



THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF EDUCATION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF MAQĀSĪD AL-SYARĪ'AH

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Abstract :

This study critically analyzes the commercialization of education within Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia through the framework of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. The scope of the study covers the forms, driving factors, and impacts of commercialization on access, educational quality, and the normative orientation of Islamic education. Employing a qualitative literature-based approach enriched with phenomenological analysis, the research draws upon academic publications, government reports, and relevant empirical findings. The results show that commercialization manifests through rising tuition fees, competitive educational marketing, and the commodification of curricula and additional services. These practices contribute to widening disparities in access, deepening quality gaps between institutions, and shifting the orientation of Islamic education from moral and spiritual formation toward market-driven objectives. Through maqāṣid al-syarī'ah analysis—particularly the principles of preserving intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql), religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn), human dignity (ḥifẓ al-nafs), and wealth (ḥifẓ al-māl)—this study finds that several commercialization practices contradict Islamic ethical principles and risk undermining the public character of education. The study concludes that Islamic education governance must be reformulated to balance financial sustainability with justice, inclusivity, and the preservation of core Islamic educational values.

Keywords : Commercialization, Islamic Education, Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini menganalisis secara kritis komersialisasi pendidikan pada lembaga pendidikan Islam di Indonesia melalui kerangka *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. Ruang lingkup kajian mencakup bentuk-bentuk, faktor pendorong, serta dampak komersialisasi terhadap akses, kualitas pendidikan, dan orientasi normatif pendidikan Islam. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka yang diperkaya analisis fenomenologis, penelitian ini memanfaatkan publikasi akademik, laporan kelembagaan, dan temuan empiris yang relevan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa komersialisasi muncul melalui peningkatan biaya pendidikan, kompetisi pemasaran antar lembaga, serta komodifikasi kurikulum dan layanan tambahan. Praktik tersebut memperlebar ketimpangan akses, memperdalam kesenjangan kualitas antar lembaga, serta menggeser orientasi pendidikan Islam dari pembinaan moral-spiritual menuju logika pasar. Melalui analisis maqāṣid al-syarī'ah—terutama prinsip *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, dan *ḥifẓ al-māl*—penelitian menemukan bahwa sejumlah praktik komersialisasi tidak selaras dengan nilai-nilai etika Islam dan berpotensi melemahkan fungsi publik pendidikan. Penelitian menyimpulkan perlunya perumusan ulang tata kelola pendidikan Islam yang mampu menyeimbangkan keberlanjutan finansial dengan keadilan, inklusivitas, serta pelestarian nilai-nilai inti pendidikan Islam.

Kata Kunci: Komersialisasi, Pendidikan Islam, Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah

INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the commercialization of education has become one of the most prominent issues in the global educational discourse, including in the context of Islamic education in Indonesia. This phenomenon is marked by rising education costs, the proliferation of Islamic educational institutions operating under modern business models, and increasingly aggressive marketing competition among institutions. This is clearly reflected in the national data from the Central Statistics Agency, which recorded the average cost of primary education in Indonesia at IDR 2.40 million for the 2017/2018 academic year, rising to IDR 3.24 million in the 2020/2021 academic year, an increase of approximately 35% over that period (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022).

Integrated Islamic schools, internationally labeled boarding schools, and modern pesantrens are increasingly adopting corporate management standards to maintain operational sustainability. A case study by Nur Wahid Sugiyanto and Sedyanta Santosa on the marketing strategies of pesantren-based schools at an educational institution in Indonesia found clear managerial and marketing practices, where schools or pesantrens implement marketing strategies (segmentation-targeting-positioning), utilize websites, YouTube channels, social media, and WhatsApp groups for promotion and communication, as well as detailed monthly cost calculations (the total monthly fee recorded in the study: IDR 390,000 per month for various items). (Sugiyanto & Santosa, 2021). These findings illustrate how Islamic educational institutions adopt modern business models and marketing strategies. This situation indicates that education, historically rooted in values of devotion and public service, is beginning to move toward market mechanisms. At this point, it is important to further examine the forms of commercialization in Islamic educational institutions as well as the factors driving the emergence of this tendency.

