



Maqasid al-Shariah as a Framework for Developing Critical Thinking in Islamic Higher Education

Naser Abdulghani¹, Mowafg Masuwd², Safa Alrumayh²,
Mohieddin Masoud², Youcha Touré³

¹University of Benghazi, Libya

²University of Zawia, Libya

³Kanku Moussa Franco-Arab Private University, Mali

✉ naser.ali@uob.edu.ly*

Article Information:

Received October 15, 2025

Revised November 28, 2025

Accepted December 19, 2025

Keywords: *Maqasid al-Shariah, critical thinking, Islamic education, pedagogy*

Abstract

This study investigates the impact of teaching Maqasid al-Shariah on the development of critical thinking skills among undergraduate students in the Departments of Law and Islamic Studies at the University of Benghazi. A sample of 100 students, comprising 72 females and 28 males from the third to the eighth semester, participated in the study through a structured questionnaire. The instrument measured four dimensions: knowledge and understanding of Maqasid, application in learning contexts, critical thinking skills, and perceived challenges and opportunities. Descriptive and inferential analyses revealed that while students demonstrated a strong conceptual knowledge of Maqasid, their ability to apply these principles in academic and real-life situations was moderate. The findings also indicated that Maqasid supports the development of critical thinking, though pedagogical limitations, such as reliance on memorization, obstruct its full potential. Students overwhelmingly highlighted the need for more practical training and innovative teaching strategies, but they also recognized Maqasid as a promising bridge between Islamic tradition and contemporary intellectual challenges. The study concludes that integrating Maqasid al-Shariah into pedagogy through active learning approaches can enhance both academic performance and critical reasoning skills. Recommendations are offered for curriculum reform, faculty development, and the adoption of student-centered teaching methods.

INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking has emerged as a central objective in higher education, equipping students with the capacity to analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge in solving complex problems. Within Islamic Studies, the ability to think critically holds particular importance, as students must not only master classical texts but also engage them meaningfully with contemporary issues. One promising pedagogical framework is *Maqasid al-Shariah*, the higher objectives of Islamic law, which emphasizes reasoning, ethical reflection, and the balancing of competing interests in pursuit of human welfare. Teaching *Maqasid al-Shariah* therefore has the potential to cultivate higher order

How to cite:

Abdulghani, N., Masuwd, M., Alrumayh, S., Masoud, M., Touré, Y. (2025). Maqasid al-Shariah as a Framework for Developing Critical Thinking in Islamic Higher Education. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Social Science*, 1(2), 47-63.

E-ISSN:

3110-1356

Published by:

The Institute for Research and Community Service

thinking skills that are both academically rigorous and grounded in Islamic intellectual traditions.

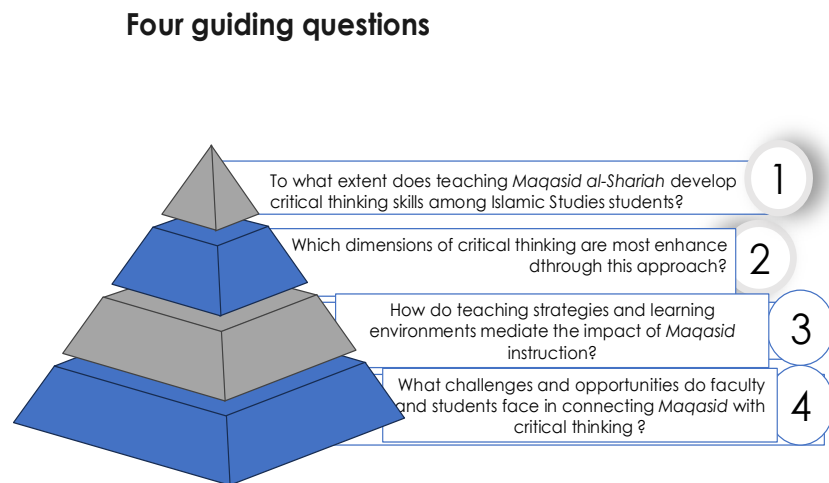
Scholars have highlighted the adaptability of Maqasid al-Shariah in addressing modern challenges (Kamali et al., 2024; Mohadi & Tarshany, 2023; Mustapha & Malkan, 2025; Shalghoum et al., 2025). argue that maqasid and ijihad are essential instruments for civilization renewal, enabling Islamic law to respond flexibly to new realities. Furthermore, illustrate its relevance by applying maqasid principles to ethical debates in artificial intelligence, showing how values such as justice and protection of intellect can guide responsible innovation. note, artificial intelligence raises significant ethical concerns, particularly regarding privacy, manipulation, and other key values aligned with Maqasid al-Shariah. This highlights the importance of embedding ethical considerations into Artificial Intelligence practices, especially in higher education settings (Alrumayh et al., 2025; Alsayd et al., 2025; Husayn et al., 2025).

Within Islamic education, recent studies stress the importance of cultivating critical and reflective learning environments (Primarni et al., 2025; Solihah et al., 2025; Zhaffar et al., 2025). highlight the need for modeling strategies in teaching critical thinking, noting that educators' approaches directly shape students' ability to question, analyze, and reason. emphasize integrating Qur'an, Hadith, and science to create a balanced paradigm that nurtures inquiry without falling into rigid literalism or secular scientism. Similar to studies on the influence of Sufi interpretations in shaping cultural and political discourses (Husin et al., 2025; Ichwan et al., 2024; Manshur et al., 2025). the present research underscores how Islamic intellectual traditions, such as Maqasid al-Shariah, extend beyond legal theory to inform education, critical thinking, and broader societal development. Together, these perspectives support the view that Islamic epistemology, and particularly Maqasid al-Shariah, can be harnessed as a pedagogical tool to promote intellectual growth.

At the same time, research on Maqasid has extended into broader ethical and societal domains, demonstrating its flexibility as a conceptual framework. (Cholidi & Masuwd, 2025). examine Maqasid exegesis as a response to ecological crises, while highlight how Islamic economic principles rooted in maqasid promote justice, equity, and accountability. Moreover, advances a "Global- Maqasid" ethic that bridges Islamic and universal values in addressing pluralism. While these studies show the relevance of Maqasid beyond jurisprudence, they also reveal a significant gap: the lack of empirical research on how teaching Maqasid al-Shariah can directly enhance students' cognitive and critical thinking skills (Engkizar et al., 2021; Masuwd, 2024; Nahid Ayad et al., 2025)

This study addresses that gap by examining the impact of teaching Maqasid al-Shariah on the development of critical thinking among students of Islamic Studies. The objectives are threefold: i) to assess how Maqasid -based instruction enhances critical thinking dimensions such as analysis, evaluation, and problem-solving; ii) to explore the influence of teaching strategies and classroom environments on this process; and iii) to identify the challenges and opportunities encountered by faculty and students in linking Maqasid with critical inquiry. These aims are expressed through four guiding questions:

Fig 1. Four guiding questions



By situating *Maqasid al-Shariah* at the intersection of theology, pedagogy, and cognitive development, this research contributes to the literature on Islamic education and critical thinking. It proposes a culturally grounded model of higher-order learning that not only advances academic outcomes but also prepares students to engage critically, ethically, and constructively with the complexities of modern society.

