



Integration of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*-Based Character Education Management: A Qualitative Study at State Islamic Junior High School (MTsN) 4 Mandailing Natal

**Mursyidan Auliya Nasution^a, Faisal Musa^b, Ainun Mardia Harahap^c,
Irma Suryani Siregar^d, Kasman^e**

^{abcde}Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Mandailing Natal, Indonesia

Abstract

This study aims to explore in depth and comprehensively the integration of character education management based on the principles of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah at MTsN 4 Mandailing Natal. The increasingly alarming phenomenon of adolescent moral decline in the era of digital disruption necessitates a fundamental reorientation of character education governance; it must move beyond mere formality or ceremonial practice and instead be firmly rooted in substantive Islamic philosophical and theological values. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing primary data sources that include the madrasah head, deputy heads (curriculum and student affairs), Aqidah Akhlak (Islamic creed and ethics) teachers, homeroom teachers, and students. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed via reduction, presentation, and conclusion-drawing—processes reinforced by the triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. The findings indicate that Ḥifẓ al-dīn (preservation of religion), ḥifẓ al-nafs (preservation of life), ḥifẓ al-'aql (preservation of intellect), ḥifẓ al-nasl (preservation of lineage), and ḥifẓ al-māl (preservation of wealth) are not taught as standalone subjects; rather, they are translated into classroom instruction, habituation, role-modeling, codes of conduct, and both intra- and extracurricular activities. At the managerial level, this integration occurs through the interconnected processes of planning, organizing, actuating, controlling, and evaluation. A significant finding of the study lies in the pattern of implicit pedagogical integration: while the term maqāṣid is not always explicitly stated, its substance is present in decisions, habits, interactions, and oversight mechanisms. Its sustainability is supported by the commitment of the madrasa community, coordination, a religious culture, role modeling, support from families and the community, a conducive environment, and adequate facilities; conversely, obstacles include the diverse backgrounds of students, inconsistent discipline, the influence of social media, a lack of continuity in family guidance, varying levels of learning motivation, and time constraints. These findings offer theoretical implications for developing an integrative-interconnective

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Corresponding author's e-mail: mursyidanauliyanasution@gmail.com

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Islamic education management model, as well as practical implications for madrasa administrators in cultivating graduates who embody the ulul albab character.

Keywords: Character Education Management, *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, Integration of Islamic Education

INTRODUCTION

Fundamentally, character education is not a task completed simply by drafting a rule, implementing a program, or offering advice. Character develops through an iterative process—shaped by institutional planning, the allocation of roles, the values demonstrated in the behavior of adults, and how students experience and internalize these habits in their daily lives. Consequently, character education in *madrasahs* must be integrated into the educational governance structure rather than treated as an add-on agenda operating outside the system. This perspective is increasingly vital as *madrasahs* navigate social changes, technological advancements, and increasingly diverse social environments.

From Thomas Lickona's perspective, character education encompasses three interconnected dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Together, these dimensions demonstrate that character extends beyond the mere ability to distinguish right from wrong; it also involves the internalization of values and the capacity to translate them into action. Arif et al. (2023) highlight the interplay of these three dimensions as crucial to the relevance of character education in the context of 21st-century societal developments. Findings by Purwati et al. (2024) reinforce this framework, demonstrating that moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action serve as key aspects for reflecting on students' moral development. Based on this framework, character education cannot be understood merely as the transmission of moral knowledge; rather, it requires a process that enables values to be understood, internalized, and manifested in behavior. In the *madrasah* context, this process demands alignment among institutional policies, instruction, habituation, role modeling, and an educational environment that consistently provides students with opportunities to experience and practice these values.

Madrasahs occupy a distinctive position in this regard. On one hand, they fulfill an academic function similar to other formal educational institutions; on the other, they bear religious and cultural responsibilities to cultivate the character, religiosity, and social responsibility of their students. Consequently, the quality of madrasah management cannot be assessed solely by administrative orderliness or academic achievement, but also by the institution's ability to establish governance that allows moral values to be tangibly integrated into the students' learning experiences and daily lives. Amalia and Zuhro (2022), for instance, demonstrate that character education management in madrasahs requires a systematic process—encompassing planning, implementation, evaluation, control, and improvement—to ensure that character formation does not occur merely incidentally.

From a broader perspective, integrating character education into Islamic educational management necessitates a connection between the roles of educators, the curriculum, and the educational environment. Hasan (2024) indicates that strengthening character education within Islamic educational management is linked to the role of teachers, curriculum design, and the creation of a school environment conducive to the moral and spiritual development of students. Thus, the fundamental issue is not merely the availability of character education programs, but rather the shared values that serve as the guiding orientation, how these values are translated into management functions, and how continuity is maintained as students transition from the madrasah setting to their family and community environments.

