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The Privatisation of Islamic Education: Implications for the Quality of Education and Accessibility for the Economically Disadvantaged

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implications of the privatization of Islamic education on educational quality and accessibility for economically disadvantaged groups. Utilizing a qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis across Ma'had Aly institutions in the Tapal Kuda region, East Java. The findings indicate that privatization significantly enhances educational quality by providing improved facilities, fostering continuous professional development for educators, and enabling a more flexible, relevant curriculum. Contrary to prevailing literature that associates privatization with prohibitive costs, this study reveals that tuition at Ma'had Aly remains affordable due to financial support from its parent pesantren foundations. However, accessibility challenges persist—not due to financial barriers, but because of the stringent academic standards and rigorous entrance examinations required for admission. These findings suggest that privatization in Islamic higher education can drive quality improvement while maintaining financial affordability, though high academic barriers may still limit access for candidates lacking prior pesantren backgrounds

Keywords

Accessibility, Educational Quality, Ma'had Aly, Privatization of Islamic Education, Tapal Kuda.

1. Introduction

Privatisation can improve the quality of education but, at the same time, creates uncertainty regarding accessibility for all sections of society. Private schools must compete to attract pupils, which encourages them to improve the quality of their teaching, facilities and services. This competition can drive innovation and continuous improvement. Research shows that private schools often have higher teaching standards than state schools. For example, a study by Hoxby found that in the United States, charter schools (state schools managed privately) demonstrated

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improved academic outcomes for pupils compared with traditional state schools (Hoxby & Rockoff, 2004). At the same time, privatisation often leads to higher education costs, which can act as a barrier for pupils from low-income families. This is because private schools rely on tuition fees paid by parents and pupils. A study by Chudgar & Quin found that private schools in many developing countries tend to be more expensive than state schools, which reduces accessibility for poor pupils (Chudgar & Quin, 2012). The privatisation of education can improve the quality of teaching through competition that encourages innovation, but it also increases the cost of education, which can hinder access for pupils from low-income families.

Numerous studies on quality improvement have been conducted by other researchers (Lawler et al., 2024), (Lee et al., 2024), (Sosa et al., 2024). This research spans topics ranging from strategic management (Cizelj et al., 2024) to roles (Fan & Fan, 2024), amongst others. However, such research has not extensively examined the privatisation of Islamic education and its implications for the quality of education and its accessibility to those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, research conducted by Chafid Diyanto, Ika Riswanti Putranti, Teguh Yuwono and Tri Yuniningsih concluded that the privatisation of education has negative impacts, namely the commercialisation of higher education, which, if allowed to continue unchecked, will lead to the capitalisation of education (Diyanto et al., 2021). Similar findings can also be found in several other studies (Wamimbi & Lukman, 2021), (Arani et al., 2015), (Saeed Gilouri & Hamid Shafiezadeh, 2021). Among the various previous studies available, it is very difficult to find any that specifically discuss privatisation within Islamic education. Previous discussions have centred on the privatisation of education in general, which fundamentally possesses academic values and traditions that differ from those of Islamic education (Islamy, 2022).

This study identifies a research gap that has not been addressed by other researchers. It focuses solely on understanding the implications of the privatisation of Islamic education on the quality of education and the extent to which this affects accessibility for those from low-income backgrounds. Privatisation can bring about significant changes in the quality of education through the provision of better resources, innovation in teaching methods, and improvements to infrastructure (Simanjorang et al., 2023), (Siahaan & Pardede, 2022). However, it is necessary to understand the extent to which this privatisation actually improves the quality of Islamic education. Most existing research focuses on the privatisation of education in general without specifically examining its impact on Islamic education. This study fills this gap by highlighting the specific impacts of privatisation within the context of Islamic education. According to Zajda, the majority of research on the privatisation of education focuses on general education and pays insufficient attention to Islamic education, creating a gap that needs to be addressed (Baedowi, 2023). By outlining the existing research gap and focusing on the implications of the

privatisation of Islamic education for quality and accessibility, this study makes an important contribution to understanding and addressing the challenges faced in the context of the privatisation of Islamic education, particularly for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