METHODS

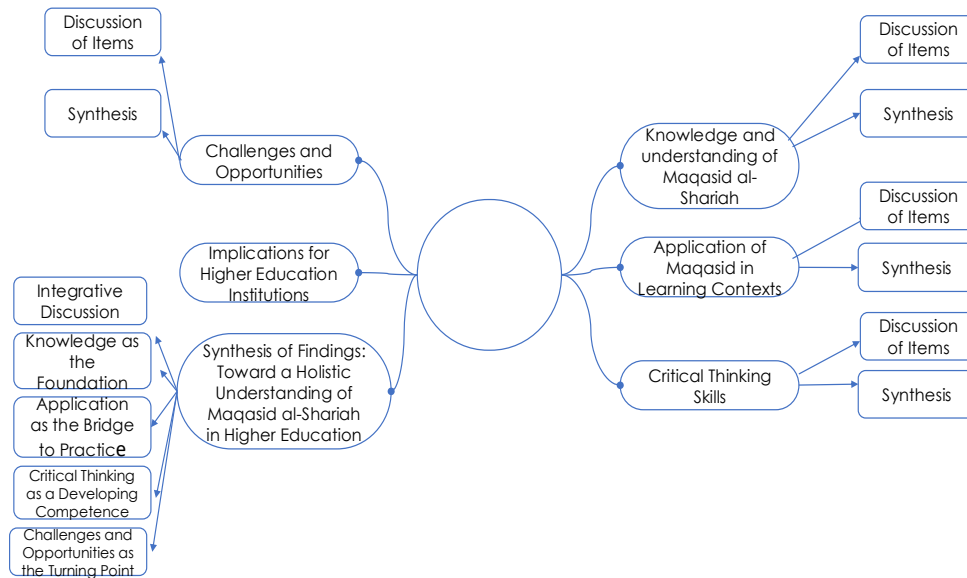
This study employed a quantitative, survey-based design to examine students' knowledge, application, and critical engagement with *Maqasid al-Shariah* and its relevance to contemporary academic and social contexts. The target population consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in the departments of Law and Islamic Studies at the University of Benghazi (Akmal et al., 2024; Engkizar, Muslim, et al., 2025; Mustafa et al., 2025). A total of one hundred students participated in the study, comprising seventy-two females and twenty-eight males, representing cohorts from the third to the eighth semester. This composition ensured that the sample reflected a range of academic exposure and intellectual maturity within the disciplines most closely related to the study's theme. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire specifically designed for this research. The instrument was divided into four dimensions: i.) knowledge and understanding of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, ii.) application of *Maqasid* in learning contexts, iii.) critical thinking skills fostered by engagement with *Maqasid*, and iv.) challenges and opportunities in applying these concepts. Each dimension contained multiple items measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). This design allowed for a nuanced capture of student perceptions, ranging from strong endorsement to critical reservation (Engkizar, Jaafar, Alias, et al., 2025; Okenova et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2024).

Data analysis was carried out using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to illustrate response distributions for each item, while means and standard deviations were used to determine central tendencies and variability. These statistical results were subsequently interpreted in light of relevant academic literature to provide depth to the discussion. Comparative analyses were also integrated, highlighting how the findings resonate with or diverge from existing studies on Islamic pedagogy, critical thinking, and higher education

reform. To enhance clarity, results were presented in tables and figures, including bar charts, radar diagrams, and diverging plots, each chosen to best represent the patterns emerging from the data (Engkizar, Jaafar, Masuwd, et al., 2025; Wati et al., 2025; Wulandari et al., 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Fig 2. Maqasid al-Shariah as a Framework for Developing Critical Thinking



Knowledge and understanding of *Maqasid al-Shariah*

The first section explored students' conceptual grasp of *Maqasid al-Shariah* and their ability to differentiate between literal legal rulings and the higher objectives underpinning them. As this dimension forms the foundation for subsequent application and critical engagement, it is central to evaluating the pedagogical effectiveness of Islamic Studies and Law curricula at the University of Benghazi.

Table 1. Students' Knowledge and Understanding of *Maqasid al-Shariah* (N = 100)

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I understand the basic principles of <i>Maqasid</i>	41	38	8	9	4	4.03	1.11	High
I can identify the main purposes behind Islamic legal rulings.	39	32	23	5	1	4.04	0.95	High
My courses have increased my awareness of how <i>Maqasid</i> relate to contemporary issues.	16	47	32	2	3	3.71	0.91	Moderate High
I am able to explain the difference between literal rulings and <i>Maqasid</i> -based reasoning.	15	49	24	12	0	3.67	0.88	Moderate High
Learning about <i>Maqasid</i> has deepened my understanding of the holistic goals of <i>Shariah</i> .	86	7	3	1	3	4.72	0.95	Very High

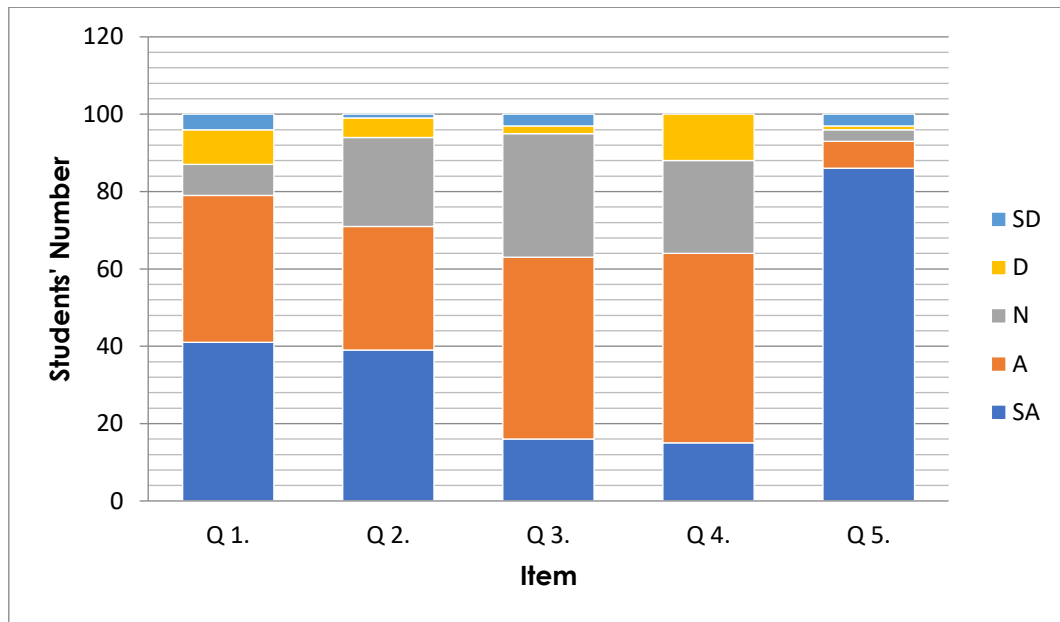


Fig 3. The Knowledge and Understanding of *Maqasid al-Shariah*

Discussion of Items

Item 1: The results indicate that a large majority of students (79%) affirmed their understanding of the basic principles of Maqasid al-Shariah, yielding a high mean of 4.03. This finding suggests that foundational concepts of Islamic legal objectives are successfully transmitted within the curriculum. This aligns with prior research emphasizing that introducing students to the historical and philosophical underpinnings of Maqasid enriches their comprehension of Shariah beyond textual literalism to overcome challenges (Kasheem et al., 2025; Laldin & Furqani, 2013; Yahya et al., 2025).

