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Challenges of Madaris Educational System in Educating the Youth in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, Philippines

Saddam Mangondato Solaiman¹

¹ Mindanao State University, Marawi City, Philippines. Email: sadsolai@gmail.com

Abstract

This study adopted the descriptive-evaluative design to gather information about the challenges of madaris in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data regarding the challenges in different traditional madaris in BARMM. The respondents who participated in this study were 293 asatidz. They were randomly selected from the selected cities in BARMM such as Marawi City, Lamitan City, and Cotabato City, and the province of Lanao del Sur. Furthermore, the results showed that: (1) the challenges on funding budget are considered serious; (2) the challenges on competency of faculty and staff are challenging but not serious; (3) the challenges on facilities are moderately serious; and (4) the curriculum is a challenge but not serious. In view of the aforementioned findings, the following recommendations were put forth for considerations: appoint qualified asatidz, trainers and consultants in every madrasah; revise the instruction materials to make them informative and updated; renovate existing facilities; regularly monitor the asatidz in terms of their performance; acquire foreign scholarship for asatidz; and the BARMM government and local government units should continually support the traditional madrasah and allocate budget thereof. It is strongly recommended that further studies be conducted to assess the need for traditional madrasah in the other areas in Mindanao, Luzon and Visayas.

Keywords: Madaris, Asatidz, Madrasah Education, Islamic Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia is a growing scenario in most western countries associated with fear of the increasing number of world population embracing the faith of Islam. Islamophobia together with the phenomenon of the internationalization of Islamic education has attracted not only traction from the Muslim world but also suspicions from critics. This is in line with the popular view that Islamic schools or Madaris are essentially risky because they have allegedly been responsible for all sorts of ills like terrorism. They have tagged Madaris as dens of terror and hatching grounds for suicide bombers and jihadists.

There is no denying that terrorism continues to wreak havoc in the lives of people worldwide, but to associate such an inhumane act to Muslims alone, especially to their learning institution, is quite unfair. The role of the Madaris in stopping the rapid propagation of terrorism is highly significant because millions of Muslim students receive some or all their formal education in a madrasah or Madaris (plural for madrasah). Typically, a madrasah provides young Muslims with a religious foundation in Qur'anic recitation and Islamic values. For some Muslim children, the madrasah is the only source of formal education that is available; for others, it is supplementary to secular basic education provided in primary and secondary schools.

However, the Madrasah as an indigenous school, often fails to provide the practical skills and academic knowledge that parents view as important for their children's future while their counterpart secular schools provide these skills and knowledge, and this made Muslim families not comfortable with madrasah as a learning institution.

In the Philippines, the Madaris are the oldest educational institution in Mindanao and are recognized to be the single most important factor in the preservation of the Islamic faith and culture (Lamla, 2018). According to Tamano, (as cited by Rodriguez, 1974), the Philippine educational system was not responsive to the educational needs of the Muslims. The western type of education introduced into the Muslim areas was not able to answer effectively the economic, cultural, and social enrichment necessary to bring the Muslims to the standard of living attained by the Christians in Visayas and Luzon. This educational inequality could widen more the socio-economic gap existing between two groups. To solve this situation, he proposed the teaching of Islam to Muslim children, providing more educational facilities and opportunities, and improving the madaris.

The legality of this study is anchored on Letter of Instruction No.1221 issued by President Marcos directing the Minister of Education, Culture, and Sports to formulate and adopt a program for the development of the madrasah schools, at least for the improvement of their teaching staff and instructional facilities. However, priority must be given, wherever possible, to their progressive integration as a sector in the national educational system with enhanced curricula to the end that their graduates join the mainstream of Philippine education, endowing them with the capability to contribute to the modernization of their communities within the framework of their Islamic faith (Rodriguez, 1993).

Furthermore, the compelling reasons in conducting this research are to provide wise insights for *asatidz*, madrasah administrators, as well as young Muslim professionals to improve their skills and their educational management. Included also is to investigate the effectiveness of educational system among the Madaris in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Methodology

Participants

This study involved the *asatidz* (teachers) as respondents who are the primary stakeholders of the madrasah educational system. Two hundred ninety three (293) respondents made up the sample, which comprised 293 *asatidz*. The said respondents were taken from the *asatidz* throughout the select cities and provinces in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, namely Marawi City, Lamitan City, Cotabato City, and Lanao del Sur. The individual respondents were then randomly selected.

Design

This study is a descriptive-evaluative research as it attempted to describe the perception of the respondents on the challenges of madaris educational system in educating the youth in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The descriptive method of research is concerned with the procedures used to organize, describe, and summarize data. Specifically, this study adopted the cross-sectional survey research design and administered questionnaires to the respondents for the collection of necessary data needed in the study.