Within the framework of Islamic education, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law) provides a normative orientation that places the public good (*maṣlaḥah*) at the heart of educational provision. This concept relates not only to the abstract goals of Islamic law but also to the effort to realize the public good through the safeguarding of fundamental human needs. Within the classical framework, these necessities encompass the preservation of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). Nazaruddin and Kamilullah (2020) emphasize that *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* is oriented towards the public interest (*maṣlaḥah*) that constitutes the objective of Sharia, while Wicaksono and Azizah (2022) demonstrate that this framework can be contextualized within the goals of Islamic education through the cultivation of religiosity, compassion, intellectual intelligence, family life, and work ethic.

From an educational perspective, these five orientations can be interpreted as a value framework for the character development of learners. *Ḥifẓ al-dīn* relates to strengthening religious commitment through the habitual practice of worship and religious conduct; *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* concerns respect for human dignity as well as attention to safety, health, and hygiene; *ḥifẓ al-'aql* focuses on developing cognitive abilities, mastering knowledge, and exercising reason responsibly; *ḥifẓ al-nasl* pertains to safeguarding honor, propriety, and ethical social interaction; and *Ḥifẓ al-dīn* is realized through honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and the wise management of resources. This interpretation aligns with the study by Wicaksono and Azizah (2022), which positions *maqāṣid* as the foundation for formulating the objectives of Islamic education, as well as the work of Mahmud et al. (2023), which demonstrates that the five *maqāṣid* orientations can serve as a framework for shaping learners' character.

The *maqāṣid* orientations become particularly relevant when character education is understood in a more substantive manner. Character education should not merely aim for compliance with rules or the cultivation of observable behaviors; rather, it must encompass the integrated development of the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and social dimensions of learners, as well as their sense of responsibility. In this context, the *maqāṣid* approach provides a framework that enables Islamic education to view learners more holistically. Hardianto and Fata (2025), for instance, demonstrate that *maqāṣid al-Qur'an* and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* can serve as the paradigmatic basis for Islamic education, encompassing its objectives, curriculum, and practices in a holistic manner. Meanwhile,

Mahmud et al. (2023) demonstrates that *maqāṣid*-based character formation entails the involvement of parents, teachers, and the community; consequently, character is shaped not only through formal instruction but also within the broader educational environment.

Nevertheless, the study of *maqāṣid* in education still offers room for further development, particularly regarding the management of character education. While numerous studies have addressed *maqāṣid* as an educational paradigm, an educational goal, or a framework for character formation, research specifically exploring how this orientation is translated into the comprehensive functions of educational management remains relatively limited. For instance, the study by Anam, Habiburrahman, and Haq (2024) indicates that *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can serve as a foundation for Islamic education policymaking by prioritizing the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. However, the question of how these five orientations are systematically integrated into the management functions—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling/evaluating—within the context of character education in formal *madrasas* requires deeper empirical explanation. This research addresses that gap.

Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 4 Mandailing Natal was selected as the research site because its character education practices feature activities that can be interpreted through the framework of the five *maqāṣid* orientations. Habits such as *tadarus* (Quran recitation), communal prayer, and congregational *Dhuhr* prayer represent the dimension of *Ḥifẓ al-dīn* (preservation of religion); efforts to foster cleanliness, order, safety, and mutual respect relate to *ḥifẓ al-naḥs*(preservation of life); literacy activities, discussions, and the development of critical thinking skills relate to *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* (preservation of intellect); the cultivation of proper conduct, politeness, respect for teachers and parents, and social ethics relates to *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (preservation of lineage); while honesty, trustworthiness, facility maintenance, and charitable giving (*infaq* and *sadaqah*) demonstrate the dimension of *ḥifẓ al-māl* (preservation of wealth). These practices align with the characteristics of *maqāṣid* -based education, which positions these five protective orientations as the foundation for students' character development.

Simultaneously, the madrasah's vision emphasizes the realization of human resources that excel in quality and achievement, possess noble character (*akhlakul karimah*), and are devout. With a student body of 977 distributed across 32 classes, the management of character education requires planning, role allocation, program implementation, and evaluation conducted in a focused and collaborative manner. These data provide an empirical context for observing how the value orientations inherent in *maqāṣid* do not remain merely at a conceptual level but are actively integrated into the management of educational life at the madrasah .

Preliminary research findings indicate that the term *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* is not always explicitly used in policy documents or the daily language of educators. Nevertheless, the substance of values aligned with *maqāṣid* orientations is evident in decisions, programs, habitual practices, and educational interactions. This situation demonstrates that the integration of *maqāṣid* need not be achieved by teaching *maqāṣid* as a standalone subject; rather, it can occur through educational management that adopts

the public interest (*maṣlaḥah*) as the guiding principle for action. Consequently, this study does not merely ask whether madrasas employ the term *maqāṣid* ; instead, it explores how values aligned with those five orientations are translated into educational policies, programs, practices, and evaluation methods.