Item 2: Similarly, students reported a strong ability to identify the purposes behind Islamic rulings ($M = 4.04$). This reflects progress in shifting from rote learning to purposive interpretation, an approach endorsed by Kamali (2008), who highlights that Maqasid education bridges normative law with societal needs. The relatively low standard deviation (0.95) suggests broad agreement among students.

Item 3: Awareness of contemporary relevance, however, showed more moderate results ($M = 3.71$). While a majority agreed, 32% remained neutral, signaling hesitation in linking theoretical knowledge to real-world issues. This resonates with critiques that Islamic legal curricula often emphasize classical jurisprudence while neglecting modern applications (Hasanuddin et al., 2024; Lestari et al., 2025; Mahmudin et al., 2025). It suggests the need for more problem-based or case-study learning methods to situate Maqasid within today's challenges.

Item 4: On distinguishing literal rulings from Maqasid-based reasoning, students scored moderately high ($M = 3.67$). Although half expressed agreement, 12% disagreed and nearly a quarter remained neutral, revealing uneven levels of interpretive confidence. As Hallaq (2009) notes, this difficulty reflects the complexity of balancing textual fidelity with purposive reasoning. The findings underscore the need for pedagogical reinforcement through comparative analysis and debates in class (Febriani et al., 2020; Htay et al., 2025; Khairunisa et al., 2025; Oktavia et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024; Sabrina et al., 2022; Ummah et al., 2025).

Item 5: The strongest endorsement emerged in students' perception that Maqasid deepened their holistic understanding of Shariah ($M = 4.72$). An overwhelming 86% strongly agreed, confirming that the integrative vision of Maqasid resonates powerfully with learners. This aligns with Auda's (2008) argument that

Maqasid provides an ethical and systematic framework that nurtures both intellectual and spiritual growth. The very high rating also suggests that teaching Maqasid may play a transformative role in student engagement with Islamic law in higher education institutions (Sulaksono et al., 2025; Sumaia Almajri et al., 2025).

Synthesis

Taken together, section 1 demonstrates that students possess a solid conceptual foundation in Maqasid al-Shariah, particularly in grasping its holistic goals. However, moderate results in applying these principles to contemporary contexts and in differentiating textual rulings from purposive reasoning reveal areas requiring pedagogical innovation. Embedding case-based approaches, interdisciplinary connections, and dialogical teaching strategies could strengthen the curriculum's effectiveness. These findings echo international scholarship calling for a revival of Maqasid-centered pedagogy to enhance Islamic legal education in ways that are both faithful to tradition and responsive to modern challenges.

Application of *Maqasid* in Learning Contexts

The second dimension examined students' ability to apply Maqasid al-Shariah in academic and practical contexts, reflecting the extent to which their knowledge extends beyond theoretical understanding. This dimension is particularly significant; as contemporary scholarship emphasizes that the value of Maqasid education lies not only in conceptual clarity but also in its applicability to problem-solving, ethical reasoning, and engagement with modern challenges (Ali Abdulghani & Husayn Alrumayh, 2025). Table 2 figure 2 present the descriptive results for this dimension.

Table 2. Students' Application of *Maqasid* in Learning Contexts (N = 100)

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I can apply <i>Maqasid</i> -based reasoning to solve academic or practical problems.	25	14	48	7	6	3.45	1.15	Moderate
I use <i>Maqasid</i> principles to interpret social or ethical issues in modern contexts.	22	34	31	10	3	3.62	1.04	Moderate High
Discussions in class encourage me to apply <i>Maqasid</i> rather than rely only on memorization.	17	29	26	16	12	3.23	1.25	Moderate
I find <i>Maqasid</i> useful in connecting Islamic principles with real-life challenges.	32	30	38	0	0	3.94	0.81	High
I can apply <i>Maqasid</i> reasoning when comparing Islamic law with other legal systems.	16	37	42	5	0	3.64	0.84	Moderate High

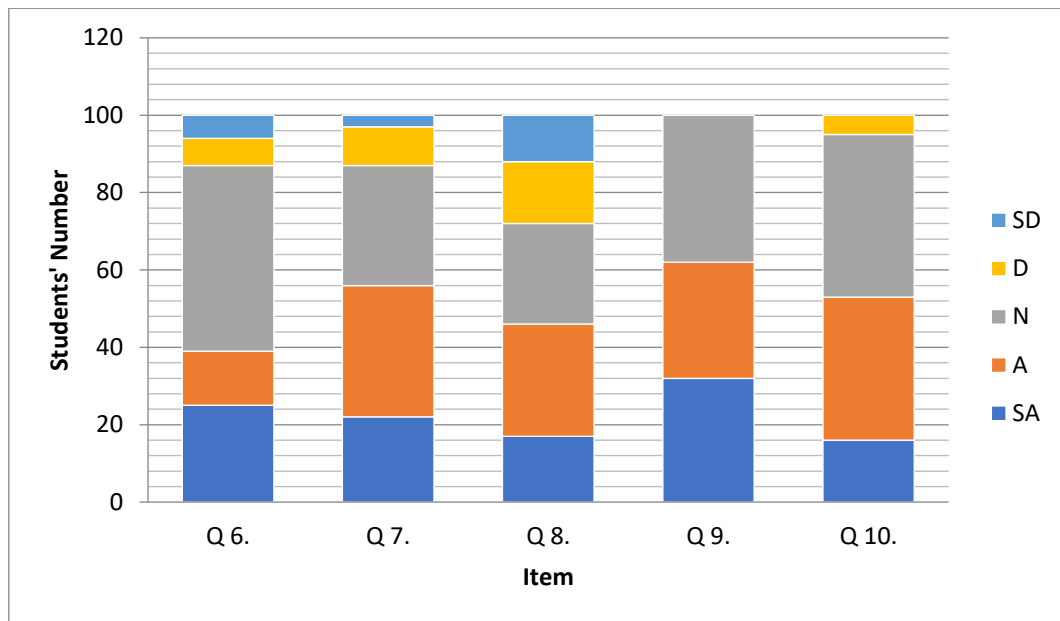


Figure 4. Application of Maqāṣid in Learning Contexts

Discussion of Items

Item 6: Students expressed only moderate ability to apply Maqasid -based reasoning to solve academic or practical problems ($M = 3.45$). Nearly half (48%) chose the neutral option, suggesting uncertainty or lack of confidence. This indicates that while students conceptually understand Maqasid, they may not be sufficiently trained in translating that knowledge into problem-solving. Such findings echo Ishak & Nasir, who argue that without applied pedagogical strategies, Maqasid risks remaining abstract rather than actionable.

Item 7: On applying Maqasid to social and ethical issues, students reported slightly higher confidence ($M = 3.62$). A majority (56%) agreed or strongly agreed, showing that many are able to extend their classroom knowledge into broader societal contexts. This outcome supports Laldin & Furqani's claim that Maqasid serves as a bridge between traditional jurisprudence and contemporary socio-ethical discourse. However, the remaining 31% neutral responses reveal the need for more structured opportunities to apply theory to practice.

