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Corporate Culture and Neoliberalism in Education: A Critical Review

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ABSTRACT:

The paradigm of freedom in higher education has given rise to the concept of neoliberalism as a hegemonic ideology that has negatively impacted the higher education sector in Indonesia. The practice of neoliberal colonization has the potential to transform the management of higher education institutions into corporate centers. Instead of being critical and rational intellectuals, university academics are positioned as mere workers under market demands, adopting the liberal view that high-quality education comes at a high cost. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a library research approach. The results of this study describe: First, several intellectual figures criticize the current higher education system, which is considered increasingly commercialized and moving away from the spirit of education. These thinkers highlight that education should not be a commodity accessible only to a select few, but rather a right for all citizens. Second, deliberative education concepts are mandatory. One important idea is that of Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, namely integrating Islamic values into the higher education curriculum and focusing on the formation of adab to become an adabi person "*insan adabi*". Furthermore, it cannot be denied that education requires organized funding to maintain its quality. Productive waqf can provide funding for educational institutions, while "*qardhul hasan*" offers interest-free loans to students, ensuring debt-free access to education. Both sources support financial independence and educational accessibility.
Keywords: Higher Education, Neoliberalism, Colonization, 1945 Constitution, Waqf, Qardhul Hasan.

ABSTRAK:

Paradigma kebebasan di perguruan tinggi melahirkan konsep neoliberalisme sebagai ideologi hegemonik yang justru berdampak negatif terhadap sektor pendidikan tinggi di Indonesia. Praktik kolonisasi neoliberalisme berpotensi mengubah pengelolaan institusi pendidikan tinggi bergerak menjadi pusat korporasi. Alih-alih sebagai intelektual yang kritis, rasional, para akademisi perguruan tinggi diposisikan sebatas pekerja di bawah kebutuhan pasar, mengadopsi pandangan liberal bahwa pendidikan berkualitas tinggi membayar dengan biaya yang mahal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi pustaka (*library research*). Hasil penelitian ini menguraikan; *Pertama,* terdapat beberapa tokoh intelektual mengkritik sistem pendidikan tinggi saat ini yang dianggap semakin terkomersialisasi dan menjauh dari ruh pendidikan. Para pemikir ini menyoroti bahwa pendidikan seharusnya tidak menjadi komoditas yang hanya dapat diakses oleh segelintir kalangan, melainkan hak bagi seluruh warga negara. *Kedua,* deliberalisasi konsep pendidikan wajib dilakukan. Salah satu ide penting adalah gagasan Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, yaitu mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam dalam kurikulum perguruan tinggi dan fokus pada pembentukan adab sehingga menjadi insan adabi. Selanjutnya, tidak dapat dipungkiri pendidikan memerlukan pendanaan yang terorganisir untuk menjaga kualitasnya. Wakaf produktif bisa menjadi sumber dana bagi lembaga pendidikan, sementara "*qardhul hasan*" menawarkan pinjaman tanpa bunga bagi mahasiswa, memastikan akses pendidikan tanpa beban utang. Kedua sumber ini mendukung kemandirian finansial dan aksesibilitas pendidikan.
Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Tinggi, Neoliberalisme, Kolonisasi, UUD 1945, Wakaf, Qardhul Hasan.

INTRODUCTION

After the New Order in 1998, neoliberal colonization has infiltrated higher education in Indonesia, resulting in the concept of liberalizing the education market. This is evidenced by a central government regulation, namely the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy, in accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education. The concept of Independent Learning and Independent Campus further demonstrates Indonesia's adherence to industrial liberalism. Previously, before market expansion, education was viewed as a sacred institution producing highly skilled human resources to continue the next generation (Mitev et al., 2024). However, when the winds of economic liberalism blew so hard and accompanied by a monetary crisis that weakened the nation's economic system, the result was a plummet in state finances coupled with the rampant practice of KKN (Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism). The winds of neoliberalism that manifested in free market policies have pushed the government to privatize or privatize various government-owned companies; State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN) as stipulated in Law Number 19 of 2003 concerning State-Owned Enterprises. This privatization has had an impact on higher education places in the context of the expansion of neoliberalism (Harahap, 2023).

Simultaneously, the IMF (International Monetary Fund), the World Bank, and the WTO (World Trade Organization), which are international lending institutions, have also participated in the privatization of higher education. As affirmed by Remy Herrera, an elite economist at the University of Paris, in his intellectual work "The Neoliberal 'Rebirth of Development Economics'," adopting the World Bank report "Knowledge for Development," he calls on governments to create a climate for privatization of higher education, commercialization of educational services, and the overhaul of public research to be transformed into joint-stock companies (Herrera, 2006). The privatization of higher education has given rise to the term "university autonomy." According to P.G. Altbach & Toru Umakoshi, in their work entitled "Asian Universities: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Challenges," ASEAN universities, with their campus autonomy policies, essentially position education as the primary player in driving the "Knowledge Economy. This knowledge-based economic agenda gave birth to the logic of corporate universities.

This autonomous corporate regulation has resulted in a tendency for universities to exploit academic programs to generate their own funding, such as the "Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi" pillar. This pillar is then interpreted according to free market demands: how education, research, and community service activities can be profit-oriented. Universities are now branding and selling educational services to the public in order to gain local funding instantly and quickly through educational business space activities, but instead there is a degradation in the quality of education, the death of homo academicus for the welfare of the campus community, the marketization of education, the increasing cost of education which creates a very wide social gap (Shirin, 2023). In the BHP Law, the government's responsibility in financing the implementation of higher education is explicitly still very low, namely only 20% of the APBN. Thus, the BHP Law provides an opportunity for PTN to cover the shortfall in education costs through the commercialization of PTN seats as stated in Article 41 paragraphs (6) and (9) that half of the operational costs are borne by BHP and the government, while one third is borne by the community (Santoso, 2021)

Second, efficiency; there is a disparity between meeting market demand and maintaining the ideal higher education process. Market demand is met by higher education by opening study programs that are marketable and profitable, such as applied engineering, medicine, economics, and so on. Meanwhile, humanities study programs that do not generate economic benefits, such as philosophy, literature, and culture, are threatened with closure. The main reason a university takes such shortcuts is to survive and expand its business, because universities now have a profit-oriented paradigm. Third, the predictability in this principle gives rise to the concept of "link and match," a production process carried out by linking the curriculum with the benefits of graduates in the job market, this will create a robot-like education. Fourth, the technologization principle emphasizes that education must always keep up with technological advances so that graduates will not be technologically illiterate. This technologization policy actually creates an education system that becomes a slave to technology.

This research aims to encourage critical reflection on the ideals of higher education and seek solutions to restore education to a more humane path. The consequences of neoliberal colonization often direct education towards commercial corporations that ignore moral and ethical values. In the Islamic perspective, education has the primary goal of forming civilized, moral, and ethical individuals, which includes the development of character and morals, as well as intellectualism that is not merely oriented towards material achievement, as offered by neoliberalism. Islam emphasizes that education is a comprehensive process that integrates intellectual, spiritual, and moral aspects, thereby creating individuals who are balanced and responsible towards their environment and society.