Based on this framework, the study aims to analyze three aspects. First, the forms and meanings of the five *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* values that underpin character education at MTsN 4 Mandailing Natal. Second, the process of integrating these values into management functions—specifically planning, organizing, actuating, controlling, and evaluating. Third, the facilitating and inhibiting factors affecting the sustainability of this integration. This study does not aim to test causal relationships or quantify the magnitude of a program's impact; rather, it seeks an empirical understanding of how the orientation toward the public interest is translated into the governance of character education. Accordingly, the study proposes a "Maqāṣid-POAC" synthesis, wherein *maqāṣid* serves as the value orientation, POAC functions as the managerial mechanism, and *madrasah* culture acts as the arena for character actualization.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach was selected because the research focuses not on quantifying relationships between variables, but rather on understanding the processes, meanings, and managerial practices occurring within a real-world context. The study was conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 4 Mandailing Natal—located in Huraba Village, Siabu District, Mandailing Natal Regency, North Sumatra—with research activities spanning April to August 2026. This location was chosen because the madrasah implements character-building practices integrated with religious activities, instruction, codes of conduct, student activities, and institutional culture.

Primary data sources consisted of seven informants representing various levels—policy, program management, instructional delivery, classroom management, and student experience—namely the madrasah head, the deputy head for curriculum, the deputy head for student affairs, an Aqidah Akhlaq (Islamic creed and ethics) teacher, a homeroom teacher, and several students. Secondary data were obtained from madrasah archives and documents, such as work plans, activity schedules, instructional materials, activity records, and relevant literature. The selection of diverse sources was intended to ensure a comprehensive picture that does not rely on a single perspective.

Data collection was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations focused on instructional activities, religious habituation, a culture of discipline, social interactions, role modeling, and specific activities such as Quran recitation (*tadarus*), congregational Dhuhr prayer, communal prayer, Yasin recitation, short religious talks (*kultum*), speeches in four languages, Scouting, and activities aimed at developing student potential. Interviews were used to explore the processes of planning, role allocation, implementation, and evaluation, as well as students' experiences regarding character building. Document analysis was used to

verify the consistency between informants' accounts and available program evidence. The use of these three techniques adhered to the principle of methodological triangulation to ensure detailed and robust findings. Data analysis was conducted in three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. During the reduction stage, data were categorized into three areas of focus: (1) the interpretation of the five *maqāṣid* values within character education; (2) their integration into the functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling/evaluating; and (3) supporting and inhibiting factors. In the presentation stage, data were organized into thematic matrices and analytical narratives to examine the relationships between values, management functions, practices, and environmental conditions. Conclusions were subsequently verified through the triangulation of sources, techniques, and timeframes. This procedure was crucial to ensure that interpretations did not rely solely on the statements of a single informant but were reinforced by observations and available documentation.

When reporting the findings, informant identities were used judiciously based on analytical requirements. Interview excerpts were not treated as ends in themselves but as evidence to be interpreted in order to explain patterns. Consequently, the research findings can be understood at two levels: the empirical level—what the *madrasah* actually did—and the analytical level—why those practices could be understood as a form of integrating *maqāṣid* into character education management. It is also necessary to clarify the study's methodological limitations; given its descriptive-qualitative design and focus on a single *madrasah*, the findings are intended to provide contextual understanding rather than statistical generalizations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

***Maqāṣid Al-Syarī'ah* as a Value Framework for Character Education**

Research findings indicate that the five *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* values at MTsN 4 Mandailing Natal function primarily as a value framework. These values are not introduced to students as a separate subject; instead, they are translated into recurring activities closely integrated into the students' daily lives. This approach is crucial because character develops through experience rather than mere definitions. In this context, habituation serves as a bridge between normative values and actual behavior. Knowledge of goodness transforms into action when the institution creates situations that allow students to practice doing good consistently.

The table below presents a mapping of the study's empirical findings. This mapping does not imply that a single activity embodies only one *maqāṣid* value; rather, a single practice may encompass multiple orientations simultaneously. Congregational prayer, for instance, is directly linked to *hifẓ al-dīn* (preservation of religion) while also fostering discipline, a sense of community, responsibility, and care for others. Similarly, discussion activities can reinforce *hifẓ al-'aql* (preservation of the intellect) while cultivating the ability to respect differing opinions. Therefore, these five values should be viewed as an interconnected, mutually reinforcing network rather than as isolated, standalone categories.