This study focuses solely on understanding the implications of the privatisation of Islamic education on the quality of education and the extent to which this affects accessibility for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Much research on the privatisation of education generally focuses on general education, whilst Islamic education—which has unique characteristics and challenges—often receives insufficient attention. This study fills this gap by highlighting the specific impacts of privatisation within the context of Islamic education. The privatisation of Islamic education has implications for improving the quality of education, such as enhanced facilities and resources, improved teacher competence, and innovation in teaching methods. Similarly, it has implications for accessibility for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, such as high costs, disparities in access to education, and financial aid and scholarships. In the context of financial aid and scholarships, access to these programmes is often limited and competition is fierce, meaning that not all students in need can benefit from them. This study fills a research gap by highlighting the specific impacts of the privatisation of Islamic education on improving the quality of education—such as improvements in facilities, teacher competence and learning innovation—as well as the challenges regarding accessibility for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, such as high costs, disparities in access to education and limitations in scholarship programmes.

2. Literatur Review

2.1. The privatisation of Islamic education

The privatisation of Islamic education represents an effort to deliver superior educational services (Tooley, 2023; Churngchow & Sinprajukpol, 2016). Privatisation often introduces an element of competition among schools (Maisah et al., 2020). Private schools must compete to attract pupils, which drives them to continuously innovate and enhance the quality of their teaching, facilities, and overall services (Crescioli, 2024). A study conducted in Indonesia by Bappenas revealed that several private Islamic schools demonstrated improvements in educational quality. These schools are able to offer a richer curriculum and superior facilities compared to many state schools (Indonesia & Nasional, 2015). Overall, the privatisation of Islamic education creates a competitive dynamic that can foster innovation and improve educational standards, although it also raises concerns regarding accessibility and public accountability.

There are several models of Islamic education privatisation, ranging from complete management by non-profit or commercial private entities to public-private partnerships in the form of charter schools. The administration of these institutions may involve the transfer of ownership and management from the public to the private sector, which frequently influences control over the curriculum, tuition fees, and admissions policies. These models reflect variations in funding, management, and educational orientation, all of which can affect the quality of education provided as well as its accessibility across different socio-economic strata. Furthermore, privatisation exhibits distinct characteristics across various dimensions, including funding, management, and accountability. In terms of funding, private schools predominantly rely on tuition fees paid by parents; whilst this can elevate the quality of educational provision, it may simultaneously restrict accessibility for disadvantaged socio-economic groups. More flexible management structures enable private schools to respond more swiftly to local educational needs and adopt innovative pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, challenges relating to uniform educational standards and public accountability remain significant concerns within the context of privatisation, shaping how these schools address and fulfill broader societal expectations.

2.2. Quality of education

The quality of education is intrinsically linked to the quality of teaching, the curriculum, facilities and infrastructure, the availability of resources, and various other factors (Roper, 2024; Abbas, 2020; Kim et al., 2010). Numerous studies substantiate this connection. For instance, research concerning teachers' competencies and instructional methods directly demonstrates an impact on pupils' learning outcomes (Sukma et al., 2022). High-quality teachers are capable of motivating pupils and fostering a profound understanding of the subject matter (Albert et al., 2023). Furthermore, a well-designed curriculum that is relevant to pupils' needs and contemporary demands can heighten learning engagement, thereby leading to superior academic achievements (VanTassel-Baska & Baska, 2021). Overall, a holistic understanding and implementation of these factors are vital for raising educational standards and creating a learning environment that supports pupils' optimal development.

An educational system can be deemed high-quality if the aforementioned aspects exhibit high levels of effectiveness (Roa et al., 2023; Noor, 2020). A relevant theoretical model is the "Quality Teaching Framework" proposed by John Hattie, which emphasizes the critical role of teacher competence in improving pupil performance through effective pedagogical practices (Rahmaniah et al., 2023; Witter & Hattie, 2024). This theory highlights that high teaching quality not only

enhances pupils' comprehension of academic content, but also motivates them to engage in deeper learning (Lazarides & Schiefele, 2024; Wahyuni, 2022). In addition, other dimensions—such as curriculum relevance, adequate infrastructure, resource availability, comprehensive evaluation, and active participation from both pupils and parents—play an essential role in establishing an optimal learning environment to meet high educational standards. Consequently, high-quality education is the product of integrating these mutually reinforcing factors to ensure that every pupil receives the best possible learning opportunities to achieve their full potential.

