

Integrating Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah into Islamic Religious Education Curriculum: A Framework for Sustainable Character Development

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Abstract

This study aims to formulate a conceptual framework for integrating Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah into the Islamic Religious Education (IRE/PAI) curriculum as a foundation for sustainable character development. The study employs a library research method by critically examining recent journal articles, conceptual studies, curriculum research, and empirical findings published primarily within the last five to ten years. The analysis indicates that the existing IRE curriculum already contains substantial religious and moral values, but their implementation frequently remains cognitive, fragmented, and insufficiently connected to students' real-life ethical challenges. Integrating Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah provides a systematic orientation through the preservation of religion (ḥifẓ al-dīn), life (ḥifẓ al-naḥs), intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql), lineage and dignity (ḥifẓ al-nasl/al-'ird), and property (ḥifẓ al-māl), while also incorporating justice, compassion, responsibility, environmental stewardship, moderation, and social welfare. The proposed framework connects these objectives with curriculum objectives, content, pedagogy, school culture, assessment, and community engagement. Its novelty lies in positioning Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah not merely as additional instructional content but as a curriculum architecture that links religious knowledge, moral reasoning, contextual action, and sustainable character formation. The framework therefore offers a theoretically grounded and practically adaptable model for transforming IRE from predominantly knowledge-oriented instruction into holistic, reflective, contextual, and socially transformative education.

Keywords: Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah; Islamic Religious Education; Curriculum Development; Character Education; Sustainable Education.

Introduction

Islamic Religious Education occupies a strategic position in the development of students' intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social capacities. In the Indonesian educational context, Islamic Religious Education is expected not merely to transmit religious information but also to cultivate faith, morality, responsibility, and socially constructive behavior. (Begum et al., 2025) Nevertheless, contemporary curriculum implementation still faces a persistent tension between the cognitive mastery of religious concepts and the actual internalization of ethical values. Recent studies indicate that values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, empathy, and respect are formally present within Islamic Religious Education curricula, yet their translation into everyday student behavior remains inconsistent (Alhamuddin & Asikin, 2025; Basri, 2024). demonstrates that curriculum inclusion alone is insufficient when the pedagogical architecture does not systematically facilitate value internalization.

The problem becomes more complex in an educational environment characterized by rapid technological change, social pluralism, digital communication, consumerism, and increasingly complicated moral challenges. Students encounter ethical dilemmas through social media, artificial intelligence, online commerce, environmental crises, misinformation, intolerance, and various forms of social conflict. (Bakr et al., 2025) Islamic Religious Education therefore needs a conceptual framework capable of interpreting religious teachings in relation to these emerging circumstances. An exclusively textual approach may provide students with doctrinal knowledge but does not necessarily equip them to reason about the purposes, consequences, and ethical dimensions of their decisions. Studies on Islamic education in the digital era emphasize the importance of strengthening character through contextual pedagogy and teacher modeling rather than relying exclusively on verbal instruction (Komalasari et al., 2025; Muhtarom et al., 2021).

Within this context, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* offers an important intellectual and pedagogical possibility. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* refers to the higher objectives and purposes embedded in Islamic revelation and Islamic law, particularly the realization of human welfare and prevention of harm. Contemporary scholarship describes *maqāṣid* as a purpose-oriented framework that can connect religious norms with human development, social justice, intellectual growth, and sustainable welfare (Wani, 2019; Moneim, 2018). This orientation is highly relevant to education because educational activity itself seeks to produce beneficial transformation in human beings and society. Consequently, *maqāṣid* can function not only as an object of religious learning but also as a philosophical orientation for determining what, why, and how students should learn.

The classical formulation of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* commonly identifies the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property as essential objectives. Contemporary applications, however, frequently expand the discussion toward dignity, justice, freedom, environmental responsibility, social welfare, and institutional sustainability. Such expansion does not necessarily abandon the classical framework but can contextualize its objectives within changing human circumstances. In educational settings, *ḥifẓ al-dīn* can be translated into religious literacy and responsible faith; *ḥifẓ al-nafs* into physical and psychological safety; *ḥifẓ al-'aql* into critical thinking and intellectual integrity; *ḥifẓ al-nasl* into family and social responsibility; and *ḥifẓ al-māl* into ethical economic behavior. This contextual translation creates a bridge between Islamic jurisprudential objectives and the concrete character competencies required by contemporary learners (Ikhlas et al., 2021; Moniem, 2021).

The relevance of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* to character education is particularly significant because character is not merely a collection of desirable behaviors. Character involves an integrated relationship among moral knowledge, moral feeling, moral reasoning, personal commitment, and moral action. Islamic education has traditionally emphasized *akhlaq* as an embodiment of faith in human conduct, thereby making character formation inseparable from religious education. Recent research shows that Islamic Religious Education can strengthen character through class-based, school-based, and community-based approaches, suggesting that moral formation requires an ecological rather than exclusively instructional strategy (Krishnawati et al., 2023). Therefore, *maqāṣid* can provide the organizing rationale that connects these multiple educational environments into a coherent moral-development framework.

Another challenge concerns the tendency to treat character education as a set of isolated values. Honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, tolerance, and cooperation are frequently listed in curriculum documents, but students may not understand why these values matter or how they relate to broader Islamic purposes. (Nabriz et al., 2025) The result can be an instrumental form of character education in which students comply with rules without developing autonomous moral reasoning. A *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* orientation changes the

question from “Which behavior is permitted?” to the more educationally productive question of “What human good does this behavior seek to protect or realize?” This shift encourages students to connect religious norms with welfare, justice, consequences, and responsibility.