Table 1. Maqāṣid Al-Syarī'ah as a Value Framework for Character Education

<i>Maqāṣid Values</i>	<i>Character Translation</i>	<i>Practices Identified</i>
<i>Hifẓ al-Dīn</i>	Religiosity, discipline in worship, and awareness of practicing religious teachings	Quran recitation, prayer, congregational Dhuhr prayer, short religious talk, recitation of Surah Yasin, observance of Islamic holidays, Quran memorization, Ramadan Islamic camp
<i>Hifẓ al-Nafs</i>	Looking after oneself and others—healthy, safe, and caring	Cleanliness, orderliness, a safe environment, mutual respect, persuasive guidance, and clean and healthy living
<i>Hifẓ al-'Aql</i>	Literacy, critical thinking, active questioning, and responsible use of knowledge	Discussion, literacy, problem analysis, academic guidance, competitions, learning reflection
<i>Hifẓ al-Nasl</i>	Etiquette, personal honor, self-restraint, social ethics	Good manners, respect for teachers and parents, upholding a good reputation, guidance on social interactions, and setting a good example
<i>Hifẓ al-Māl</i>	Honest, trustworthy, frugal, responsible, and mindful of resources	Taking care of facilities, being honest during exams, using items or money responsibly, and giving voluntary contributions and alms

Hifẓ al-Dīn (preservation of religion) stands out as the most visible dimension of daily life at the madrasah. The head of the madrasah explained that as the Dhuhr (noon) prayer time approaches, academic activities are temporarily suspended so that students and teachers can walk to the mosques in the villages of Huraba and Lumbandolok to perform congregational prayers. Tadarus (recitation) of the Qur'an takes place before lessons begin, while activities such as Yasinan (recitation of Surah Yasin), kultum (short religious talks), commemorations of major Islamic holidays, tajhizul mayit (funeral rites training), Ramadan religious camps, joint prayers, and tahfiz (Qur'an memorization) are scheduled as part of the institution's routine practices. These practices demonstrate that the orientation toward preserving religion is not merely a slogan but is embedded in the institution's daily rhythm. This finding aligns with the perspective of Farid et al. (2026), who view hifẓ al-dīn programs as activities requiring institutional management to ensure the continuity of religious values. Furthermore, a standout feature at MTsN 4 Mandailing Natal is the active involvement of teachers as both mentors and role models, ensuring that these habitual practices go beyond mere physical presence during acts of worship.

Hifẓ al-Nafs (preservation of life/self) is evident in the madrasah's focus on safety, cleanliness, orderliness, health, and social relationships. The head of the madrasah links discipline, honesty, and responsibility to the students' ability to safeguard themselves and regulate their behavior. Teachers and homeroom teachers monitor orderliness, while duty teachers, homeroom teachers, and guidance counselors collaborate to maintain a safe and comfortable environment. In this context, preserving life is not limited to physical safety; it is also reflected in efforts to create an atmosphere where students feel valued and free from humiliation, and where they are guided through

a persuasive approach. This perspective expands the function of character education from merely "molding obedient students" to "creating an environment that enables students to grow safely." *Hifẓ al-ʿAql* (preservation of the intellect) is translated into practice through learning experiences that allow students to ask questions, engage in discussions, express opinions, analyze problems, seek information, and participate in academic guidance and competitions. Interview findings with the Deputy Head of Curriculum indicate that teachers are directed to prioritize character building within their instructional materials rather than focusing solely on completing the curriculum content. Homeroom teachers also motivate students to study diligently, gather information from diverse sources, and express their views respectfully. Thus, preserving the intellect is not understood merely as "making students smart," but rather as directing the application of knowledge toward beneficial and responsible ends. This interpretation aligns with the ideas of Purwati et al. (2024), who argue that moral development requires integrating knowledge, feelings, and actions.

In this study, *Hifẓ al-Nasl* (preservation of lineage/progeny) is translated primarily through the safeguarding of honor, *adab* (proper conduct), ethical social interaction, and the cultivation of a generation characterized by good behavior. The *madrasah* fosters habits such as speaking politely, respecting teachers and parents, upholding one's own and the school's reputation, and avoiding behaviors that harm oneself or others. During routine activities—specifically classroom guidance sessions—students are entrusted with self-regulation; when infractions occur, they are engaged in dialogue to ensure they understand the consequences of their actions. This signifies a shift in the concept of *hifẓ al-nasl* from the mere protection of offspring to the cultivation of the generation's moral quality. This interpretation is consistent with the findings of Nixon et al. (2025) and Rudiansyah & Jaya (2025), which link *maqāṣid* (higher objectives of Sharia) with *adab*, honor, self-control, and student moral development.