In line with this, Prof. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas offers a solution through his intellectual study, "The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education," in which he emphasizes that the true purpose of education is to produce perfect human beings. Furthermore, it is undeniable that education requires organized funding to maintain its quality. Productive waqf can be a source of funds for educational institutions, while "qardhul hasan" offers interest-free loans for students, ensuring access to education without the burden of debt. Both of these sources support financial independence and educational accessibility (Majid et al., 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method with a library research approach. The research is intended to critically examine and interpret the phenomenon of neoliberalism in higher education through conceptual, philosophical, and analytical perspectives rather than quantitative measurement. Through this approach, the study seeks to explore the ideological transformation of higher education under neoliberal influence and its implications for academic values, educational accessibility, and institutional orientation.

The primary sources of data consist of academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, legislation, policy documents, and previous scholarly studies related to higher education, neoliberalism, educational commercialization, Islamic educational philosophy, waqf, and qardhul hasan. In addition, the study engages with critical educational theories and Islamic intellectual perspectives, particularly the ideas of Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas regarding adab and the concept of *insan adabi* as a foundation for ethical and value-oriented education.

Data collection was conducted through documentation and systematic literature review techniques by identifying, selecting, classifying, and critically reviewing relevant sources according to the research objectives. The selection of literature prioritized academic credibility, theoretical relevance, and conceptual contribution to the discourse of neoliberalism and higher education.

The collected data were analyzed using critical content analysis, which involved interpreting, comparing, and synthesizing textual content systematically to identify the patterns of neoliberal domination in higher education and to examine alternative educational paradigms grounded in Islamic values and social justice principles. To strengthen the validity and analytical depth of the study, the researcher employed theoretical triangulation by comparing various scholarly arguments, critical theories, and philosophical perspectives related to educational neoliberalism, academic capitalism, and Islamic educational thought.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Neoliberalism on the Global Stage

Neoliberalism has been a dominant phenomenon in economics and politics on the global stage since the late 20th century. It is based on the principles of free markets, privatization, deregulation, and a reduced role for the state in the economy. Etymologically, the term neoliberalism can be interpreted as "a concept of liberal theory that does not emphasize traditional liberal doctrine. Meanwhile, in terms of terminology, the term neoliberalism has several interpretations from various perspectives. According to Elizabeth Martinez and Arnoldo García, *"Neoliberalism is a set of economic policies that have become widespread over the last 25 years or so. Although the word is rarely heard in the United States, you can clearly see the effects of neoliberalism here as the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer*." Balaam and Veseth, neoliberalism is an ideology that supports a return to the liberal political economic system of Adam Smith and David Ricardo. One of the characteristics of neoliberalism is the privatization of companies, minimal government intervention, and market deregulation. Meanwhile, Heywood argues that neoliberalism is a Western ideology that contributes to social inequality, where the weak are always victimized so that the rich can thrive. This, in turn, leads to dramatic economic growth. Furthermore, David Harvey affirmed that neoliberalism is a political economic practice that prioritizes human welfare through individual liberation and entrepreneurial abilities within the scope of institutions characterized by private property rights, free trade, and free markets. Friedrich Hayek, neoliberalism as an economic concept that emphasizes individual freedom in managing their economy. Hayek argued that a central position by the government would lead to a loss of freedom (Hayek, 1944).

From the description of the opinions of the figures above regarding the ideology of neoliberalism, it can be concluded that neoliberalism is an ideology and a series of economic policies that emphasize individual freedom, privatization, deregulation, and free trade with the aim of achieving prosperity through efficient market mechanisms.

The phrase "neoliberalism" can be understood as a consequence of the evolution of economic thought resulting from the Great Depression. The Great Depression, which lasted from 1929 to the late 1930s, began with the stock market crash in the United States on October 29, 1929, known as "*Black Tuesday*." This crash was caused by excessive speculation in the stock market during the 1920s, in which investors bought shares with loans, hoping that prices would continue to rise. When stock prices began to fall, panic ensued, and many investors sold their shares en masse, causing the stock market to crash. In response to this crisis, the US government under President Franklin D. Roosevelt launched the New Deal in 1933. This program, based on the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes, offered an alternative solution to the liberal capitalist system by emphasizing the importance of government intervention in all matters, including the economy. As the term "welfare state" suggests, the welfare state is a state that controls industry (Burgin, 2012).

The Bretton Woods Conference of 1944 clarified and defined the concept of welfare as proposed by John Maynard Keynes. At this conference, member states of the United Nations (UN) collectively affirmed welfare principles that emphasized the need for government intervention in the economy to achieve stability and sustainable growth. Although the New Deal marked the culmination of Keynesian economic policies, this extensive government intervention also drew criticism from some economists who worried about its impact on individual freedom and market efficiency (Nash, 1994). In the 1940s, criticism of Keynesian policies began to emerge. Figures such as Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises opposed excessive government intervention, arguing that it could lead to totalitarianism and threaten individual freedom. Hayek, in his book "The Road to Serfdom" (1944), warned that excessive government control over the economy could undermine political and social freedom. In 1947, Friedrich Hayek, Walter Lippmann, and other intellectuals founded the Mont Pelerin Society in Switzerland (Kopnina & Cherniak, 2018). This group became the center of neoliberal thought, promoting free markets, individual liberty, and a rejection of a large government role in the economy.

Furthermore, in the 1950s and 1960s, while neoliberal ideas were still not dominant, they began to gain momentum amidst dissatisfaction with Keynesian policies. Milton Friedman, an economist at the University of Chicago, became one of the most influential figures in this movement. In his book "Capitalism and Freedom" (1962), Friedman argued that free markets were key to maintaining individual liberty and economic efficiency. He criticized government fiscal and monetary policies as causing inflation and inefficiency. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Western world faced the phenomenon of "stagflation," a combination of economic stagnation and high inflation that Keynesian policies could not overcome. This crisis provided a significant impetus for neoliberal ideas, which conservative governments began to adopt as an alternative to the Keynesian model. At this point, the term "neoliberalism" began to be widely used to describe economic policies that emphasized deregulation, privatization, and a reduced government role in the economy (Gamble, 1994). During the same period, British politician and statesman Margaret Thatcher developed the free market ideas known as Thatcherism. Ideologically, Thatcherism was described by Nigel Lawson, who served as Chancellor of the Exchequer during Thatcher's administration between 1983 and 1989, as a political platform that emphasized free market principles (Lawson, 1992).