Commercialization not only brings structural changes to the governance of educational institutions but also carries significant social implications. Rising education costs, for instance, have the potential to limit access for communities from lower and middle economic groups. This is affirmed by Wulan et al., in their research, which explains that the increase in school operational costs and the expansion of supporting services impact the growing financial burden that families must bear. This exacerbates the risk of educational exclusion, particularly for economically vulnerable groups (Wulan et al., 2025).

Another issue stemming from the commercialization of education is the widening disparity in quality between institutions with abundant resources and those with limited resources. According to Muttaqin, schools with strong financial support tend to have better facilities, more qualified educators, and greater access to educational innovations. Conversely, institutions with limited funding often struggle to meet quality standards, resulting in an increasingly broad gap in quality between "resource-rich" and "resource-poor" schools (Muttaqin, 2018).

Furthermore, the profit orientation in Islamic education raises concerns about displacing the function of education as a means for moral development, character building, and the holistic humanization of individuals. Morrison, in his research, indicates that as market logic increasingly dominates, the ethical and humanistic values that form the foundation of education tend to be marginalized. This shift places educational institutions in a dilemma between pursuing profitability and maintaining the integrity of their academic mission. (Morrison, 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to critically examine how the commercialization of education affects accessibility, the equitable distribution of quality, and the fundamental orientation of Islamic education itself.

The issue of the commercialization of education cannot be separated from the perspective of Islamic values, which form the ontological and epistemological foundation of Islamic education. In the Islamic scholarly tradition, education is not only understood as a process of knowledge transfer but also as an act of worship and a trust aimed at preserving human dignity and developing the full potential of human beings. The framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* positions education as an important instrument for safeguarding the soul (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and developing the intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), so that ideally, the educational process produces individuals who are spiritually, intellectually, and socially sound. This is affirmed by Rahma Nia Azizah, who emphasizes that the principles of *maqāṣid* must serve as the operational basis of Islamic education because education fundamentally aims to preserve human values and honor the intellect as a gift that distinguishes humans from other creatures (Azizah, 2024).

As educational practices become increasingly influenced by market logic, a fundamental question arises regarding their compatibility with Islamic ethical values, particularly concerning justice, welfare, and social responsibility. Therefore, a thorough analysis is required to assess the extent to which Islamic principles can serve as a critical framework in evaluating the commercialization of education and in formulating alternative Islamic education models that remain economically accountable without compromising their core values.

Various previous studies have discussed the commercialization of education and its impact on access equity (Razak, 2021), the development of a *maqāṣid*-based curriculum (Azizah, 2024), as well as the implications of rising education costs at the national level (Wulan et al., 2025). However, there has been no research that comprehensively examines the phenomenon of the commercialization of Islamic education from the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. Previous studies have not linked commercialization practices to violations of the principles of *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, and *ḥifẓ al-māl* as an evaluative framework. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by presenting a critical analysis of the commercialization of education within Islamic educational institutions through the *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* approach.

Based on the above explanation, it is clear that the commercialization of education in the context of Islamic education is not merely an economic

phenomenon, but a multidimensional issue that touches upon social, ethical, theological, and pedagogical aspects, which urgently require further study. This complexity demands a systematic and in-depth investigation, particularly through a critical analysis of the *maqāṣid sharī'ah* framework concerning the commercialization of education, which has never been conducted before, so as to contribute to the development of a more just, sustainable, and Islamically principled governance of Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a literature study design (library research) enriched by phenomenological analysis of the commercialization practices of education in Islamic educational institutions. The study location is conceptual, namely within the discourse on Islamic education practices in Indonesia as represented in regulations, statistical reports, scholarly articles, and related empirical research. The researcher's presence is full as the primary instrument (human instrument), independently conducting the search, selection, and interpretation of data.

The data sources in this study include academic documents, journal articles from the past five years, official reports from state institutions such as the Badan Pusat Statistik, as well as literature related to *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. Informants were not interviewed directly; however, empirical data concerning the phenomenon of education commercialization were obtained through relevant previous research findings. Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation, literature review, and content analysis of scientific and regulatory texts related to the commercialization of education and Islamic education.