The curriculum therefore needs to move beyond the simple insertion of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* as one additional chapter in Islamic jurisprudence. Rohayana (2019) demonstrated the urgency of teaching *maqāṣid* within Islamic Religious Education because understanding the objectives of Islamic law can strengthen students’ religious reasoning and help counter intolerance and radicalism. The educational significance of this approach lies in enabling students to understand religious rules as part of a broader system of protecting human welfare. Such learning can prevent students from reducing religion to formal compliance while neglecting the ethical consequences of religious interpretation. Accordingly, *maqāṣid* should be embedded horizontally across curriculum content rather than confined to one thematic unit.

The integration of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* is also compatible with the development of critical thinking. Contemporary educational research increasingly emphasizes that students need to interpret information, evaluate competing claims, reason ethically, and make responsible decisions. Teaching *maqāṣid* encourages learners to identify purposes, compare benefits and harms, consider context, and formulate balanced judgments. Recent research specifically proposes *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* as a framework for developing critical thinking in Islamic higher education because it connects religious knowledge with contextual application and analytical reasoning (Abdulghani et al., 2025). This pedagogical potential is important for secondary education as well because moral maturity requires students to understand reasons rather than merely memorize conclusions.

The concept also has strong relevance to sustainable development. Sustainable development requires educational systems to cultivate individuals capable of balancing individual interests, social welfare, environmental responsibility, and intergenerational justice. Moneim (2018) argues that a *Maqāṣidi* educational philosophy can provide an Islamic conceptual foundation for sustainable development by integrating spiritual, psychological, social, and environmental dimensions. From this perspective, education should produce people who contribute to *maṣlaḥah* rather than simply compete for personal achievement. Character development consequently becomes sustainable when it is directed toward enduring patterns of responsible action.

The sustainability dimension also requires reconsidering the relationship between religious education and environmental ethics. Environmental responsibility is frequently treated as an external topic rather than an integral component of religious morality. Yet the protection of life, preservation of resources, prevention of harm, and responsible stewardship can be interpreted through *maqāṣidi* reasoning. Recent Islamic education research has begun connecting *maqāṣid* with environmental sustainability, social justice, and responsible governance through emerging frameworks such as ESG-oriented Islamic educational materials (Sinulingga et al., 2024). Such developments indicate that Islamic Religious Education can become a significant contributor to sustainability education when its moral principles are contextualized effectively.

Indonesian curriculum reform provides another important context for this discussion. The transition from the 2013 Curriculum toward the Merdeka Curriculum has increased attention to competency development, student character, contextual learning, and the Pancasila Student Profile. Islamic Religious Education therefore has an opportunity to strengthen its contribution to national character formation while maintaining its distinctive Islamic foundation. Research examining Indonesian curriculum policy indicates that Islamic character values are already embedded in national curriculum frameworks, but classroom implementation

remains uneven (Alhamuddin, 2025). Integrating *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can provide a systematic bridge between Islamic ethical concepts and broader educational competencies.

A related issue is the gap between curriculum documents and classroom practice. Values may appear in lesson plans, textbooks, and learning outcomes without becoming observable competencies in students. Alhamuddin and Arifin (2025) found that values such as honesty, responsibility, and respect were included in Islamic education materials, yet teachers frequently relied on lectures and moral preaching rather than interactive, reflective, or student-centered approaches. This indicates that curriculum integration requires simultaneous transformation of objectives, content, pedagogy, assessment, and teacher competence. A *Maqāṣidī* curriculum framework must therefore be designed as a whole-system model rather than a content addition.

Teacher competence is especially important because *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* involves conceptual reasoning and contextual interpretation. Teachers must understand not only the terminology of *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-naḥs*, *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, and *ḥifẓ al-māl*, but also how these principles can illuminate students' everyday problems. Professional learning for Islamic education teachers has been identified as an important condition for improving pedagogical quality and adapting Islamic educational traditions to contemporary learning needs (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021). Thus, curriculum transformation cannot succeed if teachers receive a new curriculum document without corresponding professional development.

The school environment must likewise support the curriculum. Character cannot be sustainably developed when classroom messages contradict institutional practices. For example, a school cannot meaningfully teach justice while practicing discriminatory discipline, or teach respect while tolerating humiliation of students. Research on character education in Islamic institutions demonstrates the importance of integrating classroom learning with school culture and extracurricular activities (Syarnubi et al., 2021; Krishnawati et al., 2023). A *Maqāṣidī* curriculum therefore needs to evaluate whether institutional policies themselves protect religion, life, intellect, dignity, relationships, property, and welfare.

The family and community dimensions are equally significant. Character develops through repeated social interactions, role modeling, expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation. Islamic Religious Education should consequently involve parents and communities in translating *maqāṣidī* values into authentic social experiences. Recent research on character education emphasizes the interconnected roles of teachers, parents, and school environments in forming *akhlaq al-karimah* (Khairina & Hafidz, 2025). A curriculum that isolates students' moral learning from their social environment will have limited capacity to produce sustainable character.