Neoliberalism then became the foundation of economic policies implemented in the Western world during the 1970s and beyond. Under the administration of Ronald Reagan and the British under Margaret Thatcher, neoliberalism actively promoted the idea of globalization and even became a reference in international economic diplomacy, manifested in the policies put forward by international economic institutions such as the IMF, WTO, and World Bank (Alhababy, 2024). Hayek and Friedman argued that when individuals are given the freedom to compete, they are more motivated to work hard, innovate, and take the risks necessary to achieve success. This view forms the basis of the argument that economic freedom is a means and capitalism a prerequisite for achieving political freedom (Friedman, 2016). However, Hyslop-Margison & Sears criticize this view, stating that neoliberalism is a dehumanizing ideology because it reduces and objectifies human beings to serve the economic system, rather than the economic system serving humans. Essentially, the core of neoliberalism seeks to allow the market to have ultimate control over economic, social, and political decisions while minimizing the role of government. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006).

The specific mission of neoliberalism is deregulation, debureaucratization, privatization, and the reduction of welfare programs and subsidies which are considered as solutions to various socio-economic problems as well as a way to achieve growth and improve the welfare of society (Singgih et al., 2022). In essence, neoliberalism wants the government to reduce its role in economic affairs and leave it entirely to market mechanisms. According to neoliberalism, increased government intervention in the economy can lead to increasingly stagnant economic growth in the countries concerned, as affirmed by neoliberal proponents Anne O. Kruger, Bela Balasa, and Jagdish Bhagwati. Therefore, every developing country is considered to need to be urged to limit the role of government by introducing deregulation and debureaucratization. This deliberative policy applies not only to the economic sector but also to the education sector. As in the aftermath of World War II, many countries worldwide experienced economic difficulties due to a lack of human resources (HR) and natural resources (NR). In response to this situation, the Bretton Woods Conference was held in July 1944 in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, United States. The conference, attended by 44 countries, aimed to rebuild a stable post-war global financial system. Furthermore, this conference resulted in the creation of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). GATS is an organization that regulates procedures, transactions, tariffs, and trade schemes among member countries. The agreement stipulated that global countries must agree to liberalize 12 service sectors, one of which is higher education. It is hoped that higher education will become a commodity that can be traded internationally.

According to Hyslop-Margison & Sears, one of the goals of neoliberal education is to introduce the principles of industrialization into public education. Neoliberalism proclaims the concept of market economic logic by encouraging consumerism and competition. For example, when government funding is reduced, intense competition arises between public and private universities to secure more funding from other sources or private institutions. This is what is known as "academic capitalism," where each university is oriented towards a free market that focuses solely on profit, resulting in increased tuition fees for students, joint research with industry, competition for grants, and the internationalization of universities by admitting international students who will pay higher tuition fees (Huang & Xiong, 2023).

Corporate-based universities have resulted in the exploitation of intellectuals, the demise of homo academicus, and the decline of a culture of trust. Furthermore, these noble institutions, once characterized by self-regulation and professional autonomy, have been replaced by a system of corporate managerialism. When neoliberalism was introduced to modern higher education, a narrative emerged that guided universities to operate based on market individualism. According to neoliberal mathematical theory, organizations are absurd because they exclude individuals from the market. It was at this point that homo academicus emerged, aiming to decollectivize labor and unions. In this way, professors are encouraged to think of themselves as business owners who must attract external grants and earn as much money as possible. Like factory workers moving from one job to another, contract faculty are paid based on unreasonable hours. This shift in the management culture of higher education is a result of the neoliberals' conversion to market individualism and their pursuit of cost efficiency.

Neoliberalism & the Dynamics of Higher Education Autonomy in Indonesia

In the mid-1980s, neoliberal practices began to be recognized and implemented in Indonesia. This began with the collapse of crude oil prices, increasing foreign debt payments, and the economic development projects that had been implemented being less than successful in terms of their ability to meet state revenue requirements. Pressure from international capital forces. This can be seen in the growing role of the market and the diminishing role of the government in Indonesia. This growing role of the market is being achieved through deregulation and a free market.Thus, the increasing role of the market has led to Indonesia having various policies that regulate market freedom, including the management of investment and mining, as stipulated in Law Number 78 of 1958 concerning Foreign Investment. In Article 3 paragraph (1) there are 8 (eight) production field companies that are permitted to produce with limited involvement of foreign capital. This caused the New Order government to experience difficulties in its APBN, so that practices such as: liberalization in the economic and financial sectors, debureaucratization and deregulation, privatization of BUMN, and others emerged. As recommended by neoliberalism.

Van Dijk in his book "Acountry in Despair: Indonesia Between 1997 and 2000" said that this is what happened in Indonesia, where trade liberalization was carried out through the elimination of subsidies (fuel, electricity, fertilizer, and food), privatization of state-owned enterprises, fiscal discipline, floating exchange rates, and trade liberalization. The widespread implementation of the neoliberal economic agenda began after Indonesia faced the crisis in 1997. Under the strict supervision of the IMF, the Indonesian government began officially implementing most of the neoliberal economic policy package. Several factors contributed to Indonesia's political and economic crisis, including: First, corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN) have become a part of Indonesian culture. This is evident in the numerous economic development projects that have been undermined by corruption, collusion, and nepotism, the failure of foreign debt allocations, the destruction of forests, and even the embezzlement of oil revenues by certain individuals. These practices have undermined Indonesia's socio-economic order, leading to worsening inequality.

Second, in addition to the issue of corruption, collusion, and nepotism, economic analysts have highlighted the state bureaucracy's tendency to be passive and ineffective in managing companies. This ineffectiveness negatively impacted not only the performance of the bureaucracy and State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), but also the productivity of the national economy as a whole. Third, strategic errors in economic development during the New Order era have been highlighted. The primary criticism was the lack of emphasis on export growth. The New Order regime was considered reluctant, and despite attempts, failed to implement policies focused on export orientation. Economic development during that period was deemed to have excessively prioritized meeting domestic needs, with industry being directed more towards import substitution than at boosting exports. Fourth, at that time, foreign direct investment (FDI) was entering on a large scale and influencing the Indonesian economy. However, there was a lack of educated and trained human resources; the development of production technology was slow; and capital (for investment) was still insufficient.

In Indonesia, Law Number 61 of 1999 concerning Higher Education and Higher Education Autonomy is a result of liberalization and globalization in the context of GATS. According to PP 61/1999, four state universities are designated as PTNBH: UI, ITS, ITB, and UGM, resulting in increasing tuition fees. The policy of higher education autonomy as an effort to privatize education has actually been implemented by many developed countries, including New Zealand. Di Indonesia sendiri status Perguruan Tinggi Negeri (PTN) terdiri dari 3 kategori, dinataranya; a. PTN BH (state universities with legal status) is the highest level because it has full autonomy in managing finances and resources, including lecturers and educational staff. This type of PTN is similar in its management to a state-owned enterprise, b. PTN BLU (Public Service Agency State Universities) is an institution with the second level of autonomy. The management of this institution is similar to a state-owned hospital. All non-tax revenues are managed autonomously and reported to the state, c. PTN Satker is a PTN as a ministry work unit. All revenues, including student tuition fees, must be deposited into the state account (Ministry of Finance) before being used.