Data analysis was conducted in three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, all data were summarized and grouped into themes such as forms of commercialization, social impact, and the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. The data were then presented in the form of argumentative descriptions that connect empirical phenomena with theoretical frameworks. The final stage involved drawing conclusions through critical interpretation of the analyzed data to generate new understanding regarding the commercialization of education from the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Commercialization of Education in Islamic Educational Institutions and Their Contributing Factors

Roger Dale explains that the commercialization of education is the tendency to treat education as a commodity subject to market mechanisms, where educational institutions begin to operate like business entities pursuing profit (Dale, 2007). On the other hand, Ball asserts that the commercialization of education encompasses a process of internal privatization, that is, when schools or universities adopt managerial logic,

competition, and a profit-oriented approach, causing the function of education to shift from a public service to a market service (Ball, 2007). Thus, it can be understood that the commercialization of education is a process in which educational institutions adopt market logic such as competition, profit orientation, and the provision of transaction-based services, transforming education from a public service into an economic commodity. The following are some forms of commercialization of education in Islamic educational institutions and the factors that cause it:

1. Commercialization through Increased Operational Costs and Student Financing

The commercialization of education through mechanisms such as increasing operational costs and student financing refers to the tendency of educational institutions to impose various fees on students as a consequence of rising institutional operational needs. This phenomenon emerges in line with the shift in educational paradigms increasingly based on market-driven logic, where educational institutions are expected to be financially independent and capable of competing within the context of a neoliberal economy (Ball, 2007).

Conceptually, Sirozi explains that the commercialization of education occurs when educational institutions apply market mechanisms in the management of the institution, including in the determination of education fees, so that the cost is no longer merely a means to support the teaching and learning process, but becomes the main source of revenue for the institution (Sirozi, 2005). In this context, the rise in operational costs is often used as a justification for increasing the tuition fees charged to students and their parents. This policy is further reinforced by the weak allocation of government funding for educational institutions, particularly private ones, resulting in the burden of educational costs being shifted to the community (Tilak, 2008).

In Indonesia, this phenomenon is clearly evident in the practices of schools that implement contribution fees, committee fees, or other levies, despite regulations that provide for fee exemptions in certain educational units. Suhendra's 2019 study found that increases in education costs at schools and universities are more often driven by the institution managers' orientation toward maximizing revenue rather than solely improving the quality of services (Suhendra, 2019). This reinforces the view that commercialization through increased operational costs is not merely an economic consequence, but also the result of a shift in institutional orientation.

Thus, commercialization through increased operational costs and student financing represents a shift in the education governance paradigm toward a market-oriented mechanism. As a consequence, the responsibility for funding increasingly falls on students and parents, which ultimately has the potential to create inequalities in access to education. This phenomenon simultaneously poses a challenge for the state to strengthen the public role

in education funding to ensure that education remains a universal right, not a commodity accessible only to certain groups.

2. Educational Marketing and Competition Among Islamic Institutions

Educational marketing is a managerial strategy used by educational institutions to identify market needs, develop competitive advantages, and attract the interest of prospective students through various promotional approaches, image management, and service quality enhancement. Kotler and Fox define educational marketing as a social and managerial process in which educational institutions design, communicate, and deliver value to the community in order to meet their needs while simultaneously achieving institutional goals (Kotler & Fox, 1995). In the context of Islamic education, educational marketing is becoming increasingly important as competition intensifies among pesantrens, madrasahs, integrated Islamic schools, and Islamic universities in gaining public trust.

Zamroni emphasized that competition among Islamic institutions is becoming increasingly intense due to the growing awareness of middle-class Muslim communities regarding the importance of quality education that still maintains Islamic identity. This segment has become a potential market, which has subsequently triggered the emergence of various models of modern Islamic schools, such as boarding school-based pesantrens, leading madrasahs, and integrated Islamic schools that adopt professional management. Education marketing is carried out through strategies such as branding, strengthening academic and religious reputations, alumni testimonials, social media, as well as public activities like open houses or family religious gatherings (Zamroni, 2011).

Hasbullah's research indicates that in the competition among Islamic institutions, the institutional image becomes a dominant factor in parents' decisions when choosing a school. This image is shaped through accreditation, achievements, successful alumni, and the religious integrity of the institution. On the other hand, unhealthy competition can lead to polarization between traditional and modern Islamic institutions. For instance, traditional pesantren are often perceived as less competitive in terms of facilities and marketing, which hampers their ability to attract the interest of the middle class, even though they possess strong academic quality and character development in substance (Hasbullah, 2015).