The urgency of this research is reinforced by recent studies that identify fragmentation in Islamic curriculum development. Some studies focus on character education, others on curriculum reform, others on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, and still others on sustainability or digital education. What remains relatively underdeveloped is a unified framework that positions *maqāṣid* as the architectural principle connecting these dimensions. (Hushin et al., 2025) Recent work on integrative Islamic education demonstrates the potential of combining Qur'an, Sunnah, *sīrah*, and *maqāṣid* for character development, but its application remains limited in particular educational contexts (Putri, 2025). This research therefore seeks to extend that direction by developing a curriculum-level framework applicable to Islamic Religious Education more broadly.

The novelty of this article lies in conceptualizing *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* as a curriculum architecture rather than merely as subject matter. The proposed framework maps each major *maqṣad* onto curriculum objectives, content selection, learning experiences, school culture, assessment, and community engagement. This design seeks to overcome the common separation between religious knowledge and practical character development. It also connects classical Islamic objectives with contemporary concerns such as digital citizenship,

environmental sustainability, social justice, intellectual integrity, and ethical economic behavior. In this sense, the study contributes a systematic model for making Islamic Religious Education more holistic, contextual, reflective, and sustainable.

Based on this background, the study aims to analyze the theoretical and empirical literature concerning *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, Islamic Religious Education, curriculum development, and character education. It specifically seeks to identify the conceptual relationship between *maqāṣid* and sustainable character formation. It also examines previous research concerning the implementation of Islamic character education and the use of *maqāṣid* in educational contexts. The ultimate objective is to formulate an integrative curriculum framework that can guide curriculum planners, teachers, school leaders, and researchers. The framework is intended to provide both normative direction and practical educational mechanisms. Such an approach is expected to strengthen the transformative capacity of Islamic Religious Education in contemporary society.

Theoretical Foundation

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah as an Educational Philosophy

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah provides a purposive framework for understanding Islamic norms in relation to human welfare. Rather than viewing Islamic law as a collection of disconnected commands, *maqāṣid* emphasizes the purposes, wisdom, and benefits underlying revelation. Wani (2019) explains that the concept can provide a rational and human-oriented approach to understanding Islamic teachings. (Susanti et al., 2025) In education, this means that religious knowledge can be organized around the transformation it is intended to produce in human beings. Such an orientation makes education inherently teleological because learning is directed toward desirable human and social outcomes.

The educational implications of *maqāṣid* can be understood through the relationship between ontology, epistemology, axiology, and pedagogy. Moneim (2021) argues that a *Maqāṣidī* approach constructs an integrated understanding of the Creator, human beings, society, and the natural environment. Knowledge is consequently not neutral but connected to responsibility and beneficial action. This perspective is consistent with Islamic educational traditions that understand knowledge as a means toward righteous conduct. Therefore, an IRE curriculum informed by *maqāṣid* should ask not only whether students know religious concepts but whether such knowledge contributes to responsible living.

The first major objective, *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, concerns the preservation and development of religion. Within education, this objective should not be reduced to memorization of doctrines or ritual performance. It should include religious literacy, spiritual maturity, ethical interpretation, tolerance, and responsible religious practice. Rohayana (2019) demonstrates the educational importance of *maqāṣid* for helping students understand the purposes of Islamic law and resist intolerance and radicalism. Consequently, religious preservation is best achieved when students develop both commitment to Islam and the capacity to express religious values constructively.

The second objective, *ḥifẓ al-naḥs*, concerns the preservation of human life. In educational practice, it can be connected with physical safety, mental well-being, healthy lifestyles, anti-bullying education, and respect for human dignity. The concept also provides an ethical basis for teaching students to avoid violence and protect others. Recent *maqāṣid*-oriented educational research emphasizes the importance of human welfare as a central objective of Islamic education (Anugrah & Sartika, 2025). Thus, character education informed by *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* can transform abstract teachings about compassion into concrete competencies for protecting oneself and others.

The third objective, *hifẓ al-‘aql*, is particularly relevant to contemporary education. Preservation of intellect requires access to knowledge, development of reasoning, avoidance of intellectual manipulation, and cultivation of critical judgment. In an era of misinformation and artificial intelligence, students need the ability to distinguish evidence from speculation and ethical information use from harmful manipulation. Research connecting *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* and critical thinking suggests that *maqāṣidī* reasoning can encourage analytical and contextual approaches to religious learning (Abdulghani et al., 2025). Therefore, *hifẓ al-‘aql* provides a strong foundation for critical literacy within IRE.

The fourth objective, *hifẓ al-nasl*, traditionally concerns the preservation of lineage and family. Contemporary educational interpretation can extend this objective toward responsible family relationships, child protection, social responsibility, dignity, and intergenerational responsibility. (Bolat et al., 2025) The objective is especially important because character is transmitted across generations through families and communities. Islamic education can therefore teach students that personal conduct has consequences for family stability and social continuity. Such an interpretation transforms family ethics from a private issue into a broader educational responsibility.

The fifth objective, *hifẓ al-māl*, concerns the protection of property and legitimate economic welfare. In character education, this objective can be translated into honesty, financial responsibility, anti-corruption values, responsible consumption, and ethical entrepreneurship. Pesantren research illustrates that Islamic educational institutions can contribute to economic empowerment while maintaining religious and social objectives (Jazil et al., 2021). Consequently, Islamic Religious Education can teach students that economic behavior is a moral domain rather than an ethically neutral activity.