2.3. Accessibility for education

Educational access serves as a means for individuals or groups to enter educational spaces without encountering barriers (Musthofa et al., 2023). Educational accessibility encompasses the capacity of individuals to obtain an education free from significant impediments. This involves several dimensions, such as physical access, financial access, information and technology access, and cultural and social access, among various other aspects (Maulana, 2023). Educational accessibility is of paramount importance because it dictates whether all individuals, irrespective of their socio-economic background, can receive an adequate education. Without sufficient accessibility, certain groups may become marginalised and denied equal opportunities to develop and succeed. Research indicates that financial constraints represent one of the primary obstacles to educational access. For instance, a UNESCO report (2019) demonstrated that high education costs frequently prevent pupils from low-income families from enrolling in and completing their studies (Adzka, 2022). Furthermore, a study by the World Bank (2020) revealed that children in rural areas often face physical access barriers due to a lack of transportation and adequate educational infrastructure (Utami & Sahetapy, 2024). Consequently, inclusive and barrier-free educational accessibility is key to ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to obtain a high-quality education, which ultimately contributes to improving quality of life and fostering broader societal advancement.

Financial accessibility in education refers to the ability of individuals or groups to access education without being constrained by tuition fees, textbook costs, or additional expenses (Stoffel et al., 2023; Xie & Li, 2020). High educational costs can act as a major barrier for disadvantaged individuals or groups seeking an education, frequently resulting in an inability to enrol in or complete formal education (Assa et al., 2022). Extensive research has demonstrated that high tuition fees and textbook prices regularly impede socio-economically disadvantaged groups from obtaining a quality education. By way of example, a UNESCO study highlighted that high educational expenses can reduce participation among pupils from impoverished backgrounds in formal schooling (Widodo, 2020). Additionally,

research by the World Bank showed that high educational costs can lead to elevated drop-out rates among low-income households (Rahmawati, 2020). At this juncture, prohibitive education costs remain one of the main obstacles hindering educational accessibility for socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

3. Research Methods

This study was conducted at Ma'had Aly institutions in the Tapal Kuda region. This area was selected owing to its distinct social, cultural, and educational characteristics. The region is renowned for its traditional Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and long-standing tradition of Islamic education, thereby offering a rich context for examining the privatisation of Islamic higher education. Existing literature suggests that the Tapal Kuda region, with its high concentration of pesantren, represents an ideal site for researching the dynamics of privatisation within Islamic education. Indeed, Zajda (2023) emphasises that regions possessing traditional educational structures like Tapal Kuda provide crucial insights into the effects of privatisation. Consequently, this study was located across Ma'had Aly institutions in Tapal Kuda to leverage its unique socio-cultural profile and concentration of pesantren as an optimal setting for investigating how privatisation operates within Islamic education.

This investigation adopts a qualitative methodology with a case study approach. Qualitative research enables a nuanced, in-depth understanding of how the privatisation of Islamic educational institutions affects educational quality and accessibility. This methodology is particularly suited to exploring the perceptions, experiences, and viewpoints of key stakeholders—including pupils, teachers, parents, and institutional administrators. Furthermore, a case study design allows the researcher to focus on specific Islamic educational institutions undergoing privatisation, thereby facilitating an understanding of how privatisation is implemented within a particular setting and how that context shapes outcomes. Throughout the research process, observations were made regarding the perspectives and experiences of diverse stakeholders, offering a comprehensive account of privatisation's impact on quality and access. Thus, a qualitative case study design yields deep insights into these dynamics by examining stakeholder perspectives within their specific organizational contexts.

To gather empirical data regarding perceptions and experiences of privatisation's impact on quality and accessibility, credible and sufficient data sources with direct knowledge of the research focus were required. Data from trustworthy, relevant sources provide an accurate and thorough picture of how privatisation influences various facets of education. Source credibility ensures that collected information is reliable and valid for analytical interpretation, whereas data sufficiency enables the researcher to capture variations and nuances in stakeholder

experiences. By drawing upon credible sources—such as teachers, administrators, parents, pupils, and policy documents—the researcher obtained comprehensive data regarding the consequences of privatisation. Therefore, relying on these key informants and documentary evidence was crucial for generating a precise, well-rounded assessment of how privatisation impacts educational quality and access.