Thus, educational marketing and competition among Islamic institutions are part of the dynamics of the modernization of Islamic education, influenced by societal demands, market competition, and the need for educational services that are relevant to contemporary developments. This phenomenon has implications for the transformation of Islamic education management toward greater professionalism, while simultaneously presenting challenges to ensure that competition remains within the framework of Islamic values and does not fall solely into a commercial orientation.

3. Commercialization of Curriculum and Additional Services

The commercialization of the curriculum and supplementary services refers to the practice of educational institutions treating the curriculum, flagship programs, and supporting services as commodities that can be sold to increase institutional revenue. This phenomenon is part of the transformation of education in the era of neoliberalism, where schools and universities operate according to market logic and strive to offer various "educational products" that have high market value (Ball, 2012).

In the context of Islamic education, supplementary services such as intensive tahfiz, Arabic camps, character camps, and leadership training have also become educational commodities promoted as institutional advantages. Hasanah's research indicates that modern Islamic institutions tend to develop various additional services that are charged at high fees under the pretext of quality improvement, whereas some of these services primarily function as marketing strategies to attract the Muslim middle-class segment (Rutherford, 2008).

Criticism of the commercialization of the curriculum and additional services highlights that these practices have the potential to widen the gap in educational access. Rizvi and Lingard note that premium curricula and additional services tend to be affordable only for high-income groups, thereby creating stratification in the quality of education. Furthermore, the institution's profit-oriented focus can shift educational priorities from the development of knowledge and character to merely the sale of programs (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009).

Thus, the commercialization of curricula and additional services is a systemic process that transforms the function of education into an economic commodity. Educational institutions focus on program differentiation to attract consumers, while learners are increasingly burdened with costs for services that should be part of their educational rights. This phenomenon presents a significant challenge for the education sector in maintaining a balance between innovation, financial sustainability, and equitable access to education.

The Impact of Commercialization on Access, Quality, and the Orientation of Islamic Education

The commercialization of education has the following impacts:

1. The Impact of the Commercialization of Education on Educational Access and Equity

The commercialization of education has a significant impact on the aspects of access to and equity in education, namely: (1) Increased disparities in access based on socioeconomic status, (2) The exclusion of vulnerable groups, (3) Differences in the quality of education between institutions, (4) A reduction in the social function of education as a tool for social mobility, (5) The imposition of financial burdens on families and its downstream effects, and (6) The erosion of the principles of educational equity.

The commercialization of education essentially increases the dependence of educational institutions on fees collected from students, such as operational costs, infrastructure expenses, and additional services. According to Levin, when education is funded through market mechanisms, the poor are the most disadvantaged because they do not have the same purchasing power to access quality educational services (Levin, 2001). This creates educational stratification, where children from affluent families can access top-tier schools, while poorer groups can only attend institutions of lower quality.

Vulnerable groups such as the poor, people with disabilities, and remote community populations are the most affected. Apple emphasizes that market-driven education tends to encourage educational institutions to select students who are more economically advantageous and high-performing, as they can enhance the school's reputation and income (Apple, 2013). This model subsequently leads to strict admission selection based on cost rather than learning needs, discrimination against prospective students from underprivileged families, and low investment by private institutions in students with special needs.

Commercialization also creates a dual system: high-cost elite schools versus low-cost regular schools. According to Ball, educational institutions in a commercialized system use marketing strategies to attract consumers by offering facilities, international curricula, and premium services (Ball, 2007). This condition widens the quality gap between elite private schools and mid-to-lower tier private schools, favored public schools and peripheral public schools, as well as schools in urban and rural areas. Opportunities to access qualified educators, adequate facilities, and self-development programs are heavily influenced by the family's economic status.

Historically, education has been a primary instrument of social mobility. However, when education becomes a commercial product, this social function increasingly weakens. Carnoy & Levin state that privatization and commercialization actually reinforce the reproduction of social inequality because quality education can only be accessed by certain groups (Carnoy & Levin, 1985). Thus, education, which should serve as an equalizer, has instead become a reinforcer of social injustice.