Hifẓ al-Māl (preservation of wealth) is realized by cultivating habits of honesty, trustworthiness, frugality, responsibility, and care for shared facilities and resources. Students are accustomed to maintaining *madrasah* facilities, using goods and money responsibly, refraining from cheating, and faithfully carrying out entrusted tasks. Acts of *infaq* (voluntary spending) and *ṣadaqah* (charity) add a social dimension to the concept of wealth, framing it not merely as an asset to be guarded but as a trust to be utilized for the common good. In the context of character education, this perspective demonstrates that material responsibility can serve as a medium for moral education. This aligns with research by Solihin et al. (2020) and Putra (2025) regarding honesty, trustworthiness, simplicity, and responsible resource management.

Ultimately, these five orientations form a unified whole. *Hifẓ al-Dīn* provides spiritual direction; *hifẓ al-nafs* establishes conditions for safety and care; *hifẓ al-ʿaql* strengthens cognitive abilities; *hifẓ al-nasl* upholds proper conduct and the quality of social relationships; and *hifẓ al-māl* fosters responsibility regarding resources. Here, the relevance of *maqāṣid* to character education transcends mere terminological similarity; *maqāṣid* offers a holistic framework for understanding the human being. Character

education asks not only, "Do students behave well?" but also, "Does the educational environment protect what is essential for human growth, and do educational decisions foster the common good?" (Wicaksono & Azizah, 2022; Hardianto & Fata, 2025).

Integrating Values into Management Functions: From Value Orientation to Governance

The second finding indicates that the integration of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law) spans various management functions. Values do not merely emerge during the execution of activities; rather, they are present from the initial stages of setting direction, assigning roles, and providing educational experiences, all the way through to evaluation. This finding is significant because it demonstrates that character education is not solely a pedagogical issue but also a matter of governance. To build character consistently, an institution must agree on objectives, allocate responsibilities, provide opportunities for practice, and review outcomes.

It should be noted that the term *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* is not explicitly stated in the madrasah's vision and mission statements. However, the substance of this orientation is reflected in the goal of shaping students who are excellent, high-achieving, possess noble character, and are pious. Thus, the integration observed is substantive rather than merely terminological. This finding offers a crucial lesson for Islamic educational management: the strength of a value is determined not by the frequency with which its academic term is cited, but by the consistency with which the principle guides institutional decisions.

Planning: Maqāṣid as a Substantive Orientation

At MTsN 4 Mandailing Natal, planning is conducted through working meetings at the start of the academic year, involving the madrasah head, deputy heads, teachers, and other relevant stakeholders. Interview results indicate that student needs serve as a foundation for program development. Character education is subsequently linked to the operational curriculum, the madrasah work plan, student affairs programs, codes of conduct, instructional materials, and habituation agendas. The deputy head for curriculum affairs emphasized that teachers are guided to ensure their instructional materials incorporate not only subject matter targets but also goals for character formation.

From the perspective of *maqāṣid*, this planning process demonstrates a shift from activity-based planning toward planning grounded in objectives that promote the common good (*maslahah*). Programs are evaluated not merely based on the activities themselves, but on the values cultivated and the beneficiaries involved. For instance, the habitual practice of acts of worship aligns with the preservation of religion (*hifẓ al-dīn*); creating a safe environment relates to the preservation of life (*hifẓ al-naḥs*); literacy and discussion activities correspond to the preservation of the intellect (*hifẓ al-'aql*); fostering proper conduct (*adab*) relates to the preservation of lineage (*hifẓ al-naṣl*); and facility maintenance alongside charitable giving (*infak*) aligns with the preservation of wealth (*hifẓ al-māl*). This approach is consistent with the views of Miftahussurur et al. (2025), who posit that *maqāṣid* (the higher objectives of Sharia) can serve as both a

normative and operational framework within the architecture of educational management.

Because the process is participatory, planning demonstrates that character values are not the exclusive domain of a single department. Teachers of Aqidah Akhlaq (Islamic creed and ethics), homeroom teachers, and the student affairs and curriculum divisions all share a unified chain of responsibility. From a managerial perspective, this model enhances the consistency of educational messaging, ensuring that values cultivated in the classroom are reinforced through student activities, school regulations, and daily culture. In other words, planning serves as a starting point that bridges policy language with the actual experiences of the students.

Organization: The Distribution of Trust and Collaboration

Organization is achieved through a relatively clear division of tasks and responsibilities. The madrasah head holds primary responsibility; the Deputy Head for Curriculum coordinates the integration of character education into instruction; the Deputy Head for Student Affairs manages discipline and student activities; subject teachers instill character values during lessons; homeroom teachers monitor the development of attitudes and behavior; guidance counselors provide support; and extracurricular supervisors instill character through out-of-class activities. This division extends beyond the formal structure, reinforced through meetings, coordination, internal discussions, and communication with parents.