Data collection was undertaken via observations, interviews, and document analysis. Observational methods were employed to examine first-hand accounts and visual evidence of educational quality following privatisation. Observation techniques also facilitated the evaluation of behaviours, attitudes, and contextual realities among consumers of Islamic educational services, including local communities. For interviews, the researcher conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews to uncover the underlying feelings, knowledge, and lived experiences of those utilizing Ma'had Aly services in Tapal Kuda, East Java. Specifically, through observation, the researcher evaluated facility conditions post-privatisation—such as classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and communal spaces—as well as teaching methodologies, teacher-pupil interactions, and pupil engagement in learning activities. Conversely, through in-depth interviews, the researcher explored parents' views and feelings regarding tuition fees, instructional quality, and accessibility following privatisation.

The collected data were analysed using the qualitative data analysis framework of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Utilizing this framework permitted the systematic management and synthesis of complex qualitative data. Data condensation assisted the researcher in simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw field notes into meaningful, structured information. Data displays enabled the visual and structured representation of data—such as through matrices, networks, and charts—thereby facilitating the identification of emerging patterns and relationships. Finally, verification ensured the validation and confirmation of findings through continuous checking, data triangulation, and stakeholder feedback to establish research trustworthiness and validity. Through this process, data were managed, analysed, and verified in a transparent, systematic manner, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the findings concerning privatisation in Islamic educational institutions.

4. Results And Discussion

4.1. The Impact of Privatization on the Quality of Ma'had Aly

Privatisation, as an effort to enhance quality, has become an essential necessity. Through privatisation, educational institutions gain greater flexibility in managing and allocating their resources to elevate the quality of education

provided. Furthermore, privatisation can foster innovation and higher efficiency driven by competitive pressures to deliver superior educational services.

The following interview data highlight several impacts arising from the privatisation of Ma'had Aly:

Table 1: Interview Results Data on the Impact of Privatisation on the Quality of Ma'had Aly

Hasil Wawancara	Koding	Informan
"Following privatisation, we received significant additional funding to upgrade various infrastructure facilities. We successfully constructed a new library equipped with modern amenities, which has greatly assisted pupils with their studies."	Improvement of Facilities and Resources	Ahmad Ghofur (35 years old)
"We now have access to a wider range of superior professional training programmes. This has helped us develop new teaching skills and stay up to date with contemporary educational challenges."	Enhancement of Learning Quality	Jamil Chansas (39 years old)
"The new facilities, such as the dormitory areas, laptop usage rooms, and classrooms, have made the teaching and learning process more efficient and enjoyable. Pupils now have access to broader and more up-to-date resources."	Improvement of Facilities and Reso+urces	M.Firmansyah (30 years old)
"I am delighted that the institution now offers a diverse range of placements for community service programmes, allowing our children to gain broad experience and practical skills that will prove useful."	A More Diverse and Relevant Curriculum	Herman (56 years old)
"Alhamdulillah, my learning environment is extremely conducive; a short while ago, I successfully qualified to compete at the national level."	Enhancement of Learning Quality	Rifki Ali (19 years old)

Visual data obtained from the interview findings above demonstrate a consistent pattern regarding the impact of privatisation on the enhancement of facilities, resources, and learning quality within educational institutions. As stated by AG

(aged 35) and MF (aged 30), there has been a notable improvement in facilities and resources. The accounts from both AG (aged 35) and MF (aged 30) indicate that privatisation yields additional funding that can be utilised for upgrading various infrastructure facilities. This is evidenced by the construction of a new library equipped with modern amenities, alongside improvements to facilities such as dormitory areas and laptop usage rooms. The enhancement of learning quality is also demonstrated in the data above, as stated by JC (aged 39) and RA (aged 19). In their statements, both informants highlighted the improvement of learning quality as a direct result of privatisation. The informant with the initials JC noted that access to various professional development programmes helps educators acquire new skills, whereas RA experienced a more conducive learning environment that enabled him/her to attain national-level qualifications. Another key finding revealed by the data above is the creation of a more diverse and relevant curriculum. HM (aged 56) indicated that following privatisation, the institution offered a wider array of community service programmes, providing pupils with practical experience and useful skills. This demonstrates greater diversification and relevance in the offered curriculum.