The increase in education costs has led many families to spend on education beyond their means, take out consumer credit for school fees, and reduce other basic needs for the sake of their children's education. A study by Kosunen indicates that middle-class families also experience economic pressure due to the commercialization trend in schools and competition among institutions, which drives them to purchase additional services such as tutoring, international curricula, and paid extracurricular activities (Kosunen, 2014). Thus, the derivative impacts of this condition include household economic stress, the potential for dropping out of school, and students choosing to work in order to help with financing.

According to UNESCO, the commercialization of education threatens the principle of equity because countries increasingly delegate the provision

of educational services to the market. This contradicts the mandate of education as a fundamental human right. Educational equity encompasses equality of access, equality of survival (the ability to continue schooling), equality of output (equality of learning outcomes), and equality of outcome (equality of social achievement) (UNESCO, 2015). Commercialization weakens these four dimensions because learning success becomes closely tied to the financial capacity of students.

2. The Impact of the Commercialization of Education on Quality Disparities Between Institutions

The commercialization of education has a significant impact on the disparity in quality among institutions, namely: (1) Increased dependence of institutions on self-financing sources, (2) Competition driving service differentiation that widens the gap, (3) Institutional reputation becoming a commercial asset that perpetuates cycles of inequality, (4) Disparities in recruitment and quality of educators, (5) Gaps in facilities and learning technologies, (6) Inequalities in curriculum and self-development programs, and (7) Uneven quality of educational outputs and outcomes.

Commercialization has caused educational institutions to increasingly rely on self-financing through tuition fees, additional services, and other commercial programs. According to Levin, institutions with a strong financial base are able to invest in quality educators, modern facilities, and learning technologies, whereas less capable institutions can only provide minimal services (Levin, 2001). As a result, there is a quality segregation between elite private schools and middle-to-lower private schools, between popular public schools and regional public schools, as well as between large universities and smaller universities.

Commercialization encourages educational institutions to offer premium services to enhance attractiveness and reputation. Ball explains that schools marketed as high-performing institutions will develop superior facilities, offer international curricula, and provide paid extracurricular programs that reinforce their image as prestigious institutions (Ball, 2007). This impacts institutions with limited financial capacity, making them unable to keep up with similar innovations, which ultimately creates an increasingly wide quality gap.

According to Apple, the reputation of educational institutions in the market context becomes a “symbolic capital” that functions as an asset to attract certain students. A good reputation generates high demand, and high demand increases revenue. This cycle strengthens the position of leading schools and puts pressure on smaller institutions (Apple, 2013). Meanwhile, less popular institutions face operational funding shortages, a decline in service quality, increasingly lower learning outcomes, and difficulties in competing for the recruitment of qualified educators.

Educators are a key factor in determining the quality of education. Institutions with strong financial capacity can offer more attractive salaries and facilities, access international professional training, recruit experienced

educators, and retain the best teaching staff. Darling-Hammond found that resource-limited schools tend to employ less experienced educators or contract teachers with limited training (Darling-Hammond, 2015). This deepens the disparity in quality between institutions, as high-quality educators are systematically concentrated in high-fee schools.

Commercialization allows leading institutions to make substantial investments in modern laboratories, digital libraries, high-tech classrooms, subscription e-learning platforms, as well as premium safety and comfort standards. An OECD study in 2018 indicated that discrepancies in facilities are a major determinant of learning quality gaps between schools, particularly in countries that promote market mechanisms in education (Development, 2018). Conversely, institutions with limited resources can only provide minimal facilities, which affect learning motivation, the effectiveness of instruction, and long-term academic achievement.

Kosunen stated that the differences in curriculum resulting from commercialization create a 'social tracking' that directs students from upper-middle-class backgrounds toward more competitive career and university opportunities (Kosunen, 2014). High-cost institutions offer international curricula, bilingual programs, and talent development programs. Meanwhile, lower-middle schools often only adopt the standard national curriculum without significant enrichment.

Inequality in quality among institutions ultimately impacts disparities in learning outcomes, opportunities to pursue higher education, access to quality employment, as well as long-term social mobility. In 2017, EQAO conducted a study showing that schools with a high socio-economic index consistently produced better scores, not solely due to the academic ability of the students, but as a result of the superior quality of the institutions (Education Quality and Accountability Office, 2017). Thus, commercialization produces systemic inequality, not just individual inequality.