Currently, higher education in Indonesia appears to be seeking to adopt the values embodied in the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm, namely, running state administration as if it were a business sector. The hypothetical goal of New Public Management (NPM) is to improve the funding efficiency and transparency of public institutions, such as education and health, to taxpayers. However, its implementation often relies on government accounting metrics, which indirectly encourage the commercialization of the education sector with a profit-oriented orientation, resulting in institutions operating like fast-food restaurants. Christopher Hood, in his work "A Public Management for All Seasons?" (1991), stated that NPM seeks to adopt market mechanisms and efficiency logic from the private sector to the public sector. Hood also emphasized the risk that this approach could lead to an overemphasis on quantitative measurement and a decline in service quality. Michael Apple also examines the NPM concept in his book "Educating the Right Way: Markets, Standards, God, and Inequality" (2001). The NPM approach tends to prioritize standards that can be measured administratively. Apple emphasizes that education is not just about efficiency or quantitative output, but also about forming values and critical consciousness. Stephen Ball, in his writing "Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach" (1994), also criticized how NPM and neoliberal education policies facilitate the commodification of education, which can lead to a decline in teacher autonomy and a reduction of education to merely "producing" measurable results, similar to a factory (S. J. Ball, 1994).

Choi bahwa: "*In other words, PSAs were regarded as a new type of organizational form that would improve the productivity, efficiency and effectiveness*". The advent of the NPM has given the public sector a new lease of life, allowing it to reform what had been perceived as inefficient and unaccountable. However, the reality has been a failure. Established with the aim of adopting the management values taught by the NPM, the public service agencies (PTN BH) and public service agencies (BLU) have adopted a corporate mindset to an unhealthy extreme. Universities operate based on market individualism with a focus on profitability. PTN BH and public service agencies (BLU) must be able to independently source revenue to finance their operations. Ideally, a PTN with BH and BLU status should have financial resources. These productive business sectors could include hotels, building rental services, printing, hospitals, and other business sectors. Furthermore, it is hoped that once PTNs have autonomy, they will prioritize improving institutional quality and building partnerships with the aim of obtaining grant funding through research products (Darlis et al., 2023).

However, in reality, due to limited resources, many state universities (PTN BH and BLU) do not have productive business sectors; if they do, they are very limited. Therefore, universities are forced to think outside the box and find alternative sources of income. The easiest way is through tuition fees (SPP) or tuition fees (UKT). PTNs also seek funding from initial donations, better known as entrance fees. The basis for the application of entrance fees at PTNs is stated in Article 8 of the Minister of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Regulation No. 39 of 2017, which states that PTNs are permitted to charge entrance fees to students accepted through several pathways: Independent Pathways, International Classes, Foreign Students, and Students accepted through undergraduate pathways. This is a short-term solution taken by PTNs to meet their funding needs, rather than by increasing and improving the quality of superior products that can attract third parties to collaborate (Herlina et al., 2023).

Corporatization of Higher Education: The Impact of Neoliberalism on Academic Institutions

Essentially, the government has adopted the term autonomy only for funding purposes, with no other specific powers. For example, in the election of the rector, the government stipulates that the Minister of National Education holds 35% of the vote. This demonstrates that the state remains involved in bureaucratic decision-making, despite relinquishing responsibility for financing. The government should be fully responsible for fulfilling the public's right to education (Mesiono, M., & Haidir, 2021). Based on Article 31 paragraph 4 of the 1945 Constitution, the allocation of education funding is 20%, equivalent to Rp. 665 trillion from the APBN and APBD, where some of the funds are transferred to the Regional and Village Funds (TKDD); Rp. 356.5 trillion or 52%, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology; Rp. 98.987 trillion or 15%, Ministry of Religious Affairs; Rp. 62.305 trillion or 9%, Ministry; Rp. 32.859 trillion or 5%, financing expenditure/endowment fund; Rp. 77 trillion or 12%, non-ministerial education budget; Rp. 47.313 trillion or 7%.

However, in practice, education budget allocations often do not align with the figures received by educational institutions, due to waste, ineffective management, or misuse of funds. This issue has resulted in increases in the Single Tuition Fee (UKT) at several higher education institutions.

In 2021, UKT in several state universities (PTN), particularly those enrolled in the Independent Selection (Seleksi Mandiri), experienced significant increases. At Gadjah Mada University (UGM), the UKT for the Medicine Study Program increased from Rp 25-40 million to Rp 50-70 million per semester, representing a 200-300% increase. Furthermore, UKT at ITB increased between 20% and 50%, with some study programs experiencing an increase from around Rp 10 million to Rp 15 million per semester.

In addition to the UKT issue, there is also the student loan policy. ITB's collaboration with the online platform Danacita in August 2023 sparked controversy regarding the debt risks students face after graduation. This practice is known as student loans. Although Danacita offers easier access to educational financing through the application, allowing students to pay their UKT, the university provides loans that can then be repaid in installments using payment options such as bank transfers, virtual accounts, credit cards, and Danacita. This lending practice raises significant concerns that students will be burdened with loans that will be difficult to repay if they do not quickly find employment. This case is further controversial because Danacita loans are subject to high interest rates: a monthly platform fee of 1.75% for 12-month installments and 1.6% for 6-month installments, plus a 3% approval fee. Therefore, this policy is considered similar to the widespread online loan scams. This practice is inconsistent with Article 76 of the Higher Education Law, which only permits interest-free loans for tuition payments (Hasby et al., 2024).

Higher education is like a fast-food restaurant producing delicious junk food so that it can be mass-marketed for quick consumption, quickly reproduced, and quickly profited. This is what is called "Edu-Fast Food in Higher Education." The term "Edu-Fast Food" used by the author is inspired by the concept of "McDonaldization in Higher Education" by Heru Nugroho, who adapted this phrase from the work of an American sociologist, George Ritzer (1996) in "The McDonaldization of Society." The concept of "Edu-Fast Food" is considered a manifestation of the abdication of state responsibility in the provision of education, which is then handed over to market mechanisms through a neoliberal approach. Edu-Fast Food as touched in higher education tends to emphasize four principles: First, quantification; the principle of quantification where the evaluation of results and products is only seen in quantity rather than quality. The more graduates produced at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels, the more successful it is considered in managing education. In addition, students feel pressured to complete assignments and achieve results quickly, resulting in unethical practices such as the use of jockeys, the buying and selling of diplomas and academic degrees, including illegitimate doctorates and professorships (Dina et al., 2023).