Item 8: Class discussions received only moderate endorsement ($M = 3.23$), with over a quarter of students disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This suggests that teaching methods may not sufficiently promote dialogical or problem-based engagement, a finding consistent with earlier studies showing that lecture-heavy methods limit critical application of Islamic knowledge (Baroud et al., 2025; Taufiqurrahman et al., 2025). Enhancing interactive pedagogy through debates, case studies, and simulations could address this gap.

Item 9: Students strongly endorsed the usefulness of Maqasid in linking Islamic principles with real-life challenges ($M = 3.94$). The absence of disagreement here is noteworthy, highlighting widespread recognition of the relevance of Maqasid. This resonates with Auda's framework, which emphasizes that Maqasid serves as a dynamic tool for bridging tradition with modernity. It also underscores the curriculum's potential to foster applied Islamic reasoning if pedagogical methods are adapted accordingly.

Item 10: The ability to apply Maqasid reasoning in comparative legal contexts was rated moderately high ($M = 3.64$). While most students agreed, a large proportion (42%) remained neutral, reflecting a cautious stance. This may be due to limited exposure to comparative law within their coursework (Ruslan et al., 2024; Setiawan & Krisnandi, 2023). On the other hand, Kamali notes that comparative analysis is crucial

for developing jurisprudential flexibility, suggesting that curricula should integrate cross-system comparisons to strengthen this competence.

Synthesis

Overall, Dimension 2 reveals that students recognize the applicability of *Maqasid al-Shariah* to contemporary challenges and value its relevance to real-life contexts. However, the moderate ratings across several items indicate a gap between theoretical understanding and practical implementation. The findings suggest that while *Maqasid* is perceived as highly relevant, pedagogical practices may not fully empower students to operationalize it in problem-solving or comparative analysis. These results align with international scholarship emphasizing the need for active, applied, and interdisciplinary teaching strategies to translate *Maqasid* from theory into practice (Akem et al., 2025; Hajjiah et al., 2025).

Critical Thinking Skills

The third dimension explored how learning *Maqasid al-Shariah* influenced students' critical thinking, particularly their ability to analyze perspectives, evaluate arguments, question assumptions, and apply reasoning in complex situations. Developing critical thinking is central to higher education reform in Islamic contexts, where rote memorization often dominates over analytical engagement (Taofeeq Olamilekan Sanusi, 2025). Table 3 and figure 3 summarize the results for this dimension.

Table 3. Students' Critical Thinking Skills through *Maqasid al-Shariah* (N = 100)

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Learning <i>Maqasid</i> has improved my ability to analyze different perspectives.	36	28	7	14	17	3.51	1.49	Moderate High
I feel more confident evaluating arguments and evidence critically.	9	46	31	12	2	3.48	0.94	Moderate
Studying <i>Maqasid</i> encourages me to question assumptions rather than accept them blindly.	17	34	28	12	9	3.38	1.16	Moderate
I am able to compare and contrast different interpretations using critical reasoning.	15	39	25	19	2	3.46	1.05	Moderate
I can construct logical arguments supported by <i>Maqasid</i> principles.	6	42	35	16	1	3.36	0.85	Moderate
I use critical thinking when faced with conflicting opinions in religious or legal matters.	13	20	46	12	9	3.16	1.13	Moderate

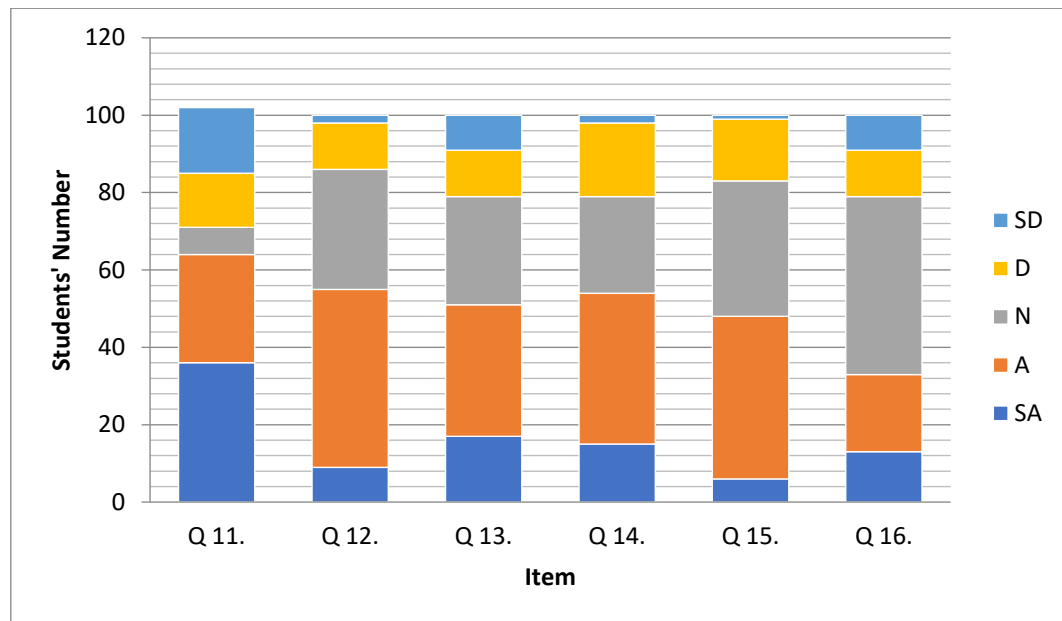


Fig 5. Critical Thinking Skills

Discussion of Items

Item 11: A relatively high proportion of students (64%) agreed that studying Maqasid improved their ability to analyze different perspectives ($M = 3.51$). However, 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and the standard deviation (1.49) shows wide variation. This suggests that while many students benefit from exposure to diverse viewpoints in class, not all have fully developed the skill. As argues, critical analysis in Islamic education requires more than conceptual teaching; it demands sustained practice through dialogical and comparative learning.

Item 12: Confidence in evaluating arguments critically was rated moderately ($M = 3.48$). Nearly half (46%) agreed, yet 31% remained neutral, reflecting uncertainty in applying evaluative skills. This results show that Islamic Studies programs often lack sufficient emphasis on evidence-based argumentation. The results highlight the importance of embedding assignments that require students to evaluate competing claims with textual and contextual evidence.

Item 13: The ability to question assumptions scored a moderate mean of 3.38, with 51% agreeing but 21% disagreeing. This illustrates tension between traditional learning environments, which may discourage questioning, and modern pedagogical approaches that emphasize critical inquiry. Encouraging students to respectfully challenge established views could enhance the role of Maqasid as a framework for independent reasoning.

Item 14: Students reported moderate competence in comparing and contrasting interpretations ($M = 3.46$). While 54% agreed, almost one-fifth disagreed, suggesting uneven skills. Comparative reasoning has been recognized as a key dimension of jurisprudential education. The mixed responses highlight the need for structured exercises that expose students to diverse juristic opinions and train them in systematic comparison.