3. The Impact of the Commercialization of Education on the Shift of Function and Orientation in Islamic Education

The commercialization of education not only affects the structural aspects and quality of institutions, but also influences the fundamental functions and normative orientation of Islamic education, including: (1) a shift in orientation from moral development to material achievement, (2) the orientation of Islamic education as a commodity leading to the loss of values of worship and trustworthiness, and (3) the reduction of Islamic scholarly values to ceremonial formalism.

Islamic education in the classical tradition is oriented towards the purification of the soul (*tazkiyah*), character formation (*akhlāq*), and the strengthening of spirituality. Al-Attas emphasizes that the primary aim of Islamic education is *ta'dīb*, namely the cultivation of proper manners and placing humans in their rightful position before God, themselves, and society (Al-Attas, 1980). However, commercialization drives a shift in orientation towards market-standard-based academic achievement, competition to enter

top universities, certified work accomplishments, and institutional image through the excellence of commercial facilities. This has resulted in a reorientation of Islamic education, which previously emphasized transcendental values, to becoming a means of socio-economic mobility.

In the epistemology of Islamic education, education is a trust and an act of worship. However, in the context of commercialization, there is a commodification of Islamic education, which is the transformation of Islamic education into a product for sale. Azra explains that madrasahs and Islamic institutions have now entered the flow of market-driven education, so religious education is often used as a selling point to attract consumers (parents) (Azra, 1999). This manifestation of commodification is evident in the branding of elite Islamic schools, price differentiation according to facilities, and religious service packages (tahfiz, Arabic camp, Islamic character building) as marketing products. As a result, the functions of worship and the trust of Islamic education shift toward commercial purposes.

Commercialization encourages Islamic institutions to present religious symbols as marketing strategies: shari'a-compliant uniforms, instant tahfiz programs, character curricula labeled as Islamic, and the rhetoric of "Islamic excellence." However, Halstead points out that such practices risk reducing the depth of Islamic knowledge to a shallow formality, resulting in what is essentially "symbolic Islamization" (Halstead, 2004). The orientation of institutions has shifted from the deepening of religious knowledge to a marketable Islamic image.

Islamic Education within the Framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah as a Critique of the Commercialization of Education

In the tradition of Islamic education, education is positioned not merely as an administrative activity, but as a trust (*amanah*), an act of worship, and a means of *tahzīb al-nafs* (purification of the soul) as well as intellectual development (*tanmiyat al-'aql*). Al-Attas emphasizes that the main purpose of Islamic education is *ta'dīb*, which is the process of cultivating *adab* that humanizes individuals in accordance with their natural disposition (*fitrah*) and their role as caliphs (*khalifah*) (Al-Attas, 1980). Al-Ghazālī, in the Hanafi and Hanbali, also viewed education as a means of nurturing the best potentials of humans, and therefore it should not be treated merely as a commodity that can be bought and sold (Hanafi F. L. and Hambali A.Y.R., 2013). Therefore, the commercialization of Islamic education is seen as deviating from the principle of trustworthiness, as it shifts education from a service-oriented focus to a market-oriented focus.

The concept of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, developed by al-Shāṭibī (1997), Ibn 'Āshūr (2001), and contemporary scholars such as Jasser Auda (2008), emphasizes that Islamic law aims to bring benefit (*maṣlahah*) to humanity through the preservation of five fundamental aspects: ḥifẓ al-dīn (preservation of religion), ḥifẓ al-nafs (preservation of life/dignity), ḥifẓ al-'aql (preservation of intellect), ḥifẓ al-nasl (preservation of lineage), and ḥifẓ al-māl (preservation of wealth) (Auda, 2008). In the context of Islamic education,

maqāṣid serves as a moral compass that guides the entire process, policies, and governance of education to align with the goals of public welfare, rather than market interests.