Table 1, as presented above, illustrates three primary impacts resulting from the privatisation of Ma'had Aly. The data elucidate the following findings:

4.1.1. Improving the Quality of Learning

Privatization has had a significant impact on the quality of student learning because it has improved the availability of teaching resources through access to professional training programs and introduced educators to better educational facilities. For example, Ahmad Ghofur (35 years old) noted that additional funding following privatization enabled the construction of a new library equipped with modern facilities, which greatly assists students in their studies. Furthermore, Jamil Chansas (39 years old) explained that access to professional training programs has helped teachers develop new skills and stay up-to-date with the times, which ultimately improves the quality of teaching. M. Firmansyah (30 years old) also stated that new facilities such as dormitories, laptop labs, and classrooms have made the teaching and learning process more efficient and enjoyable, giving students access to a wider range of up-to-date resources. This evidence demonstrates that privatization can significantly improve the quality of student learning.

4.1.2. Kurikulum yang Lebih Beragam dan Relevan

Privatization improves the quality of educational institutions by offering a more diverse and relevant curriculum. Privatization allows educational institutions to have greater flexibility in designing and implementing curricula tailored to students' needs and the changing times. Through privatization, educational institutions can introduce new programs that are more diverse and practical, equipping students

with the skills needed in the real world. Herman (56 years old) stated that following privatization, his school offers various community service programs that provide students with practical experience. These programs not only enrich the curriculum but also provide useful skills that can be applied in daily life and future careers. Privatization plays a crucial role in improving the quality of educational institutions by providing a more diverse and relevant curriculum.

4.1.3. Improvements to Facilities and Resources

Privatization provides greater scope for the creation of more resources—both in terms of quality and quantity—by providing additional funding, access to advanced technology, and professional training programs. This enables educational institutions to expand their facilities, enhance teachers' capabilities, and provide more learning resources for students. Ahmad Ghofur (35 years old) noted that the additional funding following privatization made it possible to build a new library equipped with modern facilities. This demonstrates an improvement in both the quantity and quality of facilities available to students. Furthermore, privatization provides access to various professional training programs that help teachers develop new teaching skills and stay up-to-date with current trends. This enhances the quality of instruction at these educational institutions, as stated by JC (39 years old).

4.2. Dampak Privatisasi terhadap Aksesibilitas

Privatization in educational institutions often poses accessibility challenges for the general public, particularly for economically disadvantaged groups. Privatization tends to increase the cost of education because private institutions operate for profit and often do not receive government subsidies. Families from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are often unable to afford these costs, which include tuition, textbooks, uniforms, and other additional expenses such as extracurricular activities and facilities. Furthermore, this can widen the gap between students from wealthy and poor families and lead to broader social disparities in the future.

The following interview data highlights several impacts resulting from the privatization of Ma'had Aly in relation to accessibility:

Table 2. Interview Results
The Impact of Privatization on Access to Ma'had Aly

Interview Results	Coding	Informant

"It's true that not everyone can access MA'had Aly education, but in my opinion, the problem isn't really the cost—it's more that the academic standards required for admission are quite high; in fact, the cost is actually very affordable."	Inequality in Access to Education	M.I (18 Tahun)
"In my opinion, the facilities here are excellent. We have our own dormitories and a separate campus environment that's much more conducive to learning, not to mention the frequent public lectures featuring national and international figures."	Ease of Access to Knowledge	A.H (19 Tahun)
"As someone who wants my child to have a solid religious education that meets the needs of the times, I see Ma'had Aly as one of the best options available today, but the fairly difficult entrance exam often poses a hurdle—especially for children who have never been boarding school students before."	Inequality in Access to Education	A.S (58 Tahun)
"Alhamdulillah, the educational environment at Ma'had Aly offers a fairly comprehensive range of supporting facilities, such as laptops, Wi-Fi, a spacious library, and comfortable discussion areas."	Ease of Access to Knowledge	M.M (30 Tahun)
"Alhamdulillah, since enrolling at Ma'had Aly, I've been able to explore the things I enjoy more—like graphic design. Although this isn't a standard offering and is part of the curriculum, having easy access to various tools has made it much easier for me to develop my talents."	Ease of Access to Knowledge	M.H (20 Tahun)