Item 15: Constructing logical arguments using Maqasid principles received one of the lowest means ($M = 3.36$). Although a majority (48%) agreed, 35% remained neutral and 16% disagreed. This may reflect limited opportunities for students to engage in written or oral argumentation within their courses. As Laldin & Furqani's (2013) note, Maqasid provides strong ethical foundations, but students require training in rhetoric and logic to translate principles into arguments.

Item 16: The lowest mean was recorded for applying critical thinking to conflicting opinions in religious or legal matters ($M = 3.16$). Almost half (46%) responded neutrally, indicating hesitation when faced with contestation. This reflects

a broader challenge in Islamic education, where students are often more comfortable with consensus (ijma') than with conflict (ikhtilaf). As emphasizes, navigating disagreement is an essential skill in jurisprudence, requiring both confidence and intellectual flexibility.

Synthesis

Dimension 3 indicates that students recognize the role of *Maqasid* in fostering critical thinking, particularly in analyzing perspectives and evaluating arguments. However, the generally moderate means across all items highlight that critical thinking skills remain underdeveloped compared to knowledge acquisition (Dimension 1) and perceived relevance (Dimension 2). Neutral responses and wide variability suggest that students may lack consistent opportunities to practice critical inquiry, construct arguments, and engage with conflicting interpretations.

These findings confirm existing critiques that Islamic higher education often prioritizes content mastery over critical engagement. To bridge this gap, curricula should incorporate dialogical pedagogy, debate, and case-based reasoning, enabling students to translate *Maqasid* into tools for analytical inquiry. This aligns with broader calls for educational reform in the Muslim world, where critical thinking is increasingly recognized as essential for preparing graduates to address complex contemporary challenges.

Challenges and Opportunities

The final dimension, as represented in table 4 and figure 4 examined the obstacles and potential benefits students encounter when engaging with *Maqasid al-Shariah*. While previous dimensions highlighted knowledge gains and applications, this section sheds light on the pedagogical and contextual barriers that may hinder critical thinking, as well as the opportunities that studying *Maqasid* provides for bridging tradition and modernity. Understanding these dynamics is vital because challenges often indicate areas where curricular reforms and teaching innovations are most needed (Faddhia et al., 2025; Ikhlas et al., 2025).

Table 4. Students' Perceptions of Challenges and Opportunities in Applying *Maqasid al-Shariah* (N = 100)

Item	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I face difficulties in applying <i>Maqasid</i> concepts to new or unfamiliar issues.	32	24	31	10	3	3.72	1.09	Moderate-High Challenge
Some teaching methods limit my ability to think critically about <i>Maqasid</i> .	67	19	10	4	0	4.49	0.82	Very High Challenge
More practical training is needed to strengthen critical thinking through maqāṣid.	72	16	4	6	2	4.50	0.94	Very High Need
Learning <i>Maqasid</i> provides opportunities to link tradition with modern intellectual challenges.	46	27	21	5	1	4.12	0.98	Strong Opportunity

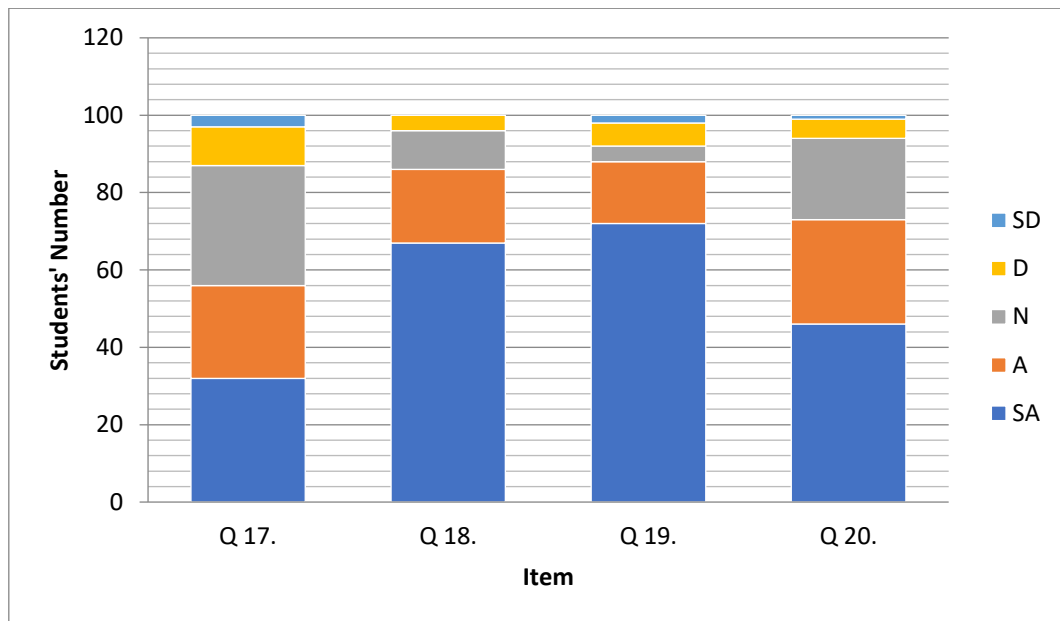


Figure 6. Challenges and Opportunities

Discussion of Items

Item 17: Students reported moderate-to-high difficulty in applying Maqāṣid to unfamiliar issues ($M = 3.72$). While 56% agreed, a significant portion (31%) remained neutral, suggesting uncertainty about their ability to transfer knowledge to new contexts. This reflects what Kamali describes as the “gap between theory and application” in Islamic law education, where principles are taught abstractly but rarely operationalized through practical problem-solving.

Item 18: A striking 86% of students agreed that teaching methods often limit their critical engagement with *Maqasid* ($M = 4.49$). This is the highest-rated challenge in the study, with very low standard deviation (0.82), indicating strong consensus. This supports the argument that traditional lecture-based methods, focused on memorization, stifle analytical skills. It also echoes findings by Halstead, who stressed that reforming pedagogy is as important as curriculum reform in Islamic education.

Item 19: A similarly high consensus emerged regarding the need for more practical training. An overwhelming 88% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed, suggesting that students not only identify deficiencies but also see a clear path toward improvement. This aligns with those who argue that practical engagement, such as case studies and simulations, is essential to enable students to apply *Maqasid* reasoning effectively. The findings call for embedding experiential learning into the curriculum, moving beyond theoretical lectures.

Item 20: Despite the challenges, students overwhelmingly recognized that *Maqasid* offers strong opportunities to bridge Islamic tradition with modern intellectual challenges ($M = 4.12$). Nearly three-quarters of respondents agreed, showing optimism about the relevance of *Maqasid* in addressing contemporary issues. This resonates with Ramadan’s call to revive *Maqasid* as a dynamic framework for reconciling heritage with modernity.

Synthesis

Dimension 4 paints a dual picture: significant challenges alongside substantial opportunities. The consensus on inadequate teaching methods and the urgent need for practical training highlights systemic gaps in pedagogy that constrain critical thinking. At the same time, students’ strong recognition of *Maqasid* as a bridge between tradition and modern challenges signals its transformative potential in Islamic higher education.