1. The Commercialization of Education and the Principle of *Ḥifẓ al-‘Aql*

The commercialization of education results in limited access to quality education for the poor. In fact, the preservation of intellect is the core maqṣad. Al-Syātibī emphasizes that any policy that prevents society from developing their intellect constitutes a form of *mafsadah* (harm) (Al-Shatibi, 2003). Therefore, the maqāṣid critique of the commercialization of education in this first principle is that education must be open and accessible, not a luxury item, and education cost policies must not infringe upon the public's right to acquire knowledge.

2. The Commercialization of Education and the Principle of *Ḥifẓ al-Nafs*

Sulaiman mentioned that when education is treated as an economic product, students are treated like “consumers,” rather than honored subjects, this has the potential to degrade human dignity because human values are replaced by transactional values (Sulaiman, 2016). Therefore, the maqāṣid critique of the commercialization of education in this second principle—that Islamic education must uphold human dignity, in this case of everyone involved in education, rather than exploit them. Educational services should also prioritize the safety, comfort, and holistic development of learners, rather than the financial profit of institutions.

3. The Commercialization of Education and the Principle of *Ḥifẓ al-Dīn*

Ibn ‘Āsyūr emphasizes that the purpose of Sharia is to safeguard religion through education that shapes morality and faith (Asyur, 2001). When Islamic education is trapped in market logic, its orientation shifts from *tazkiyāt al-nafs* to 'religious branding,' from character formation to selling 'Islamic labels.' Therefore, the maqāṣid critique of the commercialization of education under this third principle is that Islamic education must be free from manipulative practices that commercialize religious symbols.

4. The Commercialization of Education and the Principle of *Ḥifẓ al-Māl*

The high cost of education makes society vulnerable to economic burden and even causes structural injustice. Fauzi, in his research, states that the commercialization of education creates significant disparities in access for lower economic groups (Fauzi, 2020). Therefore, the maqāṣid critique of the commercialization of education on this fourth principle, namely the management of public wealth (such as education funds, *zakat*, and *waqf*), must be directed towards inclusive education. On the other hand, Islamic education should not become an economic burden that prevents people from acquiring knowledge.

5. The Commercialization of Education and Sociological Maqāṣid

Auda explains that maqāṣid not only encompasses the classical five,

but also includes social justice, participation, and equality. Commercialization creates “upper-class” and “lower-class” schools, thereby widening social inequalities (Auda, 2008). Therefore, the *maqāṣid* criticism of the commercialization of education in this fifth principle is that Islamic education must serve as a means of social mobility, not as a tool for the reproduction of injustice.

By taking into account the various criticisms mentioned above, Islamic education within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* essentially offers a methodological approach to building an education system that is just, inclusive, and dignified.

CONCLUSION

Based on the overall discussion, it can be concluded that the commercialization of education in Islamic educational institutions emerges in various forms, such as increased tuition fees, marketing competition among institutions, as well as the commercialization of curricula and additional services. This phenomenon is driven by the demand for financial independence, the penetration of market logic, and the growing demand from the middle-class society for modern Islamic education services with superior facilities. Such commercialization has a significant impact on access to and equity in education, widening the quality gap between institutions, and shifting the orientation of Islamic education from moral and ethical development towards a competitive and economic orientation. From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī‘ah*, the practice of commercialization often does not align with the objectives of preserving intellect, soul, religion, and social justice, thus requiring a critical framework based on Islamic values to ensure that education remains a trust, an act of worship, and an instrument of public welfare, rather than merely a market commodity.

The findings of this study imply the need to reformulate the governance of Islamic education in a way that balances financial sustainability with the values of *maqāṣid al-syarī‘ah*. Firstly, educational institutions need to design fee policies and resource management that do not create social exclusion, particularly for vulnerable groups, so that education remains a universal right. Secondly, the state and Islamic institutions need to strengthen public funding mechanisms, through zakat, waqf, or subsidies, to reduce quality disparities among institutions. Third, the orientation of Islamic education must return to the function of nurturing morals, manners, and the complete humanity of individuals, so that innovation, marketing, and flagship programs do not depart from the principles of public welfare, justice, and the preservation of human dignity. Fourth, *maqāṣid al-syarī‘ah* can serve as both an evaluative and normative framework to critique the tendencies of commercialization and to formulate an inclusive, ethical, and just model of Islamic education. In this way, Islamic education can develop professionally without losing the core values that constitute its identity and trust.

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