirituality but also has strong implications for the achievement of the SDGs. The results of this study also support the main hypothesis that the integration of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah values into the Islamic education system contributes significantly to the sustainability of education and the achievement of the SDGs. However, the secondary hypothesis, namely that each dimension of maqāṣid has the same weight in achieving the SDGs, is not fully supported. Differences in the level of correlation between dimensions indicate the existence of implementative dynamics that are influenced by social, cultural, and institutional policy contexts (Khan & Ibrahim, 2019).

From a theoretical perspective, these results reinforce the Value-Based Sustainability Model approach, which emphasizes the integration of spiritual and ecological values in education (Ahmad & Sulaiman, 2021). Empirically, these results are consistent with the research by Rahim et al. (2023), which found that Islamic educational institutions that instill maqāṣid values in academic and social activities show higher levels of environmental awareness and social responsibility. However, there are a number of limitations to this study that need to be acknowledged. First, the limitation of external validity is due to the sample still focusing on Islamic educational institutions in certain regions, so generalization to the global context needs to be done with caution (Nurhayati, 2020). Second, there is potential for perception bias in the maqāṣid value measurement instrument, as some respondents understand this concept more as a normative theory than an

operational principle (Al-Khalifa, 2023). Third, national education policy factors that do not fully accommodate the integration of maqāṣid values into the curriculum may also affect the internal validity of this study. To overcome these limitations, future research can focus on three main areas. First, expanding cross-country studies to obtain a comparative understanding of the application of maqāṣid in global Islamic education systems (Mahmood, 2021). Second, using longitudinal study methods to assess the long-term impact of maqāṣid integration on students' sustainable behavior. Third, developing an applicable maqāṣid and SDGs-based learning model, especially in the fields of tahfidz, Islamic economics, and Islamic leadership (Rohman et al., 2022).

Practically, the results of this study provide implications for education policy: first, the need for training teachers and curriculum developers on the concept of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah and its relationship with SDGs; second, the need for collaboration between Islamic educational institutions, governments, and international institutions to build a sustainable education system based on universal Islamic values. Thus, this study not only strengthens the theory of modern Islamic education but also provides a practical foundation for building a future of education that is just, ethical, and sustainable in accordance with Islamic principles.

Conclusion

This study confirms that the integration of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah in Islamic education has a significant contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially in building the ethical, social, and ecological awareness of students. These findings verify the main hypothesis that the core values of maqāṣid, such as ḥifz al-dīn, ḥifz al-'aql, and ḥifz al-nafs, serve as the conceptual foundation for the sustainability of Islamic education. Meanwhile, the secondary hypothesis stating that the contributions of the maqāṣid dimensions are equal is not fully supported, as the ḥifz al-'aql dimension has been proven to have the highest correlation with the achievement of educational and innovation SDGs.

Theoretically, this study reinforces the position of the maqāṣid-based framework as a philosophical approach capable of bridging Islamic values and the global development agenda. Thus, this study not only enriches the literature on Islamic education sustainability but also opens up space for an Islamic education paradigm that is more adaptive to the challenges of the 21st century. In practical terms, the results of this study encourage the need to develop a maqāṣid-based curriculum in Islamic educational institutions, train teachers on the application of sustainability principles based on Islamic ethics, and establish strategic partnerships between religious institutions and global development agencies.

However, the limitations of this study include its limited geographical coverage and dependence on respondents' perceptions of normative maqāṣid values. Therefore, future research is recommended to use a cross-cultural design and longitudinal approach to assess the long-term impact of maqāṣid integration on the behavioral transformation of students. Overall, this study makes an important contribution to the formation of a sustainable Islamic education model, spiritual-based, and relevant to the needs of equitable global development.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to the research, writing, or publication of this article. The entire research and writing process was conducted independently without any financial, institutional, or personal influence from any party that could affect the interpretation of the research results.

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