These findings suggest that addressing pedagogical shortcomings is essential if *Maqasid* is to fulfill its role as a critical thinking framework. Integrating active learning

methods, debate, problem-based learning, and real-world case applications, could reduce student difficulties and enhance confidence in applying *Maqasid* to new contexts. Moreover, the recognition of *Maqasid* as a bridge to modernity affirms its importance in equipping graduates to navigate global intellectual, social, and legal challenges, consistent with wider calls for reform in Islamic education.

Synthesis of Findings: Toward a Holistic Understanding of *Maqasid al-Shariah* in Higher Education

Integrative Discussion

The findings across the four dimensions, knowledge and understanding, application, critical thinking, and challenges/opportunities, collectively paint a nuanced picture of how *Maqasid al-Shariah* functions as both a learning framework and a catalyst for intellectual growth in higher education.

Knowledge as the Foundation

The first dimension confirmed that students possess a solid conceptual grasp of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. High levels of agreement suggested that the foundational principles, such as the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, are well understood. This aligns with earlier findings who emphasize that understanding *Maqasid* is indispensable for appreciating the ethical and rational underpinnings of Islamic law. Knowledge thus provides the necessary base upon which application and critical engagement can be developed.

Application as the Bridge to Practice

In the second dimension, students demonstrated moderate confidence in applying *Maqasid* within academic and real-life contexts. While many acknowledged the framework's practical value, a significant number expressed reservations or remained neutral, reflecting a gap between theoretical understanding and practical use. This tension mirrors Halstead's critique that Islamic education often prioritizes knowledge transmission over skills development. The implication here is clear: without structured opportunities for application, through case studies, simulations, or community-based projects, students may find it difficult to operationalize *Maqasid* in novel or unfamiliar settings.

Critical Thinking as a Developing Competence

The third dimension highlighted that *Maqasid al-Shariah* contributes meaningfully to the cultivation of critical thinking skills, though with variation across items. Many students felt more confident in questioning assumptions and analyzing different perspectives, echoing Laldin & Furqani view that *Maqasid* can nurture reflective reasoning. Yet, neutral responses and lingering doubts reveal that critical thinking is still underdeveloped, likely due to pedagogical limitations. As Alwani notes, education that emphasizes rote learning often undermines analytical growth, a challenge still evident in many Islamic universities. Thus, while *Maqasid* has strong potential as a critical thinking tool, its effectiveness depends on teaching methods that encourage inquiry, debate, and independent reasoning.

Challenges and Opportunities as the Turning Point

The fourth dimension brought these dynamics into sharper relief. Students identified serious challenges, particularly the inadequacy of teaching methods and the lack of practical training, echoing global concerns about pedagogy in Islamic higher education (Alriteemi et al., 2025). However, students also expressed optimism, recognizing that *Maqasid* provides a powerful bridge between Islamic tradition and contemporary intellectual challenges. This duality points to a paradox: *Maqasid* is both underutilized and highly promising, depending on how institutions choose to teach and contextualize it.

Implications for Higher Education Institutions

Taken together, these results suggest that *Maqasid al-Shariah* possesses strong potential as an educational framework, yet its transformative impact is constrained by

pedagogical practices. Knowledge is well established, but application and critical thinking remain inconsistent due to systemic barriers. The overarching implication is that curricular reform must go hand in hand with pedagogical reform. Institutions should therefore: i.) Integrate practice-based learning: Use real-world case studies, simulations, and fieldwork to enable students to apply *Maqasid* reasoning. ii.) Adopt student-centered pedagogy: Replace rote memorization with active learning strategies debates, problem-based learning, and collaborative projects to foster analytical growth. iii.) Bridge tradition and modernity: Explicitly connect classical *Maqasid* principles with contemporary issues such as human rights, sustainability, and bioethics, fulfilling the integrative vision advanced. iv.) Provide faculty development: Train instructors in innovative teaching methods, ensuring that pedagogical practices do not undermine the critical potential of *Maqasid*.

The integrative findings affirm that *Maqasid al-Shariah* is more than a historical legal framework; it is a living paradigm capable of equipping students with knowledge, application skills, and critical reasoning for navigating contemporary challenges. However, realizing this vision requires a rethinking of educational strategies to move beyond theoretical instruction toward experiential, inquiry-driven, and context-sensitive approaches. In this sense, *Maqasid* embodies not only a set of legal objectives but also a comprehensive educational philosophy for the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study demonstrate that *Maqasid al-Shariah* offers a powerful framework for both transmitting Islamic knowledge and cultivating higher-order thinking skills in university students. Students at the University of Benghazi displayed strong awareness of the conceptual underpinnings of *Maqasid*, confirming its value as an essential foundation for understanding Islamic law. However, their responses also revealed gaps in application and critical thinking, largely shaped by traditional teaching practices that emphasize rote memorization over analytical engagement. The challenges identified, particularly limited opportunities for practice-based learning and insufficient pedagogical innovation, underscore the need for structural reforms in Islamic higher education. At the same time, students' recognition of *Maqasid* as a bridge between tradition and modern intellectual issues suggests significant opportunities for curriculum development. By embedding *Maqasid* within active, problem-based, and inquiry-driven pedagogies, universities can better prepare students to address contemporary challenges with intellectual rigor and ethical grounding. This study therefore recommends that educational institutions integrate *Maqasid* into teaching practices not only as a body of theoretical knowledge but also as a dynamic methodology for cultivating critical reasoning. Faculty training, curriculum reform, and the inclusion of real-world applications are essential steps toward maximizing the transformative potential of *Maqasid al-Shariah* in higher education. Ultimately, by aligning Islamic pedagogy with the objectives of *Maqasid*, universities can foster graduates who are both deeply rooted in their intellectual tradition and equipped to engage critically with the complexities of the modern world.

REFERENCES

- Akem, U., Hamdan, N. M., Iskandar, M. Y., Efendi, E., & Halimahturrafiah, N. (2025). Digital Technology in Quranic Learning: Opportunities and Challenges. *Journal of Quranic Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 139–154. <https://joqer.intischolar.id/index.php/joqer/index>
- Akmal, F., Guspita, R., & Hafis, A. (2024). Principal Management in Improving Infrastructure in Junior High Schools. *Khalaqa: Journal of Education and Learning*, 2(1), 87–94.
- Ali Abdulghani, N., & Husayn Alrumayh, S. (2025). an Islamic Legal Perspective on