When viewed through the lens of *maqāṣid* (higher objectives), this structure can be understood as a distribution of *amānah* (trust/responsibility). Each element assumes responsibility aligned with its role, yet the ultimate goal remains the same: the well-being of the students. The values of *ta'āwun* (mutual cooperation), *amānah* (trustworthiness), and *mas'ūliyyah* (accountability) serve as operational principles explaining why character education proves ineffective when shouldered solely by religious studies teachers or guidance counselors. Hasanah et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of organization in ensuring that roles and competencies are appropriately assigned, while Rachman et al. (2023) highlight the need for visionary leadership capable of uniting various elements toward the goal of character formation.

The role of the homeroom teacher is strategic, as it sits at the intersection of policy, subject teachers, students, and parents. When behavioral changes occur, the homeroom teacher can coordinate with subject teachers and guidance counselors while simultaneously contacting parents. This mechanism demonstrates that the organization of character education is not merely a hierarchy of positions but a communication network. At this juncture, coordination becomes an integral part of educational quality. Values that are not communicated across roles are easily lost, whereas values reinforced repeatedly across different relationships have a greater chance of becoming ingrained habits.

Implementation: Habituation as a Mechanism for Internalization

Implementation is the stage where value orientation meets daily reality. In the context of MTsN 4 Mandailing Natal, character is cultivated through practices such as *tadarus* (Quran recitation) prior to lessons, communal prayers, congregational *Dhuhr* prayers, short religious talks (*kultum*), *Yasin* recitations, Quran memorization (*tahfiz*), and the observance of major Islamic holidays. It also involves speeches delivered in four languages—Indonesian, English, Arabic, and Mandailing—as well as Friday charity (*infak*), Scouting activities, and other extracurricular programs. The head of the *madrasah* emphasizes the importance of habituation, noting that character does not develop from sporadic activities. In this context, repetition is not merely an empty routine but an educational mechanism; it provides students with repeated opportunities to practice values until those values become an integral part of their daily lives.

This habituation is reinforced by the practice of leading by example. Teachers do not simply issue directives; they actively participate in religious activities, model appropriate behavior, offer motivation, and employ a persuasive approach when students have not yet formed the habit. Homeroom teachers explain that for students who lack consistency, the approach focuses more on fostering awareness than on punishment. This pattern demonstrates that "actuating" entails more than just executing a program; it involves motivating individuals through appropriate approaches so that the program holds genuine meaning for those participating in it.

In the learning process, the integration of *maqāṣid* (objectives of Sharia) occurs implicitly. *Ḥifẓ al-dīn* (preservation of religion) manifests through prayer and by linking subject matter to Islamic values. *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (preservation of life/self) is addressed through discussions on health, hygiene, and respect for others. *Ḥifẓ al-ʿAql* (preservation of intellect) is fostered through questioning, discussion, analysis, literacy activities, and problem-solving. *Ḥifẓ al-Nasl* (preservation of lineage/progeny) is cultivated through proper etiquette and social conduct. Meanwhile, *Ḥifẓ al-Māl* (preservation of wealth/property) is instilled through honesty, frugality, and the proper care of facilities. This demonstrates that integration is not merely a matter of attaching the term *maqāṣid* to every activity, but rather embedding its orientation into the objectives and methods of implementation.

Student experiences reinforce these findings; they cite *tadarus* (Quran recitation), congregational prayers, supplications, short religious talks (*kultum*), and other religious activities as routine parts of their lives at the *madrasah* . Students also describe how teachers frequently emphasize honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, respect for teachers and parents, and mutual assistance. These data are not used to claim that the students' character is "perfect," but rather to show that the practice of values is present in their experiences and recognized by them as an integral part of *madrasah* life.

Evaluation: Character as a Subject of Monitoring and Improvement

Evaluation is conducted continuously through daily observations, homeroom teacher reports, teacher assessments, supervision, guidance and counseling services,

coordination meetings, and communication with parents. The indicators monitored include not only academic grades but also discipline, honesty, responsibility, interaction with teachers and peers, adherence to rules, and religious observance habits. Evaluation results are used to identify students requiring attention and to formulate appropriate follow-up actions.

This pattern demonstrates that "controlling" is not understood merely as oversight to detect errors, but rather functions as a mechanism for feedback. When a student exhibits a change in behavior, the homeroom teacher and subject teachers seek to identify the underlying cause through communication. If infractions recur, guidance efforts may be intensified through the school counselor or parental involvement. Within the framework of *maqāṣid* (higher objectives), evaluation serves to ensure that the focus on well-being extends beyond the planning stage. The impact of values must be observed in actual behavior, and the resulting insights used to refine the process.

This illustrates a reflective management cycle: planning provides direction, organizing establishes structure, implementation yields experience, and evaluation feeds that experience back into the institution as a basis for learning. This cycle ensures that character education does not stagnate into mere routine; rather, it remains open to correction and improvement. In this context, evaluation becomes an integral part of fostering an organizational learning culture, rather than serving merely as an administrative tool.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors: Character Education as an Ecosystem

Research findings indicate that the sustainability of integration is not determined solely by the existence of a program. Supporting factors reveal mutually reinforcing internal and external ecosystems, whereas inhibiting factors highlight the limits of the *madrasah's* control over students' lives. These findings align with the study by Mahmud et al. (2023), which positions families, teachers, and the community as crucial elements in *maqāṣid*-based character formation.