Second, efficiency and emphasis (STEM); many higher education institutions focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs to compete and meet the demands of the global labor market. The presence of STEM in higher education often reinforces the dichotomy between "money-making" and "unprofitable" sciences (Terzieva et al., 2024). STEM disciplines are prioritized because they are considered to have high economic potential and are directly relevant to market needs, such as applied study programs in engineering, medicine, and economics. Meanwhile, humanities study programs that do not generate economic benefits, such as philosophy, literature, and culture, are threatened with closure. Third, predictability (Link & Match); the link and match program, which began in 1989, aims to align workforce skills with job market needs. This policy was created to prevent a mismatch between the supply prepared by educational institutions and the demand needed by the workforce. The link and match program targets two levels: secondary school and university. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in August 2020 showed that vocational high school graduates had the highest unemployment rate, at 13.55%. This indicates the absence of an effective link and match between education and the job market. Although vocational high schools are the focus of the link and match policy, vocational high school graduates are the largest contributor to unemployment in Indonesia. The increase in the number of vocational high schools has not been matched by improvements in quality, such as a lack of reference books and a shortage of approximately 34,000 graduates. In higher education, industry plays a role in creating specialized training. Furthermore, they also establish collaborative institutions tailored to the type of industry being developed. The application of link and match, which focuses on economics, reminds us that education has broader and more complex goals than simply economic interests (Precalya, 2022).

Fourth, technologization; the technologization policy in education has resulted in an education system that has become a slave to technology. To borrow the term "cheerful robot" from sociologist C. Wright Mills, meaning the academic community actively carries out technical instructions rather than thinking critically and reflectively, our education system has become dehumanized (Mills, 1959). Modern higher education speculates that universities are corporate institutions with the goal of profitability. This is certainly the case, as the term "homo academicus" has emerged, describing a phenomenon in which the academic identity and spirit, which should focus on intellectual development and character formation based on research (research-based education), have experienced a significant decline. This is due to the strong influence of neoliberalism, which has transformed education into a traded commodity and shifted the focus of academics from scientific integrity to pragmatic goals such as profitability and institutional rankings. Consequently, ethical and moral values that should be the foundation of the academic world, such as honesty, etiquette, and dedication to knowledge, have been marginalized. Today's academic community no longer stands atop the ivory tower of knowledge, but is busy competing for academic titles and serving power in order to obtain the highest H-Citation Index for the highest degree.

Furthermore, a culture of corruption remains a serious problem in higher education in Indonesia. According to findings by Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) in 2021, there were 240 cases of corruption in higher education institutions, resulting in state losses of Rp 1.605 trillion between 2016 and 2021. The methods of corruption in the education sector include extortion/extortion (14%), fictitious reports (14%), fictitious projects (15%), mark-ups (15%), abuse of authority (14%), budget cuts (11%), embezzlement (14%), and bribery (3%). This phenomenon demonstrates the depth of corruption in the education sector, which should be a place to instill values of integrity and morality.

The Urgency of Revitalization in Higher Education: A Critical Review

Intellectual Figures' Views on Higher Education

The phenomenon of corporatization in higher education, which has developed alongside the penetration of neoliberalism, has drawn sharp criticism from various leading thinkers, who have raised the issue of hegemonic global structures. David Harvey, in "A Brief History of Neoliberalism," describes it as accumulation by dispossession, where education is converted into a commodity to be bought and sold at the expense of basic human rights. One prominent case is in the UK, where the 2012 increase in tuition fees from £3,000 to £9,000 per year sparked massive protests. In Indonesia, tuition fees at Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) increased by between 20% and 50%, with some study programs increasing from around Rp 10 million to Rp 15 million per semester. This policy not only increased student debt but also reduced the opportunities for students from lower-middle-class backgrounds to continue their education. Harvey identifies this phenomenon as part of "accumulation by dispossession," where universities, which should serve the public interest, are instead used to expand the influence of profit-driven, factory-based capitalism.

Still in a commercial context, Heru Nugroho, in "The McDonaldization of Higher Education," argues that commercialization is an integral part of neoliberalism, resulting in university autonomy. He argues that higher education autonomy has positive potential. However, academics often rush to interpret and implement government regulations on "educational autonomy," without considering the holistic and sustainable framework needed to ensure the achievement of more comprehensive educational goals. Adopting the term autonomy only addresses funding, but not other managerial aspects. For example, in the election of rectors, the government stipulates that the Minister of National Education holds 35% of the vote. This demonstrates that the state remains involved in bureaucratic decision-making despite relinquishing responsibility for financing. According to Amartya Sen, in his work "Development as Freedom," knowledge and education are vital components in developing the capacities of individuals and societies. Sen argues that investment in education is an investment in human development, and governments have a responsibility to provide adequate funding for education as a human right. In line with Amartya, Peter Fleming, through his scientific writing "Dark Academia: How Universities Die," states that if higher education institutions want to avoid commercial domination, then the restoration of an integrated managerial approach is a must, including prioritizing a participatory funding model from the state for higher education, to ensure the sustainability and quality of education that focuses on the public interest. Reform of the state budget scheme for higher education needs to be carried out by returning the allocation of these funds specifically to support the development of knowledge and quality research.

Criticism of neoliberal colonization policies has also been expressed in France, where the adoption of an assessment model based on academic productivity and the number of scientific publications has created an imbalance in funding and attention for the humanities. In Western countries, the Publish or Perish phenomenon forces academics to prioritize publication quantity over quality. According to a report from the European University Association, 40% of academics feel pressured to produce more publications at unreasonable costs, impacting research integrity. In Indonesia, government policies linking international publications (Scopus; Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4) with promotions and financial incentives exacerbate the situation. A study by the Ministry of Education and Culture found that 30% of lecturers are caught in manipulative practices, such as choosing predatory journals or including their names in research that is not collaboratively conducted. This practice is similar to the phenomenon depicted in an article called "Profesor Kangkong," or "the empty-minded professor." Furthermore, another case in point is the Netherlands, where the internationalization of higher education has created a crisis at the local level. Dutch universities often prioritize the admission of international students who can afford higher tuition fees, neglecting the needs of domestic students. This has not only triggered a student housing crisis but also put pressure on university facilities, which are no longer adequate to accommodate the increasing number of students. Stefan Collini's scathing critique in "What Are Universities For?" emphasizes that universities should function as public institutions advancing knowledge for the welfare of society, not merely profit-making machines oriented toward international prestige and financial gain.

The current phenomenon of lecturers overworking their working hours at universities, with the aim of earning additional income beyond the standard 12-16 hours per week, has resulted in a paradigm shift in the academic world. Instead of focusing on substantial research, driven by passion and sincerity, many lecturers are now shifting their focus from research to more lucrative activities, such as teaching at private institutions or commercial research projects. A 2023 survey by the Indonesian Lecturers Association indicated that approximately 60% of lecturers tend to divert their time to off-campus activities, including teaching and research collaborations with the private sector, which are considered more financially rewarding alternatives. On the other hand, lecturers operating within the university environment are focusing more on diploma programs that offer more promising income potential. This shift in lecturers' focus to more financially rewarding activities has been strongly criticized by William G. Bowen, in his book "Higher Education in the Digital Age," who argues that a university's success as a research institution depends not only on the number of publications or research funding received, but also on a strong commitment to the development of knowledge and ongoing academic collaboration. He emphasizes that universities should function as centers of innovation and critical thinking, not simply institutions focused on profitability.