- Contemporary Health Issues: Integrating Traditional and Modern Approaches. *Jurnal Ilmu Psikologi Dan Kesehatan (SIKONTAN)*, 3(4), 187–198. <https://doi.org/10.47353/sikontan.v3i4.2785>
- Alriteemi, A., Mowafg Masuwd, Masoud, M., Alsayd, A., Aboujanah, Y., Alrumayh, S., & Ayad, N. (2025). The Geography of Place in the Qur'anic Narrative: A Hermeneutical Study of the Story of Moses and Al-Khidr through the Lenses of Philosophical Symbolism and Pedagogical Perception. *Tebuireng: Journal of Islamic Studies and Society*, 6(1), 119–138. <https://doi.org/10.33752/tjiss.v6i1.9813>
- Alrumayh, S., Ayad, N., Alouzi, K., Ibrahim, D., Abdullah, M., Masoud, M., & Kasheem, M. (2025). Perceptions of Islamic Studies, Sharia, and Law Students Towards the Use of Artificial Intelligence in English Learning. *Action Research Journal Indonesia (ARJI)*, 7(3), 2238 – 2256. <https://doi.org/10.61227/arji.v7i3.504>
- Alsayd, A., Masoud, M., Abdullah, M., Alzletni, N., Maati, A., Barka, A., & Baroud, N. (2025). Postgraduate Students' Usage Patterns, Perceptions, and Attitudes Toward Artificial Intelligence Applications in Learning: A Case Study of the University of Zawia, Libya. *Journal of Education and Teacher Training Innovation*, 3(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.61227/jetti.v3i1.149>
- Baroud, N., Ardila, Y., Akmal, F., & Sabrina, R. (2025). Opportunities and Challenges for Islamic Education Teachers in Using Artificial Intelligence in Learning. *Muaddib: Journal of Islamic Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 1–11.
- Cholidi, M. F., & Masuwd, M. A. (2025). Evaluating Tafsir Maqāṣidī As A Framework For Ecological Crisis Moderation. *ZAD Al-Mufasssirin*, 7(1), 54–74. <https://doi.org/10.55759/zam.v7i1.261>
- Engkizar, E., Jaafar, A., Alias, M., Guspita, B., & Albizar, R. (2025). Utilisation of Artificial Intelligence in Qur'anic Learning: Innovation or Threat? *Journal of Quranic Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 1–17. <https://joqer.intischolar.id/index.php/joqer/index>
- Engkizar, E., Jaafar, A., Masuwd, M. A., Rahman, I., Datres, D., Taufan, M., Akmal, F., Dasrizal, D., Oktavia, G., Yusrial, Y., & Febriani, A. (2025). Challenges and Steps in Living Quran and Hadith Research: An Introduction. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research of Higher Education (IJMURHICA)*, 8(3), 426–435. <https://doi.org/10.24036/ijmurhica.v8i3.396>
- Engkizar, E., K, M., Kaputra, S., Arifin, Z., Syafril, S., Anwar, F., & Mutathahirin, M. (2021). Building of Family-based Islamic Character for Children in Tablighi Jamaat Community. *Ta'dib*, 24(2), 299. <https://doi.org/10.31958/jt.v24i2.4847>
- Engkizar, E., Muslim, H., Mulyadi, I., & Putra, Y. A. (2025). Ten Criteria for an Ideal Teacher to Memorize the Quran. *Journal of Theory and Research Memorization Quran*, 1(1), 26–39. <https://joqer.intischolar.id/index.php/joqer>
- Faddhia, N., Alias, M. F. ., & Urfa, W. (2025). The effect of hot seat strategy on the 1st intermediate students' Reading comprehension. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Sciences*, 15(5), 1089–1098. <https://doi.org/10.18844/CJES.V15I5.5153>
- Febriani, A., Miftahurrahmah, M., Pajaria, S. A., & Nurhaliza, S. (2020). Six Motivations for Students to Take Tutoring. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research of Higher Education (IJMURHICA)*, 3(3), 121–129. <https://doi.org/10.24036/ijmurhica.v3i3.192>
- Hajjiah, A., Nasution, M., Hasibuan, N. A. P., Hilda, L., & Baroud, N. Y. (2025). Fostering Critical Thinking through Socio-Scientific Issue-Based Problem-Based Learning in Stoichiometry Instruction. *JTK (Jurnal Tadris Kimiya)*, 10(1), 35–44. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jtk.v10i1.43992>
- Hasanuddin, Masuwd, M., Ridwan, M., Mustamin, S. W., Saleh, M., & Fitrayani. (2024). Legal Reform of Consumer Privacy Rights Protection in Online Transactions Based on Islamic Economic Law Principles. *Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 22(2), 313–342. <https://doi.org/10.28918/jhi.v22i2.03>

- Htay, S. S., Po, E. T. H., & Kaewkanlaya, P. (2025). Building Student Character through Worship in Elementary Schools. *Muaddib: Journal of Islamic Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 55–63.
- Husayn, E., Alrumayh, S., Kasheem, M., Ibrahim, D., Alouzi, K., Shalghoum, N., & Almajri, S. (2025). The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Knowledge Management: Faculty Perspectives from the University of Zawia's Faculties of Economics, Management, and Law. *Journal of Education and Teacher Training Innovation*, 3(1), 52–66. <https://doi.org/10.61227/jetti.v3i1.163>
- Husin, H., Aziz, A. bin A., & Masuwd, M. (2025). Integrating Al-Ghazali's Educational Philosophy: Advancing Transformative Learning in Islamic Schools in the Digital Era. *SYAMIL: Journal of Islamic Education*, 13(1 SE-Articles), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.21093/sy.v13i1.10263>
- Ichwan, M. N., Asy'Ari Ulama'I, A. H., Masuwd, M. A., & Abdulghani, N. A. (2024). Sufism And Quranic Interpretation: Bridging Spirituality, Culture, and Political Discourse in Muslim Societies. *Ulumuna*, 28(2), 655–680. <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v28i2.1082>
- Ikhlas, R. Z., Ulwi, K., & Patri, P. (2025). Arabic Language Program Management for Muhadatsah Class. *Journal of Arabic Literature, Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 27–37.
- Kamali, M. H., Eriouiche, M., & Mohadi, M. (2024). مقاصد الشريعة والاجتهاد. *Journal of Contemporary Maqasid Studies*, 3(1), 145–174. <https://doi.org/10.52100/jcms.v3i1.134>
- Kasheem, A., Baroud, N., & Almajri, S. K. (2025). the Role of Emotional Intelligence in Enhancing Teacher-Student Relationships in Rural Schools. *Sibatik Journal*, 4(8), 1693–1704. <https://doi.org/10.54443/sibatik.v4i8.3158>
- Khairunisa, F., Kaema, M. T., & Ibrahim, B. (2025). The Effect of Instagram Reels on Arabic Vocabulary Learning Outcomes. *Journal of Arabic Literature, Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 47–54.
- Laldin, M. A., & Furqani, H. (2013). The Foundations of Islamic Finance and the Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah Requirements. *Journal of Islamic Finance*, 2(1), 31–37. <https://doi.org/10.12816/0001115>
- Lestari, R. H. S., Damayanti, A. K., & Masuwd, M. A. (2025). Optimising Societal Welfare: *Al-Insiyroh: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 11(1), 20–40. <https://doi.org/10.35309/alinsiyroh.v11i1.363>
- Mahmudin, M., Nafi, M., & Masuwd, M. (2025). Sharia Insurance Controversy: Fatwa Review and Its Development. *Waralaba: Journal Of Economics and Business*, 1(3), 33–48. <https://doi.org/10.61590/waralaba.v1i3.217>
- Manshur, U., Nur Hadi, & Mowafg Abraham Masuwd. (2025). Classical Cooperative Learning Model for Reading Classic Literature: Enhancing Student Independence through Self-Regulation. *Izdihar: Journal of Arabic Language Teaching, Linguistics, and Literature*, 8(1), 105–120. <https://doi.org/10.22219/jiz.v8i1.36829>
- Masuwd, M. A. (2024). Islamic Pluralism and Küng's Global Ethical Discourse: Toward a “Global-Maqāṣid” Centered Paradigm. *Ittesaal – Journal of Connecting Discourses*, 1(2), 41–63. <https://journal.ehya.com.pk/ijcd/article/view/9>
- Mohadi, M., & Tarshany, Y. (2023). Maqasid Al-Shari'ah and the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence. *Journal of Contemporary Maqasid Studies*, 2(2), 79–102. <https://doi.org/10.52100/jcms.v2i2.107>
- Mustafa, N. N. B., Elita, R., Guspita, R., & Vanessa, A. D. (2025). Tahfidz Teachers' Strategies in Improving the Memorization Skills of Slow Learners. *Al-Hashbi: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pendidikan Islam*, 3(1), 12–24.
- Mustapha, R., & Malkan, S. N. A. (2025). Maqasid Al-Shariah in the AI Era: Balancing Innovation and Islamic Ethical Principles. *International Journal of Islamic Theology & Civilization (E-ISSN-3009-1551)*, 3(3), 1–21.
- Nahid Ayad, Mowafg Abraham Masuwd, & Safa Alrumayh. (2025). From Riba to