"Since we are not an independent institution but operate under the auspices of the Islamic Boarding School Foundation—which, thank God, is financially stable—we receive part of our funding from the Foundation. Perhaps some of the Ma'had Aly institutions in Tapalkuda are not much different from ours here."	Ease of Access to Knowledge	J.C (40 Tahun)

The visual data obtained from the interviews above show that the privatization of education at Ma'had Aly has created significant disparities in access, primarily due to the high academic standards required for admission. Based on an interview with M.I. (18 years old), it was found that tuition at Ma'had Aly is actually very affordable; however, many prospective students are unable to access this education because the academic standards required for admission are quite high. This indicates that the main obstacle to accessing Ma'had Aly is not a financial issue, but rather the strict academic requirements. A.S. (58 years old) added that although Ma'had Aly is considered one of the best paths to acquiring religious knowledge suited to the needs of the times, the difficult entrance exams pose a major barrier, especially for children who have never been pesantren students before. This indicates that the rigorous selection process limits access for many prospective students who may have a strong interest and potential in religious education but lack an adequate pesantren educational background. This disparity reflects that while cost is not the primary issue, high admission standards prevent many students who actually have the potential from receiving a quality education at Ma'had Aly.

From another perspective, the privatization of education at Ma'had Aly has yielded positive results in terms of accessibility, thanks to comprehensive facilities and financial support from the foundation. Based on interviews, A.H. (19 years old) highlighted the excellent facilities, including dormitories and a conducive learning environment, as well as frequent public lectures by national and international figures that enrich the students' knowledge. M.M. (30 years old) emphasized the comprehensiveness of supporting facilities such as laptops, Wi-Fi, a spacious library, and comfortable discussion rooms, which facilitate access to information and support effective learning. M.H. (20 years old) noted that Ma'had Aly supports the development of individual interests and talents—such as graphic design—by providing easy access to the necessary equipment, enabling students to explore their abilities. J.C. (40 years old) explained that financial support from the Islamic Boarding School Foundation provides funding stability, allowing Ma'had Aly to offer high-quality facilities without burdening students with high costs. Consequently, Ma'had Aly has succeeded in maintaining the affordability of its education despite privatization, thereby continuing to provide quality educational access to students

from lower-middle-class families. The findings from the above interviews indicate that the privatization of education at Ma'had Aly has created significant disparities in access, primarily due to the high academic standards required for admission. Additionally, based on an interview with M.I. (18 years old), it was revealed that tuition at Ma'had Aly is actually very affordable.

Table 2 above shows two impacts resulting from the privatization of Ma'had Aly in terms of accessibility; the data illustrate the following findings:

4.2.1. Inequality in Access to Education

There is a significant disparity in access to education, primarily due to the high academic standards required for admission. Tuition at Ma'had Aly is actually very affordable, but many prospective students are unable to access this education because the academic standards for admission are quite high. This indicates that the main barrier to accessing Ma'had Aly is not a financial issue, but rather the strict academic requirements. Although Ma'had Aly is considered one of the best paths to obtaining religious knowledge suited to the needs of the times, the difficult entrance exam poses a major obstacle, especially for children who have never attended a pesantren before. This indicates that the rigorous selection process limits access for many prospective students who may have a strong interest and great potential in religious education but lack an adequate pesantren educational background. This disparity reflects that, although cost is not the primary issue, high admission standards prevent many students who actually have the potential from receiving a quality education at Ma'had Aly.