This is confirmed by Simon Marginson in his paper: "*The Global Market in Higher Education*", yang menguraikan "*universities must remain true to their academic mission and invest in research to generate broader social impact, even in the context of increasing commercialization of higher education*". Furthermore, the issue of borrowing by higher education institutions in the West, particularly through student loan schemes, has drawn sharp criticism from various groups. One prominent critic, Elizabeth Warren, speculated in her work "A Fighting Chance," that student debt has become a financial burden that oppresses students, exacerbates economic inequality, and hinders social mobility. In Warren's view, this approach creates a cycle of debt that is difficult to break, where students trapped in the financial burden sacrifice their career potential and quality of life. In Indonesia, the student loan policy launched by the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) in partnership with the Danacita platform in August 2023 has sparked controversy. While designed to increase accessibility to higher education, this policy has the potential to create financial dependence that burdens students in the future, harming their ability to achieve economic independence.

Responding to the student loan policy at ITB, through its partnership with Danacita, Prof. Rhenald Kasali emphasized the need for a holistic approach to educational access. Kasali argued that the solution goes beyond simply providing loans and instead focuses on strengthening the financial support system, including the provision of broader scholarships such as the Education Fund Management Institute (LPDP) Scholarship, the Bidikmisi Scholarship (KIP), the Unggulan Scholarship, the Ministry of Religious Affairs Scholarship, and the Outstanding Student Scholarship. Furthermore, Kasali and Heru criticized the trend referred to as "Edu Fast Food" in higher education. They argue that higher education is like a fast-food restaurant producing delicious junk food so that it can be mass-marketed, quickly consumed, and quickly produced and profitable. The concept of "Edu-Fast Food" is considered a manifestation of the state's abdication of responsibility in the provision of education, which is then handed over to market mechanisms through a neoliberal approach. Edu-Fast Food, as it has been applied in higher education, tends to emphasize four principles: quantity, efficiency, predictability, and technologization. Delving further into the principle of quantity, Martha Nussbaum, in her book "Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities," argues that education that is too oriented towards quantitative parameters and tends to ignore the dimensions of developing individual moral and intellectual qualities often experiences epistemological dysfunction. Martha Nussbaum critically asserts that an ideal education system should focus on internalizing character values and honing critical thinking skills, rather than simply meeting quantitative targets such as the number of graduates or certifications.

This principle often creates excessive pressure on students, which has given rise to various unethical practices, including the use of fake degrees and the buying and selling of diplomas. One example is the fake diploma scandal that occurred in several countries, including Indonesia and India. In fact, Alfred North Whitehead, a British philosopher and mathematician, in his work "The Aims of Education and Other Essays" (1929). True education cannot be reduced to the mere accumulation of information or quantitative achievements such as the number of graduates, test scores, or certifications. He emphasized that education must focus on developing deep understanding and wisdom, which cannot always be measured numerically. Whitehead criticized "inertial education," which produces graduates with stagnant knowledge unconnected to practical reality or moral wisdom. Whitehead further sharpened his criticism by explaining that quantification in education prioritizes only numerically measurable evaluations, with the Grade Point Average (GPA) as the dominant indicator of academic success. This results in students prioritizing high grades over substantive mastery of the material. This increases the likelihood of unethical practices, such as plagiarism and the use of professional services, which undermine academic integrity and the very substance of education.

Continuing with the Edu Fast Food trend in higher education, another concern concerns the principle of efficiency and emphasis (STEM); many higher education institutions are focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs to compete and meet the demands of the global labor market. The presence of STEM in higher education often reinforces the dichotomy between those that "make money" and those that don't. STEM disciplines are prioritized because they are considered to have high economic potential and are directly relevant to market needs, such as applied study programs in engineering, medicine, and economics. Meanwhile, humanities study programs that do not generate economic benefits, such as philosophy, literature, and culture, are threatened with closure. Turning to Western countries, a number of universities in the UK and the United States are slowly eliminating arts and humanities study programs because they are not marketable. This phenomenon indicates an epistemological dysfunction, where cultural and ethical values are being replaced. Critics such as Pierre Bourdieu, in his work "Homo Academicus," note that higher education is increasingly controlled by market logic, at the expense of academic freedom and intellectual diversity. (Pierre, 1988). The importance of recognizing the contribution of the humanities to critical thinking and creativity can help foster an appreciation of their cultural and ethical values. Furthermore, the development of a vibrant humanities study spirit can occur, one way being to prioritize participatory state funding for higher education.

Exploring further, the principle of predictability (Link & Match); the link and match program, implemented in 1989, aims to align workforce skills with job market needs. This policy was created to prevent a mismatch between the supply prepared by educational institutions and the demand required by the workforce. Richard Sennett, in his landmark work "The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism," forcefully criticized how an excessive focus on efficiency and productivity in the workplace can lead to the erosion of fundamental moral and social values. (Richard Sennett, 1998). In the context of the Link and Match policy, which seeks to justify higher education by making it a tool to meet industry needs, there are significant detrimental implications. In Indonesia, the link and match program targets two levels: secondary school and university. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in August 2020 showed that vocational high school graduates had the highest unemployment rate, at 13.55%. This indicates the absence of an effective link and match between education and the job market. Although vocational high schools are the focus of the link and match policy, vocational high school graduates are the largest contributors to unemployment in Indonesia. The increase in the number of vocational high schools has not been matched by improvements in quality, such as a lack of reference books and a shortage of approximately 34,000 graduates. In higher education, industry plays a role in creating specialized training. Furthermore, they also establish collaborations to establish institutions tailored to the type of industry being developed. The implementation of link and match, which focuses on the economy, reminds us that education has broader and more complex goals than simply economic interests. (Precalya, 2021)." In other words, the Link and Match policy can lead to "character corrosion." Therefore, it is necessary to involve various stakeholders, including academics and industry, in curriculum design to ensure the relevance of education without sacrificing the human aspect.

Continuing with the same issue, Edu Fast Food, based on its technologization principles, has drawn sharp criticism from various scientists; the technologization policy in education has resulted in an education system that has become a slave to technology. To borrow the term from sociologist C. Wright Mills, "cheerful robots," meaning that the academic community actively carries out technical instructions rather than thinking critically and reflectively, have dehumanized our education system (Mills, 1959). Neil Postman also experienced similar anxiety about his fate *"Technopoly: The Surrender of Culture to Technology,"*(Postman, 1992) Postman argued that technology has created a "technopoly," where technology dominates all aspects of life, including education. He criticized the shift in education from fostering critical thinking and cultural values to focusing on technology and rapid information, thus reducing the depth of learning. Postman advocated for the judicious use of technology, limiting its use to appropriate contexts and preventing technology from dominating education. This meant striking a balance between the use of technology and traditional teaching methods that focus more on human interaction.