- Zakat: An Analytical Study of Islamic Economic Principles and Their Distinction from Conventional Economics. *Bulletin of Islamic Research*, 3(4), 733–752. <https://doi.org/10.69526/bir.v3i4.358>
- Okenova, B., Xu, W., & Adel, S. (2025). The Practice of Moderate Education to Prevent Interreligious Conflict. *Muaddib: Journal of Islamic Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 36–54.
- Oktavia, G., Febriani, A., Hasnah, H., Sabrina, V., & Rahman, I. (2024). Enam Metode Menghafal Al-Qur'an Mahasiswa di Perguruan Tinggi Al-Qur'an Indonesia. *Jurnal Kepemimpinan Dan Pengurusan Sekolah*, 9(1), 12–23. <https://doi.org/10.34125/jkps.v9i1.105>
- Primarni, A., Masuwd, M., Makmudi, M., Fa'atin, S., & Nuhdi, A. (2025). The implementation of the theoretical humanism paradigm in holistic education. *Journal of Research in Instructional*, 5(1), 199–209. <https://doi.org/10.30862/jri.v5i1.601>
- Rahman, I., Kustati, M., & Sepriyanti, N. (2024). Sustainable Development: Implementation of The Talqin Method In Memorizing The Quran. *Jurnal Kepemimpinan Dan Pengurusan Sekolah*, 9(1), 99–108. <https://doi.org/10.34125/jkps.v9i1.355>
- Ruslan, R., Faijah, N., Luthfiyah, L., & ... (2024). Facing The Independent Curriculum: Teacher Challenges And Strategies In The Evaluation Of Islamic Religious Education Learning. *Jurnal At-Tarbiyat ...*, 07(02), 246–261. <https://doi.org/10.37758/jat.v7i2.861>
- Sabrina, V., Oktavia, G., Albizar, A., Susanti, H., AR, F. M., & Suryani, Y. (2022). Eight Supporting Factors for Students Success in Quran Memorization. *Khalifa: Journal of Islamic Education*, 6(1), 73. <https://doi.org/10.24036/kjie.v6i1.202>
- Setiawan, E., & Krisnandi, H. (2023). The Influence Of Discipline, Leadership Style And Work Environment On Employee Performance Through Motivation At The Secretariat General Of The DPR RI. *EKOMBIS REVIEW: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Dan Bisnis*, 12(1), 81–102. <https://doi.org/10.37676/ekombis.v12i1.4936>
- Shalghoum, N., Yahya, N., Abdullah, M., Masuwd, M., Kasheem, M., Alrumayh, S., Aryanti, Y., & Rosyadi, N. (2025). Integrating Maqasid al-Shariah into Higher Education: Enhancing the Role of Faculty in Achieving the SDGs. *International Journal of Islamic Studies Higher Education*, 4(2), 153–173. <https://doi.org/10.24036/insight.v4i2.231>
- Solihah, I., Isma Hisbullah Aljauhany, Khaibar Akmaluddin, Ahmad Mustafidin, Safa Alrumayh, & Alfian Eko Rochmawan. (2025). Integrating al-qur'an, hadith, and science in islamic education: Tracing scientific insights. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Sains Islam Interdisipliner*, 123–131. <https://doi.org/10.59944/jipsi.v4i3.453>
- Sulaksono, Sulistyowati, E., Masnun, M. A., & Yahya, N. (2025). An Ideal Model for The Preparation of Internal Regulations of Universities in Indonesia Based on Meaningful Participation in The Success of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) 2030. *Jurnal Suara Hukum*, 7(2), 463–487. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jsh.v7n2.p463-487>
- Sumaia Almajri, Najah Baroud, Khuloud Mustafa Alouzi, & Amaal Kasheem. (2025). Islamic Psychology: An Integrative Approach to Human Behavior and Mental Well-Being. *Bulletin of Islamic Research*, 3(4), 687–704. <https://doi.org/10.69526/bir.v3i4.353>
- Taofeeq Olamilekan Sanusi. (2025). Maqasid Al-Shariah as an Evaluative Framework for the Digitalisation of Islamic Education. *Permata: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 6(1), 49–63. <https://doi.org/10.47453/permata.v6i1.3114>
- Taufiqurrahman, M., Lathoif Ghozali, M., & Kasheem, M. (2025). Understanding Halal Awareness in the Digital Age: A Millennial Perspective. *Create: Journal of*

- Islamic Management and Business*, 1(2), 59–71.
<https://doi.org/10.59373/create.v1i2.162>
- Ummah, A. K., Mahmudi, M. B., Wardani, A. Z., & Ummah, A. K. (2025). Efforts of Dormitory Supervisors in Overcoming Problems in the Quran Memorization Dormitory. *Journal of Theory and Research Memorization Quran*, 1(1), 1–14.
- Wati, A., Asril, Z., & Guspita, R. (2025). The Role of Akhlak Mahmudah in Counteracting the Moral Crisis of the Digital Age: A Review of Contemporary Islamic Literature. *Journal of Islamic Thought, Research and Practice*, 1(1), 27–34.
<https://doi.org/10.70588/jitera.v1i1.325>
- Wulandari, W., Millah, S. E., Lubis, T., & Arifin, Z. (2024). Seven Challenges for Arabic Department Students in Memorizing Hadith. *Journal of Arabic Literature, Teaching and Learning*, 1(2), 1–13.
- Yahya, N., Abdullah, M., & Masuwd, M. (2025). Development of Digital Education in Libya: Progress, Challenges, and Future Directions. *International Journal of Education and Digital Learning* |, 3(5), 211–219. <https://doi.org/10.47353/ijedl.v3i5.307>
- Zhaffar, N. M., Bakar, N. A., & Muhamad, N. A. F. (2025). Modeling Strategies in Teaching Critical Thinking in Islamic Education. *Akademika*, 95(01), 260–276.
<https://doi.org/10.17576/akad-2025-9501-15>

Copyright holder :

© Abdulghani, N., Masuwd, M., Alrumayh, S., Masoud, M., Touré, Y.

First publication right:

Journal of Islamic Studies and Social Science

This article is licensed under:

CC-BY-SA