4.2.2. Ease of Access to Knowledge

The privatization of education at Ma'had Aly has yielded positive results in terms of students' access to knowledge, thanks to comprehensive facilities and financial support from the foundation. Excellent facilities—such as dormitories and a conducive learning environment, as well as frequent public lectures featuring national and international figures—greatly enrich the knowledge of Ma'had Aly students. Comprehensive support facilities—such as laptops, Wi-Fi, a well-stocked library, and comfortable discussion rooms—facilitate access to information and support effective learning. Additionally, Ma'had Aly fosters the development of individual interests and talents—such as writing, graphic design, and more—through easy access to tools that allow students to explore their abilities. Financial support from the Islamic Boarding School Foundation provides funding stability, enabling Ma'had Aly to offer high-quality facilities without burdening students with high costs. As a result, Ma'had Aly has successfully maintained the affordability of its education even after privatization, thereby continuing to provide quality educational access to students from lower-middle-class families.

4.3. Discussion

4.3.1. Implications for Quality

Privatization has a significant impact on the quality of student learning because it enables institutions to better provide teaching resources through access to professional training programs and exposes faculty to better educational facilities. This finding is consistent with several previous studies stating that one of the effects of privatization is an improvement in the quality of services and the availability of infrastructure in educational institutions (Adamson, Frank; Galloway, 2018), (Hidayati et al., 2022). Theoretically, these findings reinforce the theory that the quality of education is closely related to the quality of teaching, curriculum, infrastructure, availability of resources, and so on (Roper, 2024), (Abbas, 2020).

Privatization has also been shown to improve the quality of educational institutions by offering more diverse and relevant curricula, thereby allowing these institutions greater flexibility in designing and implementing curricula tailored to students' needs and the changing times. The findings of Edwards's study (Edwards, 2024) also offer a similar perspective: that the privatization of education can have a significant impact on curriculum development, as private institutions tend to be more flexible and innovative in adopting the teaching approaches that are needed. They can quickly respond to changing trends in education and integrate modern teaching methods, technology, and pedagogical practices, which can lead to a more effective learning environment. Theoretically, these findings reinforce Brahim Hiba's (Hiba, 2024) assertion that privatization can provide a framework for understanding its costs and benefits in education. These models can help identify potential effects on curriculum development, such as the potential for innovation and flexibility versus the risks of commercialization and a decline in quality.

The third finding is that privatization actually provides greater scope for the creation of more resources by providing additional funding, access to advanced technology, and professional training programs. This enables educational institutions to expand their facilities, enhance teachers' capabilities, and provide more learning resources for students. This finding clearly points to a significant improvement in facilities and resources. This can have a significant positive impact on students, such as the availability of a more conducive learning environment with adequate facilities like classrooms and libraries (Yangambi, 2023). With this third finding, the need to provide quality educational services to the public is fully established. Improving the quality of learning, creating a more diverse and relevant curriculum, and enhancing facilities and resources are interrelated aspects in building a high-quality educational environment. By focusing on these areas, educators can create an inclusive and engaging learning environment.

However, although these findings indicate positive results, the sample used

in this study was limited to the MA'had Aly Islamic educational institution in the Tapal Kuda region of East Java; therefore, the findings may not fully apply to institutions outside the Tapal Kuda region—particularly those located outside East Java or even outside the island of Java. Furthermore, this study employed a qualitative approach, which may not have fully captured the full range of variations in each informant's experiences.

4.3.2. Implications for Accessibility

In the section on accessibility, disparities in access to privatized educational institutions were found. However, this was not caused by skyrocketing tuition costs resulting from privatization—as explained in the literature—but rather by the academic standards required for admission to Ma'had Aly institutions. In terms of limited access to education, this finding aligns with various previous studies. Uniquely, however, the cause of limited access identified in this study is not high tuition costs—as commonly found in previous research—but rather the high standards set by the institutions when recruiting students. Theoretically, this refutes many concerns raised in previous studies regarding inequitable access to education for economically disadvantaged groups, as noted by Edwards (Edwards, 2024). This study found that the determining factor for access is not a family's economic status but almost entirely the student's academic ability.