Contemporary *maqāṣid* scholarship also emphasizes the importance of dignity, justice, and social welfare. These expanded dimensions are educationally important because students live within pluralistic societies where ethical decisions affect people beyond their immediate communities. Character education should therefore develop the ability to recognize injustice and respond constructively. The integration of Pancasila values into Islamic Religious Education textbooks demonstrates that Islamic education can engage national and civic values without abandoning religious identity (Achadi & Fithriyana, 2020). A *Maqāṣidī* framework can strengthen this relationship by grounding civic responsibility in Islamic ethical purposes.

Character Development Theory

Character development can be understood as a process involving moral cognition, affective commitment, behavioral practice, and social reinforcement. Within Islamic education, *akhlaq* integrates these dimensions through the relationship between faith and action. Character therefore cannot be developed effectively through memorization alone. Recent studies show that Islamic Religious Education strengthens character most effectively when learning, school culture, extracurricular activities, and community involvement operate together (Syarnubi et al., 2021; Krishnawati et al., 2023). The implication is that curriculum design must provide repeated opportunities for students to practice values rather than merely describe them.

The concept of sustainable character extends this understanding by emphasizing durability and transfer. A student has not fully developed responsibility merely because the student behaves responsibly under teacher supervision. (Mukhlis et al., 2025) Sustainable character is evident when ethical behavior continues in different contexts, including situations where external monitoring is absent. This requires internal moral reasoning and an understanding of why particular actions are beneficial or harmful. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* can contribute to this internalization by explaining the purposes behind moral norms.

Contextual learning is therefore central to the proposed framework. Students should encounter real-world cases involving digital ethics, environmental problems, financial decisions, interpersonal conflict, religious diversity, and public responsibility. They should then

analyze these cases using *maqāṣidī* reasoning. This approach corresponds with recent calls to humanize Islamic Religious Education through contextual and student-centered learning (Alhamuddin, 2025). The result is a curriculum in which character becomes a process of ethical inquiry and practice rather than a list of behavioral expectations.

Teacher modeling constitutes another major theoretical component. Students learn moral behavior not only from explicit instruction but also from observing how teachers respond to disagreement, mistakes, authority, and difference. (Yilmaz et al., 2025) Islamic educational traditions have long emphasized *uswah ḥasanah*, or exemplary conduct, as a mechanism of moral formation. Contemporary research on Islamic Religious Education similarly identifies teacher role modeling as central to character development (Komalasari et al., 2025). A *Maqāṣidī* teacher must therefore embody justice, compassion, intellectual honesty, moderation, and responsibility.

Curriculum theory further requires alignment among objectives, content, pedagogy, and assessment. If the curriculum claims to develop responsibility but assesses only memorization, students will rationally prioritize memorization. If it claims to develop empathy but uses humiliating pedagogical practices, the curriculum communicates contradictory messages. Research on Indonesian Islamic education indicates that character values are often present in curricular documents but are insufficiently assessed through systematic instruments (Alhamuddin & Arifin, 2025). Therefore, *Maqāṣidī* curriculum development requires constructive alignment between intended values and actual learning evidence.

Curriculum Integration Theory

Curriculum integration involves connecting knowledge, competencies, values, learning experiences, and assessment into a coherent educational system. The integration proposed here is multidimensional rather than merely interdisciplinary. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* becomes a conceptual lens for determining the educational purpose of religious knowledge and its relationship to other fields. Research on science integration within Islamic higher education demonstrates the potential of *maqāṣid* to connect religious and general knowledge (Silaturrahmi et al., 2023). This supports the argument that IRE can become a platform for integrating religious values with contemporary scientific, technological, social, and environmental concerns.

The horizontal integration of *maqāṣid* means that the five objectives should appear across different IRE topics. For example, *ḥifẓ al-dīn* can be discussed through *aqīdah* and worship; *ḥifẓ al-nafs* through Islamic ethics and health; *ḥifẓ al-'aql* through intellectual traditions; *ḥifẓ al-nasl* through family and social ethics; and *ḥifẓ al-māl* through economic ethics. This structure prevents *maqāṣid* from becoming an isolated theoretical topic. (Abdullah et al., 2025) It also creates repetition across grade levels, allowing students to encounter the same principles with increasing complexity.

Vertical integration refers to developmental progression. Younger learners require concrete examples and habituation, while older students can engage in ethical dilemmas, jurisprudential reasoning, policy analysis, and social projects. A curriculum that ignores developmental progression risks either oversimplifying *maqāṣid* or presenting abstract theory without practical relevance. Contemporary character-based curriculum research recommends integrating values into learning objectives, content, strategies, and assessment in a systematic manner (Hidayati et al., 2025). The same principle can be adapted to *Maqāṣidī* curriculum development.

Previous Research

Previous research has established the importance of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in Islamic education. Rohayana (2019), for example, specifically argued for the urgency of *maqāṣid*

materials in Islamic Religious Education. The study emphasized the five essential protections and their relevance for countering intolerance and radicalism. This research is important because it demonstrates that *maqāṣid* can function directly within school-based religious learning. However, its emphasis remains primarily on the urgency of instructional material rather than a comprehensive curriculum architecture.

Moneim (2018) extended the discussion by proposing a *Maqāṣidī* philosophy of education for sustainable development. The study conceptualized *maqāṣid* as an integrated system encompassing spiritual, psychological, social, and environmental dimensions. Its major contribution lies in connecting Islamic educational philosophy with sustainability. Nevertheless, the study does not provide a detailed operational matrix connecting *maqāṣid* with contemporary IRE curriculum components. (Desyulita et al., 2025) The present study builds upon that philosophical foundation by translating it into curriculum objectives, content, pedagogy, assessment, and school culture.