Islam Responds to the Current Higher Education Crisis

While the West has presented proposals intended to mitigate the growing infiltration of neoliberalism into educational structures, the concept of Islamic education can be explored as an alternative framework that not only complements existing educational infrastructure but also serves as a navigator in the search for solutions to the neoliberal colonial domination that looms over higher education institutions. In this context, Islamic education, with its rich and profound epistemological and ontological foundations, offers a holistic approach that has the potential to strengthen moral and ethical values and support the formation of a more authentic academic identity. At the higher education level, several issues of the loss of adab (the loss of adab) persist. Numerous intellectuals are involved in fraudulent practices at fictitious campuses to obtain fake diplomas and instant degrees. The reputation and image of universities have been tarnished by the actions of pragmatic academics who are ambitious to obtain degrees quickly for socio-economic gain. Furthermore, at the postgraduate level, there are issues of plagiarism, corruption of educational funds, and various other forms of fraud committed by professors in educational institutions. This is the impact of the neoliberal system in higher education, the values of manners and ethics which should be the main foundation in the academic world are increasingly being eroded.

Prof. Naquib Al-Attas, in his scientific writings *"The Concept of Education in Islam: A Framework for an Islamic Philosophy of Education", (*Naquib Al-Attas, 1999). emphasized that the current educational goals often focus on economic orientation and materialistic attainment, neglecting spiritual values. He argued that higher education must be rooted in tradition and Islamic values. According to Naquib al-Attas, the goal of education is essentially to produce a universal human being (al-insan al-kamil), known as a civilized human being. Al-Attas argued that education should focus on developing strong adab (good character), where individuals not only pursue knowledge and intellectual skills but are also equipped with moral and ethical values in accordance with Islamic teachings. A sweet saying goes, "in this world there is not a shortage of intelligent people, but there is a shortage of good people. Many economics graduates every year, but corruption still occurs. Thousands of law masters graduate every year, but legal justice in this country is still lacking. Many people are intelligent, but have problems with good character," said Al-Attas. The role of teachers as muaddib (leaders) is important to understand and practice. Universities must be able to optimize the role of their lecturers to become the best educators (*muaddib*) for students. Every lecturer must understand and practice the Tri Dharma of higher education thoroughly. A lecturer's duties are a manifestation of the combination of knowledge and good deeds. According to Adian Husaini, teachers are mujahid fi sabilillah (combatants for the sake of Allah). Teachers are not merely "teachers" who lack a passion for education and work only for pay.

Concerns about education were also expressed by Tariq Ramadan, a Muslim intellectual and writer, in "*Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity*", in which he outlined the challenges facing Islamic education in the context of globalization and neoliberalism. Ramadan emphasized the importance of maintaining Islamic identity and values in education, as well as the need for a more democratic approach to address the negative impacts of the current dominant education system. In this context, the student loan crisis at the Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB) serves as a concrete example of this challenge, where many students are trapped in debt that hinders their ability to achieve financial stability after graduation. This crisis reflects how educational values, which should prioritize the well-being of individuals and society, are often marginalized by a system that prioritizes financial gain, necessitating serious attention to finding solutions that align with the principles of justice and the values advocated by Ramadan. The ever-increasing cost of education, coupled with high interest rates on student loans, often leaves graduates feeling pressured to quickly find employment to repay mounting debt.

In this context, the concept of "qardhul hasan" emerges as an alternative solution, offering an interest-free loan model. Qardhul hasan, meaning "good loan," is a financial instrument granted with the pure intention of helping individuals in need, without any expectation of financial gain. By applying the principles of qardhul hasan, ITB students can obtain financial support for their education without the risk of being trapped in excessive debt or burdened with interest burdens that could burden their finances in the future.

The benefits of qardhul hasan lie not only in reducing the financial burden but also in the underlying moral and ethical aspects. Providing loans in the form of qardhul hasan reflects the values of solidarity, justice, and mutual assistance within society, which are highly relevant in the educational context. With qardhul hasan, students are encouraged to help and support one another, creating a more inclusive and community-based educational ecosystem. Furthermore, qardhul hasan can be managed through collaboration between ITB and Islamic financial institutions or through productive waqf funds. By utilizing professionally managed waqf assets, the investment proceeds can be allocated to support qardhul hasan programs. This will not only create a sustainable source of funding for students but also reduce reliance on interest-based loans, which are often rooted in a profit-oriented financial system. Thus, implementing qardhul hasan not only provides a solution to student loan problems but also contributes to the development of students' character and personality based on the principles of social justice and the common good (Purwadi, 2014).

In addition to qardhul hasan, which effectively addresses the problem of student debt, productive waqf plays a strategic role in providing long-term resources for educational institutions without relying on profit-based financing schemes. With productive waqf, educational institutions can optimally manage assets to generate income to support operations, scholarships, and academic development, thus maintaining the focus of educational goals on character building and intellectual development, without succumbing to commercial pressures. Critically, waqf presents a challenge to the neoliberal paradigm that dominates the global education system. The commercialization of education focuses on privatization, where educational institutions operate with a profit-oriented orientation, leading to exclusion and creating social inequality. Waqf, with its non-commercial principles, is fundamentally different, as it positions education as a social right that should be accessible to all, without excessive financial burden.

However, to more deeply understand why waqf is considered a solution, it is important to examine how waqf management can achieve sustainability beyond the short-term. Productive waqf, managed with a professional business model, enables educational institutions to manage funds independently, generating sustainable income without compromising moral and ethical principles. This differs from the commercialization model, which often shifts the focus from educational quality to increasing profitability, ultimately undermining the essence of education as a process of character building and intellectual capacity enhancement. Furthermore, in a market-oriented system, education becomes a means to create a workforce ready to meet industry needs. Waqf, on the other hand, reinforces the goal of education as a means of holistic human development, encompassing moral, spiritual, and social dimensions, not just the development of technical skills required by the market. This means that waqf not only facilitates educational financing but also serves as a tool to maintain the integrity of the values that educational institutions seek to uphold, particularly in the Islamic context, which emphasizes the importance of ethics and moral development in the learning process.

However, waqf is not without its challenges. To be a truly effective solution, waqf management must be transparent, accountable, and adaptable to changing times. In the era of globalization, inefficient or corrupt waqf management can hinder its potential as a credible alternative to commercialization. Another challenge is how waqf can be integrated with national education policies, which are often still trapped in the logic of neoliberalism. Waqf must be integrated with policy reforms that support inclusivity and equal access, so that it becomes not merely a philanthropic instrument but truly strengthens a more democratic and equitable education system.