The most prominent internal factor is the shared commitment of the *madrasah* community. The head of the *madrasah* emphasizes that character education is not merely the duty of religious studies or guidance and counseling teachers, but the responsibility of all stakeholders. This commitment is bolstered by coordination among teachers, homeroom teachers, the student affairs division, and guidance counselors. An established religious culture also provides a supportive social context for habituation programs. The exemplary conduct of the *madrasah* head and teachers serves as another key factor; students do not simply hear about values but witness them being enacted in daily interactions.

Support from families, the school committee, and the community constitutes a vital external factor. The *madrasah* acknowledges that habits cultivated at school may not always be reinforced when students are at home; consequently, communication with parents becomes an integral part of the character-building process. These findings demonstrate that character education extends beyond the school gates. When values

apply only during school hours, they easily become situational behaviors; however, when values are reinforced by the family and social environment, the likelihood of their sustainability increases.

Conversely, the study identified obstacles stemming from the diverse characters and backgrounds of the students. Differences in parenting styles, habits, family attention, and initial environments result in varying levels of receptiveness to character-building efforts. Therefore, applying the same approach to all students does not always yield the same response. Effective character management requires an adaptive and iterative approach to character building. Another obstacle stems from inconsistent discipline—manifesting as tardiness, incomplete uniforms or required gear, or a lack of adherence to school regulations. The madrasah addresses these issues through reprimands, guidance, counseling support, and parental involvement when necessary.

The influence of social media and peer environments outside the madrasah presents an increasingly tangible challenge. Informants noted that while technology benefits learning, uncontrolled use can disrupt focus, provide access to age-inappropriate content, or lead to imitative behavior. These findings extend the concepts of *hifz al-'aql* (preservation of the intellect) and *hifz al-nafs* (preservation of the self/life) into the digital realm: preserving the intellect entails helping students manage information, while preserving the self requires the ability to protect oneself from potentially harmful environments.

Limited time for guidance and the pressure to cover the curriculum present further managerial challenges. Teachers must strike a balance between achieving learning targets and instilling values. These findings underscore that integrating character education cannot be achieved simply by adding more activities. Instead, a more sustainable approach involves embedding values into existing activities. Consequently, character building does not become an added burden—an "extra hour"—but rather a quality that shapes the nature of instruction and interaction.

Conceptual Synthesis: The Maqāṣid–POAC Integration Model

Based on the overall findings, this study formulates a conceptual synthesis proposing that the integration of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law) into character education management occurs across four interconnected layers. The first layer is value orientation, comprising the five core objectives of *maqāṣid*. The second layer consists of managerial mechanisms: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC). The third layer comprises practical mediums, such as instruction, habituation, role modeling, school regulations, and both intra-curricular and extracurricular activities. The fourth layer involves feedback through evaluation, coordination, and follow-up. These four layers operate as a cycle rather than a linear progression.

This pattern can be summarized simply as follows: " *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* → orientation toward the common good (*maṣlaḥah*) → Planning–Organizing–Actuating–Controlling → instruction/habituation/role modeling/regulations/student activities → character internalization → evaluation and follow-up → reinforcement of the common

good." In this model, *maqāṣid* serves as the value compass, POAC as the managerial navigation tool, and the *madrasah* culture as the environment where the character-building journey unfolds. This analogy highlights that values without a system often remain mere rhetoric, while a system without values easily loses its direction.

The primary contribution of this research lies in its explanation of implicit-pedagogical integration. Many practices in *madrasas* do not explicitly employ the term *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, yet they can be understood through objectives, policies, and actions aimed at safeguarding religion, life, intellect, lineage/honor, and property. Thus, *maqāṣid* need not constitute "new content" within the curriculum to function as a paradigm; rather, it can serve as a lens for interpreting and evaluating existing programs. Do acts of worship foster genuine awareness or merely compliance? Do disciplinary measures educate or simply punish? Does instruction develop both intellect and character? And does evaluation serve as a tool for improvement rather than mere record-keeping?

This synthesis extends the findings of previous research. Ningsih et al. (2024) position *maqāṣid* as an orientation toward the community's well-being within education, while Anam et al. (2024) demonstrate its role in Islamic educational management. Similarly, Rachmah et al. (2025) link it to character formation in *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) environments, and Miftahussurur et al. (2025) discuss the architecture of *maqāṣid*-based educational management. This study adds operational detail at the formal *madrasah* level: value orientation permeates the four management functions and translates into recurring educational experiences. Consequently, the study's novelty lies in the relationship between values, management functions, practices, and evaluation—a framework that can serve as an analytical lens for future research.