Moneim (2021) subsequently developed the epistemological and ontological implications of *Maqāṣidī*-based knowledge. The study emphasized systematic, developmental, and integrated knowledge construction. This provides a theoretical justification for using *maqāṣid* as a curriculum organizing principle rather than simply as subject matter. However, an educational framework still needs to explain how such epistemological principles become classroom practices. The present study addresses this practical-theoretical gap.

Studies on Islamic Religious Education and character education also reveal an implementation gap. Muhtarom et al. (2021) found that PAI learning management is influenced by teacher competence, parental support, school environment, student motivation, and technological development. (Uyun, 2025) These factors demonstrate that character formation is a systemic process. The research strengthens the case for integrating *maqāṣid* across classroom and institutional dimensions. It also indicates that curriculum reform must be supported by teacher development and school-level policy.

Krishnawati et al. (2023) identified class-based, school-based, and community-based models for strengthening character education through Islamic Religious Education. Their findings reinforce the ecological nature of character development. Yet the study does not provide *maqāṣid* as the organizing ethical framework for these three environments. The present article proposes that *maqāṣid* can unify classroom, school, and community approaches. This constitutes one of the central conceptual contributions of the framework.

Research by Alhamuddin and Arifin (2025) is particularly relevant because it identifies the gap between curriculum policy and implementation. Teachers may include values in lesson plans while continuing to rely heavily on lectures and moral preaching. The authors consequently recommend value mapping, reflective pedagogy, and assessment reform. These findings directly support the present framework's emphasis on curricular alignment. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can provide the value-mapping mechanism that connects Islamic principles with observable competencies.

Recent research also demonstrates growing interest in explicit *maqāṣid*-based educational models. Katni et al. (2025) discuss the implementation of *Maqāṣid Syari'ah* values in Islamic Education through library research and emphasize human welfare as a central educational purpose. Their study confirms the feasibility of using *maqāṣid* as an educational framework. However, further work is needed to specify curriculum design, assessment, and developmental progression. The present study seeks to provide that broader architecture.

Recent research on integrative Islamic education also indicates that *Qur'an*, *Sunnah*, *sīrah*, and *maqāṣid* can be integrated into character development. Putri (2025) found that such integration can support religious commitment, discipline, critical thinking, social responsibility, and ethical behavior. This research provides empirical support for the idea that *maqāṣid* becomes more powerful when embedded within broader Islamic sources and contextual

learning. The present framework similarly treats *maqāṣid* as an interpretive bridge rather than a replacement for Qur'anic and Prophetic foundations.

The literature therefore reveals three important gaps. First, research on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in education often remains philosophical or conceptual. Second, research on Islamic character education often discusses implementation without a systematic *maqāṣidī* architecture. Third, curriculum studies frequently identify value integration but do not specify how the values should be transformed into sustainable competencies and assessment evidence. This study addresses these three gaps simultaneously. Its principal contribution is an integrated curriculum framework that connects purpose, content, pedagogy, assessment, culture, and community.

Method

This study employs a qualitative library research design. Library research is appropriate because the primary objective is to synthesize existing theoretical and empirical scholarship rather than collect new field data. The study focuses on literature concerning *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, Islamic Religious Education, curriculum development, character education, sustainability, and contextual pedagogy. Recent methodological studies also demonstrate the usefulness of library research for developing conceptual curriculum frameworks in Islamic education (Hidayati et al., 2025; Nurdi & Cahyadi, 2025). The method therefore corresponds directly to the conceptual nature of the research question.

The literature selection emphasized journal articles published within approximately the last five to ten years, particularly from 2018 to 2025. This temporal criterion was established to ensure that the framework responds to contemporary curriculum debates and educational challenges. Older classical concepts of *maqāṣid* were used only insofar as contemporary journal scholarship had interpreted or operationalized them. Priority was given to peer-reviewed journal articles discussing Islamic education, curriculum, character, sustainability, *maqāṣid*, and educational transformation. This strategy helps prevent the framework from being disconnected from current educational research.

The search process involved combinations of keywords such as “Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah and education,” “Islamic Religious Education curriculum,” “Maqāṣid and character education,” “Islamic curriculum and sustainability,” and “Maqāṣid-based education.” Searches were conducted across scholarly journal platforms and academic indexing resources. Relevant articles were initially screened based on title and abstract. Articles were subsequently selected when their content directly addressed at least one of the study's conceptual domains. This process ensured thematic relevance rather than relying solely on keyword frequency.

The inclusion criteria consisted of recent scholarly journal publications, direct relevance to Islamic education or related educational theory, explicit discussion of curriculum, character, *maqāṣid*, sustainability, pedagogy, or assessment, and sufficient conceptual or empirical information for synthesis. Articles were excluded when they focused entirely on non-educational applications of *maqāṣid* without implications for education. Studies that duplicated the same argument without providing additional analytical value were also given lower priority. This approach enabled the analysis to remain focused on the curriculum-development problem.