Historically, waqf has been implemented since the beginning of Islam as a social financing mechanism, developed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a manifestation of God's command to channel economic resources for the sustainable benefit of the community. The Prophet implemented this system through various strategic steps, such as purchasing land measuring 25.75 x 27.33 meters with donations for the construction of the Quba Mosque and purchasing a well to provide water to the community. The term "waqf" emerged around the second century of the Hijriah, when ongoing charity no longer consisted solely of immovable property but also cash. This was emphasized by Imam Al-Zuhri (d. 124 AH), who issued a fatwa permitting waqf in the form of dinars and dirhams to support the development of Islamic propagation. Waqf became increasingly popular after Caliph Al-Ma'mun allocated a large portion of the Baitul Mal (Public House) for educational purposes in 218 AH (Pamungkas, 2021). During the Umayyad Dynasty (661-750 CE), although the use of waqf for education was not yet fully developed, several mosques were built to become centers of learning, such as the Great Mosque of Damascus built by Caliph Walid ibn Abdul Malik (705-715 CE). However, the peak occurred during the Abbasid Dynasty (750-1258 CE), where figures such as Al-Mansur (754-775 CE) and Al-Ma'mun (813-833 CE) strongly supported the development of education through waqf. During this period, Al-Qarawiyyin University was founded in Fez in 859 CE by Fatima al-Fihri and is recognized by UNESCO as the oldest university in the world still in operation. In addition, Al-Azhar University in Cairo was founded in 970 CE by Jawhar al-Siqilli on the orders of Caliph Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allah and became a very influential center of learning in the Islamic world (Kasdi, 2016).

Delving deeper into the history of Al-Azhar, it began as a mosque founded in 970 CE by a Fatimid caliph with sustained financial support. Each caliph contributed waqf, either through personal wealth or from the state budget, to support Al-Azhar. During the Seljuk period, Nizamul Mulk was known as a pioneer of waqf, while the first figure to establish a waqf specifically for Al-Azhar was Caliph al-Hakim ibn Amrillah, one of the Fatimid caliphs. This initiative was then followed by subsequent caliphs, as well as philanthropists from local communities and throughout the Islamic world. This waqf tradition has been continuously expanded and maintained throughout history, so that today

Al-Azhar has reached over 1,050 years old. Initially, the Elementary and Secondary Education Institutions (al-Ma'ahid al-Azhariyyah) managed by al-Azhar were established in every mantiqah (district), followed by Al-Azhar University in Cairo and 11 branch universities spread across various provinces. Al-Azhar University fosters approximately 400,000 undergraduate students, 10,000 master's students, and 1,000 doctoral students, supported by 11,000 lecturers, the majority of whom hold professorial and doctoral qualifications.

Al-Azhar's productive waqf consists of land, buildings, and agricultural land, which are managed and developed to finance the education sector. Furthermore, waqf at Al-Azhar is used for various investment activities and business capital accumulation, such as developing shopping centers as a source of sustainable income, establishing tourism, recreation, and public baths. Al-Azhar also collaborates with companies in the iron, steel, and real estate sectors to develop housing and infrastructure projects. Furthermore, waqf land is managed for agricultural and livestock businesses, which contribute to increased agricultural production.

The proceeds from Al-Azhar's waqf are allocated to provide scholarships, construct educational facilities such as classrooms and libraries, conduct seminars, workshops for lecturers, conduct research projects, and conduct extracurricular activities. Through the use of these waqf funds, Al-Azhar is committed to improving the quality of education. Each year, Al-Azhar allocates 127,875,000 Egyptian pounds to finance lecturers' salaries, including 22,000,000 pounds for doctors and professors, 18,750,000 pounds for teachers, and 9,750,000 pounds for staff. In addition, these funds are also allocated for scholarships, totaling 41,250,000 pounds for Ma'had students, 35,000,000 pounds for undergraduate students, 100,000 pounds for postgraduate students, and 125,000 pounds for doctoral students. Salaries and scholarships at Al-Azhar account for one-third of the total education budget, while the other third is allocated to training, research, and human resource development and education quality. Thus, each year, Al-Azhar's waqf results reach 383,529,000 Egyptian pounds, or approximately Rp. 4,611,130,000,000. Thus, the existence of waqf ensures that Al-Azhar can continue to make significant contributions to the world of education with stable and sustainable resources (Azmi, 2020).

Al-Azhar's success in managing productive waqf as a sustainable source of funding for education has inspired the establishment of the Education Waqf Board in Indonesia, including at the Darussalam Gontor Modern Islamic Boarding School. Gontor has developed a robust waqf system, where waqf assets such as land and buildings are independently managed by the foundation that oversees them. Revenue from this waqf management is used to support the operations of the Islamic boarding school, expand educational facilities, and keep tuition affordable. Thus, Gontor has succeeded in creating an independent and sustainable educational model, following in Al-Azhar's footsteps in maximizing the potential of waqf for educational advancement (Arroisi, 2020).

The concept of waqf, integrated into the structure of Islamic educational institutions, has found substantial parallels in the European educational context, where analogous principles are adopted with the terminology of endowments. This reflects fundamental similarities in the financing and resource management mechanisms for education, which aim to improve the quality and sustainability of educational institutions by optimizing resource allocation and utilizing invested assets for educational purposes. The endowment fund system in European universities serves as a productive financial mechanism, enabling institutions to manage assets and support various academic and research activities. The endowment fund management system at the University of Oxford is a complex and organized structure aimed at providing sustainable financial support for academic and social initiatives. By 2023, the total value of Oxford's endowment fund is estimated to reach approximately £7.8 billion, making it one of the largest in Europe. The fund is strategically allocated, with 40-50% invested in stocks to generate stable and potentially high returns. Additionally, approximately 20-30% is allocated to bonds, 10-15% to real estate, and 5-10% to alternative investments such as venture capital and sustainable assets. This endowment fund is funded through donations from alumni, individuals, and organizations, as well as investment returns. The fund is managed by Oxford University Endowment Management (OUEM), which employs a diverse investment strategy to maximize returns. This strategy includes investing in stocks.

CONCLUSION

The grip of neoliberalism in higher education in Indonesia has changed the direction of higher education autonomy through economic mechanisms that support commercialization. Regulations that prioritize profitability, especially in the context of State Universities with Legal Entities (PTN-BH), have given rise to various problems such as the presence of edu fast-food in universities, student loans, an emphasis on STEM, increasing tuition fees (UKT), the demise of homo academicus, link and match, and a culture of corruption. Thus, in an effort to respond to these challenges, many thinkers such as David Harvey, Heru Nugroho, Amartya Sen, Peter Fleming, Richard Sennett, Pierre Bourdieu, and Neil Postman have criticized the corporatization of higher education triggered by neoliberalism. They highlight commercialization, inequitable access, an emphasis on academic productivity, and a dependency on technology that undermines intellectual values, morals, and the function of universities as institutions for character development and critical thinking. Furthermore, the revitalization of higher education's identity can be examined through a critical approach from an Islamic perspective, as proposed by Prof. Naquib Al-Attas, education must focus on the formation of strong morals. An education based on good manners can produce individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also possess integrity, contribute positively to society, and are able to mitigate the negative impacts of the neoliberal education system. Furthermore, education undeniably requires organized funding to maintain its quality. Productive waqf can provide funding for educational institutions, while "qardhul hasan" offers interest-free loans for students, ensuring access to education without the burden of debt. Both of these sources support financial independence and educational accessibility.

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