However, this synthesis must be interpreted with appropriate nuance. This study does not claim that the *Maqāṣid* –POAC model is the only viable model. Rather, it is an abstraction derived from a specific research context based on recurring patterns within the data. Testing the model in other *madrasas*, at different educational levels, or in Islamic educational institutions with distinct social characteristics is necessary to determine its applicability and limitations. This is precisely where the value of qualitative research lies: it offers depth within a specific context while opening up new questions for future research.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the findings indicate that *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* can be interpreted as a framework for educational governance, rather than merely as a normative tool within the study of Islamic law. The five orienting values of *maqāṣid* provide substantive criteria for interpreting educational policy. Under this framework, planning goes beyond merely addressing activity targets to consider the public interest (*maṣlaḥah*) to be preserved. Organizing entails not just the division of labor, but ensuring the equitable distribution of responsibility (*amānah*). Implementation seeks not only to execute tasks but to transform values into lived experiences. Evaluation assesses not merely compliance, but the sustainability of value internalization.

In practical terms, the research findings suggest that madrasas can strengthen integration by formulating more explicit character indicators based on the five *maqāṣid* orientations, without needing to introduce *maqāṣid* as a separate subject. These indicators can assist teachers in aligning instructional materials, student activities, codes of conduct, and evaluation methods. Furthermore, communication with parents can shift from merely reporting infractions to aligning habits and behavioral expectations. The challenges posed by social media also highlight the importance of digital literacy—integrated with character education—to help students manage information and maintain appropriate behavior outside the madrasa.

A more fundamental implication is the need to shift the perspective from "character programs" to a "culture of character." Programs have a defined beginning and end, whereas a culture operates on a daily basis. Findings from MTsN 4 Mandailing Natal demonstrate that practices such as *tadarus* (Quran recitation), congregational prayer, discipline, cleanliness, discussion, *adab* (proper conduct), and responsibility gained strength precisely because they were repeated across various situations. From a *maqāṣid* perspective, this consistency is crucial because the well-being of students is not fostered by a single activity, but rather by an accumulation of educational experiences.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be noted to avoid overinterpreting the findings. First, the research was conducted at a single madrasa using a qualitative-descriptive design; thus, the results are context-specific. Second, the study focused on the perspectives of administrators, teachers, homeroom teachers, and students; future research could expand participation to include more students and parents to gain a deeper understanding of external dynamics. Third, this study did not measure character changes longitudinally, nor did it employ quantitative indicators to assess changes before and after the program. Fourth, the *Maqāṣid* –POAC synthesis is an abstraction derived from data patterns at the research site; consequently, its application in other contexts requires further empirical testing. These limitations also highlight avenues for future research, particularly multi-site, longitudinal, and mixed-methods studies, as well as the development of character indicator instruments based on *maqāṣid*.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the integration of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* into character education management at MTsN 4 Mandailing Natal occurs not merely as an addition of subject matter, but as a process of translating the orientation of public interest (*maṣlaḥah*) into institutional life. The five core values—*ḥifẓ al-dīn* (preservation of religion), *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* (preservation of life/self), *ḥifẓ al-'aql* (preservation of intellect), *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (preservation of lineage/dignity), and *ḥifẓ al-māl* (preservation of wealth/resources)—are translated into specific character traits: religiousness; self-care and concern for well-being; critical and responsible use of knowledge; civility and the upholding of honor; and honesty and trustworthiness in resource management. At the management level, this integration unfolds through the functions of planning, organizing,

actuating, and controlling/evaluating. Planning aligns the vision, curriculum, programs, and student needs; organizing distributes responsibilities and establishes coordination; actuating translates values into action through instruction, habituation, role modeling, codes of conduct, and student activities; and evaluation serves as a mechanism for monitoring and improvement.

This pattern reveals that the strength of the integration lies not primarily in the volume of activities, but in the interconnectedness of value orientation, management functions, and daily educational experiences. The sustainability of this integration is reinforced by the commitment of the madrasa community, role modeling, coordination, a religious culture, family and community support, a conducive environment, and adequate facilities. Simultaneously, factors such as diverse student backgrounds, inconsistent discipline, a lack of continuity in family guidance, the influence of social media and peer groups, varying learning motivation, and time constraints indicate that character education is a cross-environmental endeavor that cannot be fully controlled by the madrasa alone. Consequently, the *Maqāshid*–POAC synthesis proposed in this study frames character education as a continuous cycle of values, management, practice, and evaluation subject to ongoing improvement. It is here that education finds its meaning—not merely in preparing learners to answer questions, but in helping them learn to cherish what is valuable, use knowledge wisely, and bring goodness to their shared lives.

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