Data analysis used thematic content analysis. Each selected source was examined for its conceptualization of *maqāṣid*, understanding of character, educational objectives, implementation strategies, curriculum implications, and identified challenges. The extracted information was then organized into thematic categories. These categories included philosophical foundations, curriculum objectives, content integration, pedagogy, assessment, teacher competence, school culture, community participation, and sustainability. Thematic

analysis is particularly suitable for identifying patterns across heterogeneous qualitative literature.

The synthesis process was interpretive and comparative. Similar arguments were grouped together, while differences among studies were retained as evidence of conceptual diversity. For example, some studies emphasize *maqāṣid* as a philosophical orientation, whereas others treat it as a specific curriculum topic or institutional management principle. Rather than selecting one approach exclusively, the present study combines these perspectives into a layered curriculum model. This synthesis is consistent with recent *Maqāṣidī* educational research that emphasizes multidimensional and systematic knowledge construction (Moneim, 2021).

The final stage involved conceptual framework construction. The framework was developed by mapping the five major objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* onto sustainable character competencies. These competencies were then connected to curriculum objectives, learning content, pedagogy, assessment, school culture, and community engagement. The framework was evaluated conceptually against findings from recent Islamic Religious Education studies concerning implementation gaps and character development. Thus, the outcome is not a statistical generalization but a theoretically grounded curriculum model derived from critical synthesis of recent scholarship.

Results and Discussion

The Core Finding: From Value Inclusion to Maqāṣidī Curriculum Architecture

The literature synthesis indicates that Islamic Religious Education already contains extensive character values but often lacks an organizing framework that explains their relationships and purposes. Honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, empathy, cooperation, and religious commitment appear repeatedly in contemporary studies. However, these values are frequently treated as separate educational targets rather than interconnected expressions of broader Islamic purposes. Alhamuddin and Asikin (2025) similarly found that character values are normatively embedded in IRE curriculum documents but require stronger contextual implementation. The central finding of this study is therefore that *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can function as the missing organizing architecture.

The proposed framework begins by redefining the ultimate purpose of Islamic Religious Education. The curriculum should aim not merely to produce students who know Islamic teachings but students who can use Islamic knowledge to protect and enhance human and social welfare. This purpose is consistent with the *Maqāṣidī* philosophy of education developed by Moneim (2018) and Moneim (2021). The framework therefore links religious knowledge with ethical judgment and beneficial action. Such a transformation shifts curriculum orientation from content coverage toward human formation.

Proposed Maqāṣidī Curriculum Framework

Maqāṣid Dimension	Educational Orientation	Sustainable Character Competencies	Example Learning Experiences	Assessment Evidence
<i>Ḥifẓ al-Dīn</i>	Responsible religious commitment	Faithfulness, tolerance, religious responsibility, moderation	Case analysis of religious diversity; reflective worship journal	Reflection, ethical reasoning, behavior portfolio
<i>Ḥifẓ al-Nafs</i>	Protection of life and dignity	Empathy, safety, compassion, self-care	Anti-bullying project; health campaign	Project performance, observation,

Maqāsid Dimension	Educational Orientation	Sustainable Character Competencies	Example Learning Experiences	Assessment Evidence
				peer assessment
<i>Hifẓ al-‘Aql</i>	Protection and development of intellect	Critical thinking, intellectual honesty, digital literacy	Misinformation analysis; AI ethics discussion	Argumentative essay, problem-solving task
<i>Hifẓ al-Nasl / al-‘Ird</i>	Family, dignity, and social continuity	Respect, responsibility, relational ethics	Family ethics project; intergenerational interviews	Portfolio, presentation, behavioral observation
<i>Hifẓ al-Māl</i>	Ethical economic welfare	Honesty, moderation, financial responsibility	Ethical consumption project; simple budgeting	Project report, financial decision analysis
Justice and <i>Maṣlaḥah</i>	Social welfare	Fairness, civic responsibility, solidarity	Community service; social problem inquiry	Community project and reflection
Environmental responsibility	Sustainable stewardship	Environmental care, moderation, accountability	Waste reduction or conservation project	Project indicators and reflection

The first dimension, *hifẓ al-dīn*, should orient students toward mature religious commitment rather than narrow formalism. Religious character includes worship, spiritual awareness, tolerance, ethical communication, and responsible participation in society. Rohayana (2019) demonstrates that *maqāsid* education can help students understand the purposes of Islamic law and address intolerance. Consequently, religious commitment should be measured not simply through memorization but through students’ ability to apply religious principles constructively. This approach also supports the development of religious moderation.

The second dimension, *hifẓ al-nafs*, places human safety and dignity at the center of character education. Students should understand that bullying, violence, humiliation, reckless behavior, and neglect of health contradict the objective of protecting life. (Mukhlis et al., 2024) This principle can be integrated into lessons concerning *akhlaq*, Islamic law, social relations, and contemporary issues. Inclusive Islamic education research further demonstrates how *maqāsid* can support educational environments that respond to diverse student needs (Anugrah & Sartika, 2025). The curriculum thus transforms protection of life from an abstract legal concept into an everyday ethical responsibility.

The third dimension, *hifẓ al-‘aql*, provides perhaps the strongest connection between *maqāsid* and twenty-first-century competencies. Students should be trained to evaluate evidence, recognize misinformation, distinguish legitimate disagreement from intellectual manipulation, and use digital technology responsibly. Recent research on *Maqāsid al-Sharī‘ah* and critical thinking supports the idea that *maqāsidī* reasoning can strengthen analytical capacities (Abdulghani et al., 2025). In IRE, this could involve analyzing social-media claims

about religion, comparing interpretations, and examining ethical dilemmas involving artificial intelligence.