For students who successfully meet the qualifications, it was found that they have easier access to education through various facilities provided by the institution. This finding further reinforces the notion that one of the positive impacts of privatization is the availability of adequate and improved facilities to support the learning process. Theoretically, these findings further reinforce the findings and assertions that privatization can provide better facilities for the learning process (Sidharth Swain, 2020), (Edwards, 2024). However, although these findings indicate positive results, the sample used in this study was limited to the MA'had Aly Islamic educational institution in the Tapal Kuda region of East Java; thus, the findings may not fully apply to institutions outside the Tapal Kuda region, particularly those located outside East Java or even outside the island of Java. Furthermore, the questions addressed in this study focus on the implications of the privatization of Islamic education for educational quality and the extent to which this affects accessibility for economically disadvantaged groups; consequently, this study has not yet identified the underlying causes of the differences in accessibility barriers for prospective students found in this study compared to previous studies. Furthermore, this study employs a qualitative approach, which may not fully capture the full range of variations in each informant's experiences. We have visualized the results of this study more clearly in the figure below:

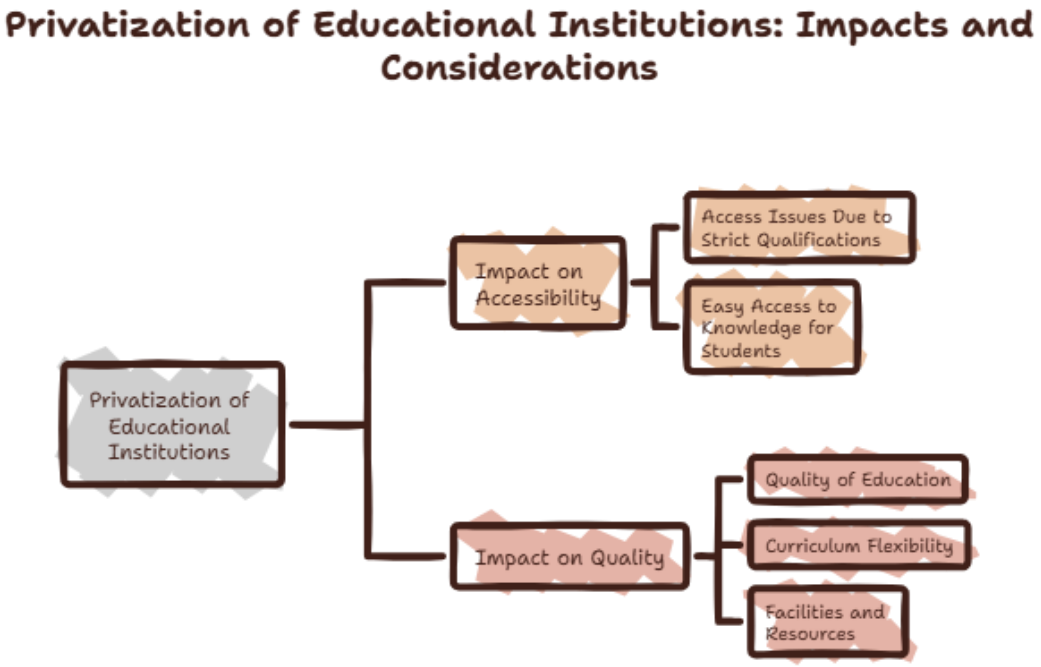


Figure 1: The Impact of the Privatization of Islamic Educational Institutions

5. Conclusions

This study found that the privatization of education, particularly at Ma'had Aly, has a significant impact on the quality and accessibility of education. Privatization has been shown to improve the quality of learning through the provision of better resources, professional training programs, and adequate facilities. However, accessibility remains a challenge due to the high academic standards required for admission; this certainly differs from most findings, which indicate limited access due to soaring education costs. This study makes an important contribution to the field by offering a new perspective on the impact of education privatization. These findings indicate that privatization can improve the quality of education and provide better support facilities, while also showing that academic standards—not cost—are what limit access. The qualitative methodology employed offers deep insights into individual experiences within privatized educational institutions. However, since this study is limited to the case of Ma'had Aly in the Tapal Kuda region of East Java, its findings may not apply to institutions outside that region. Furthermore, the qualitative approach used may not capture the full range of experiences of each

informant. Further research is needed to account for variations in gender and age and to employ different survey methods to obtain a more comprehensive picture. This will help in formulating more effective and targeted policies in the context of education privatization.

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