The fourth dimension, *ḥifẓ al-nasl* and related contemporary concerns of dignity, emphasizes relational character. Students need to understand that their behavior affects family, peers, future generations, and society. Character education therefore includes respect, responsibility, protection of dignity, and healthy interpersonal boundaries. Recent sociological research on Islamic Religious Education confirms that PAI contributes to values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and politeness through social interaction (Mukhtar et al., 2025). A *Maqāṣidī* curriculum strengthens these values by linking them to the preservation of human relationships and social continuity.

The fifth dimension, *ḥifẓ al-māl*, extends character education into economic ethics. Students should learn that wealth must be acquired and used responsibly, honestly, and moderately. This can include lessons about fraud, corruption, consumerism, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and charitable responsibility. Research on pesantren and economic development demonstrates that Islamic educational institutions can combine religious education with economic empowerment within a *maqāṣidī* perspective (Jazil et al., 2021). Thus, financial responsibility becomes part of religious character rather than an external economic competency.

The framework also adds justice and *maṣlahah* as cross-cutting dimensions. Justice ensures that students understand that character is not merely personal morality but also social responsibility. *Maṣlahah* encourages students to consider whether their decisions create genuine benefit and prevent harm. (Arfani et al., 2025) These principles can be used to analyze contemporary issues such as poverty, discrimination, environmental degradation, digital privacy, and public health. Such an approach aligns Islamic education with broader sustainability and social-justice concerns.

The environmental dimension emerges as a logical extension of the framework. Human beings depend upon natural systems, and environmental destruction threatens life, health, property, and future generations. Consequently, environmental stewardship can be interpreted through interconnected *maqāṣid* rather than treated as an unrelated topic. Moneim (2018) explicitly places environmental and social systems within a broader *Maqāṣidī* understanding of sustainable development. Recent Islamic educational research similarly recommends connecting Islamic values with environmental sustainability and responsible governance (Sinulingga et al., 2024).

Pedagogically, the framework requires a transition from lecture-dominated instruction toward reflective, contextual, dialogical, and project-based learning. Students should encounter authentic problems and use *maqāṣidī* principles to analyze them. (Lhegina et al., 2025) A teacher might present a case involving online religious misinformation and ask students to evaluate it through *ḥifẓ al-dīn* and *ḥifẓ al-‘aql*. Another case might involve excessive consumerism and be analyzed through *ḥifẓ al-māl* and environmental responsibility. This method makes *maqāṣid* a practical reasoning tool rather than an abstract theoretical concept.

Assessment must also change. Conventional IRE assessment often emphasizes factual recall, terminology, and textual reproduction. These forms of assessment remain useful but are inadequate for evaluating sustainable character. (Mabruri et al., 2025) The proposed framework recommends portfolios, reflective journals, case analysis, project assessment, peer assessment, behavioral observation, and community-based tasks. Such approaches provide evidence of students' ability to apply values in context. This recommendation responds directly to research identifying weak alignment between character objectives and formal assessment practices (Alhamuddin & Arifin, 2025).

Teacher professional development is a central implementation requirement. Teachers need conceptual knowledge of *maqāṣid*, curriculum design competence, facilitation skills,

ethical-case analysis skills, and assessment literacy. (Nasier, 2024) They also need the ability to distinguish legitimate contextual interpretation from arbitrary relativism. Professional learning should therefore combine Islamic scholarship with contemporary educational theory. Research on Islamic education teachers confirms that professional learning is essential for improving the quality of instructional practice (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021).

School culture should become the practical laboratory for *maqāṣidī* character. If students learn *hifẓ al-naḥs* but experience bullying, the curriculum becomes contradictory. If they learn *hifẓ al-‘aql* but are discouraged from asking questions, intellectual preservation is undermined. If they learn *hifẓ al-māl* but observe dishonest institutional practices, moral learning loses credibility. Character research in madrasahs supports the integration of classroom instruction with extracurricular and institutional activities (Syarnubi et al., 2021).

The family dimension should likewise be incorporated into implementation. Parents can receive guidance concerning the same *maqāṣidī* vocabulary used at school. Students can undertake projects that connect classroom learning with family practices, such as responsible consumption, digital ethics, family communication, or environmental stewardship. (Wahyuni & Handriani, 2025) Such activities reinforce the transfer of character beyond school. Research on Islamic character education emphasizes the interconnected contributions of teachers, parents, and schools (Khairina & Hafidz, 2025).

Community engagement provides another pathway for sustainable character. Students can participate in social-service projects, environmental campaigns, literacy programs, economic empowerment activities, or interfaith cooperation. These projects allow students to experience *maṣlaḥah* as a lived educational concept. Instead of simply learning that Islam promotes social welfare, students participate in creating it. (Rohman & Munawaroh, 2025) This approach is consistent with research identifying community-based character education as an important component of Islamic Religious Education (Krishnawati et al., 2023).

The framework also has implications for curriculum sequencing. At the elementary level, *maqāṣidī* education should emphasize concrete habits such as honesty, cleanliness, kindness, safety, respect, and responsible use of resources. At the secondary level, these values can be developed through ethical dilemmas, social problems, and reflective reasoning. At higher levels, students can engage in jurisprudential analysis, policy issues, research, and complex social questions. This developmental sequence prevents the curriculum from presenting *maqāṣid* as an overly abstract legal theory. It also supports progressive development of moral autonomy.

The integration of *maqāṣid* should not eliminate Qur’anic and Prophetic learning. Instead, it should help students understand the purposes and ethical coherence of those sources. Qur’anic verses, hadith, *sīrah*, *fiqh*, and *akhlaq* remain primary sources of Islamic Religious Education. (Mukhlis et al., 2026) *Maqāṣid* functions as a bridge connecting these sources with contextual interpretation and educational application. Recent integrative Islamic education research supports the combination of Qur’an, Sunnah, *sīrah*, and *maqāṣid* in character formation (Putri, 2025).

The framework is also compatible with national character education. Pancasila values such as mutual cooperation, humanity, justice, responsibility, and respect can be interpreted through corresponding *maqāṣidī* objectives without collapsing the two traditions into one. Research on Islamic Religious Education textbooks shows that Pancasila values can be integrated into Islamic learning materials (Achadi & Fithriyana, 2020). This suggests that *Maqāṣidī* curriculum development can strengthen, rather than weaken, the relationship between religious identity and national citizenship.

Digital citizenship is another important application. Students increasingly make ethical decisions in online environments where religious, social, and commercial information is rapidly circulated. *Ḥifẓ al-‘aql* can guide information verification, *ḥifẓ al-dīn* can guide responsible religious communication, *ḥifẓ al-nafs* can guide online safety, and *ḥifẓ al-māl* can guide digital financial ethics. Recent research on Islamic education in the digital era highlights both the opportunities and moral risks created by technological exposure (Komalasari et al., 2025). The *Maqāṣidī* framework provides a coherent ethical vocabulary for responding to those risks.

Artificial intelligence also creates new educational questions. Students need to understand plagiarism, misinformation, algorithmic bias, privacy, intellectual ownership, and responsible use of generative systems. A *Maqāṣidī* approach does not provide technological answers automatically, but it supplies an ethical framework for evaluating consequences and benefits. *Ḥifẓ al-‘aql* can guide intellectual integrity, *ḥifẓ al-māl* can address economic consequences, and *ḥifẓ al-nafs* can address safety and psychological well-being. Recent research explicitly identifies *maqāṣid* as a strategic framework for Islamic education management in the era of digital disruption and AI (Muqaffi et al., 2025).

The framework also supports inclusivity. A curriculum oriented toward human welfare should consider the needs and dignity of students with diverse abilities and circumstances. Inclusive Islamic education research demonstrates how *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* can inform educational practices for children with special needs. The emphasis on welfare, dignity, and protection challenges schools to evaluate whether their practices unintentionally exclude vulnerable students. Thus, *maqāṣid* becomes a criterion for evaluating not only what students learn but also how institutions treat learners.

From the perspective of curriculum evaluation, the proposed framework requires continuous review. Schools should examine whether learning objectives correspond to *maqāṣidī* competencies, whether teaching methods enable ethical reasoning, whether assessments capture behavior and reflection, and whether school policies support the same values. Evaluation should use both quantitative indicators and qualitative evidence. Student portfolios, teacher observations, community feedback, and reflective narratives can complement achievement data. This makes curriculum evaluation developmental rather than merely administrative.

The overall discussion demonstrates that *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* can provide a coherent bridge between Islamic normative knowledge and sustainable character development. Its strongest contribution is not the addition of another curriculum topic but the reorientation of the curriculum toward purpose, welfare, ethical reasoning, and responsible action. This responds directly to the implementation problems identified in recent Islamic Religious Education research. It also connects character education with sustainability, digital citizenship, inclusion, and social responsibility. The framework therefore represents a conceptual shift from “teaching values” toward “designing an educational system that continuously produces value-oriented action.”

Conclusion

The study concludes that integrating *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum offers a theoretically coherent and practically relevant strategy for sustainable character development. The literature indicates that contemporary IRE curricula already contain numerous character values, but implementation is frequently fragmented, cognitive, lecture-oriented, and weakly connected to assessment and everyday life. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can overcome this fragmentation by providing an overarching purpose-oriented framework through *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-naḥs*, *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, *ḥifẓ al-nasl/al-'ird*, and *ḥifẓ al-māl*, complemented by justice, *maṣlahah*, dignity, and environmental responsibility. The proposed framework integrates these objectives into curriculum goals, content, pedagogy, assessment, teacher development, school culture, family participation, and community engagement. Consequently, Islamic Religious Education can move from predominantly transmitting religious knowledge toward forming reflective, ethical, socially responsible, environmentally conscious, and intellectually mature Muslim citizens. The principal novelty of this study is the positioning of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* as a curriculum architecture rather than merely an instructional topic. The framework creates a systematic relationship between Islamic objectives and sustainable character competencies while maintaining Qur'anic, Prophetic, and *akhlaq*-based foundations. Future research should empirically test the framework across elementary schools, madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and higher education institutions using longitudinal and mixed-method designs. Researchers should also develop validated assessment instruments capable of measuring *maqāṣidī* reasoning and sustainable character development. Such empirical validation will be important for determining how effectively the framework changes students' knowledge, attitudes, moral reasoning, and actual behavior. The long-term objective is to establish Islamic Religious Education as a transformative educational field capable of responding simultaneously to religious, social, intellectual, technological, and sustainability challenges.



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