Research Instrument

The research instrument used in this study was a survey questionnaire. This consists of identifies the challenges encountered by Madaris in madrasah educational system which contains challenges on funding budget, challenges on competency of faculty and staff, challenges on facilities, challenges on curriculum. Furthermore, only certain respondents completed of the survey were administered to *asatidz* (teacher).

Procedure

To gather the primary data needed for the study, the researcher used a structured questionnaire that was presented and approved by the dissertation committee. The data collection set off by sending request letters to the traditional Madrasah administrators to allow the researcher to conduct the study. When the request was granted, the researcher visited the respective madrasah schools and paid personal visit to the administrators. It was intended for the setting of schedules of data collection. With their approval, the researcher immediately administered the questionnaires to the chosen respondents. It was made possible by personally collecting the data from the locales of the study, namely Marawi City, Cotabato City, Lamitan City, and Lanao del Sur.

The respondents were given sufficient time to finish answering the questionnaires to ensure that they responded properly and completely to the survey. After which, the instruments were retrieved. The data analysis then ensued after retrieving all the questionnaires.

Sampling Techniques

The respondents were purposively selected from four areas that is Lanao del Sur, Cotabato City, Lamitan City and Marawi City. These areas were selected because of the accessibility of the area. Before that, the researcher get a preliminary survey from the file of the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education under the Bureau of Madaris Education. After studying their location, the researcher decided to have a quota on the four areas. The Table below shows the distribution of the respondents.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents of the study

Areas	Asstidz (Teachers)
Lanao del Sur	76
Marawi City	74
Cotabato City	101
Lamitan City	42
Total	293

After the quota, the researcher made used of simple random sampling using raffles to actually pick up the respondents.

Results and Discussions

Challenges in the Madaris Institution of the BARMM

A. Challenges in Funding

Table 2 illustrates the Weighted Mean Ratings of Challenges in Funding. Presented in Table 1 is the perceived evaluation of the challenges in relation to funding budget of Madaris. It reveals that all indicators are considered serious based on the mean values. Specifically, there was insufficient money to pay madrasah employees (M=4.13), to fund madrasah activities or programs (M=3.89), to purchase equipment or supplies (M=3.85), and to build classrooms (M=3.45). Basically, without funding, the operations of the schools will be difficult to accomplish

and this poses negative consequences not only to the administrators but also to the students who depend on the services of the Madaris.

Table 2: Weighted Mean Ratings of Challenges in Funding

Funding Budget	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Std. Deviation
1. There was no enough budget for building classroom for the madrasah.	3.45	Serious challenges	1.461
2. There was no enough money for purchasing madrasah equipment or supplies.	3.85	Serious challenges	1.248
3. There was no enough money for salary of the employee in madrasah.	4.13	Serious challenges	1.057
4. There is no enough money for other madrasah activities or programs.	3.89	Serious challenges	1.305
OVER-ALL MEAN	3.8300	Serious challenges	0.28190

*Legend: 1.00-1.80 – Never, not a challenge at all, 1.81-2.61 – A challenge but not serious
2.62- 3.42 – Moderately serious challenges, 3.43- 4.23 – Serious challenges
4.25- 5.00 – Very serious challenges*

In general, it shows that the Madaris institutions in BARMM are financially inadequate. This is attributed to the fact that Madaris in BARMM are self-sustained and privately owned and less or no support come from the government. According to the administrators, despite the small salary, they continue doing their job to teach in Madaris because they believe in the doctrine of Islam that teaching is a form worship and they do it for the sake of Allah (swt).

B. Challenges on Competence of Faculty and Staff

Table 3 depicts the Weighted Mean Ratings of the Challenges on Competence of Faculty and Staff. Table 3 data manifested the weighted mean (WM) ratings of the indicators of challenges on competence of faculty and staff with five statement indicators. The data indicated that all statement indicators were either viewed as challenge but not serious.

Table 3: Weighted Mean Ratings of the Challenges on Competence of Faculty and Staff

Statement Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Std. Deviation
1. The employee in madrasah are not all graduate in kuliyyah/college.	2.03	A challenge but not serious	1.261
2. The ustadz in madrasah does not have enough training and seminar for professional growth.	2.84	Moderately serious challenge	1.333
3. The ustadz does not have sufficient knowledge on the topic he/she is discussing.	1.94	A challenge but not serious	1.116
4. The ustadz is not well prepared on his/her lesson.	2.03	A challenge but not serious	1.249
5. The ustadz is not updated on concepts and ideas he/she is discussing.	1.85	A challenge but not serious	1.237
OVERALL MEAN	2.1380	A challenge but not serious	0.39946

Legend: 1.00-1.80 – Never, not a challenge at all, 1.81-2.61 – A challenge but not serious

2.62- 3.42 – Moderately serious challenge, 3.43- 4.23 – Serious challenge
4.25- 5.00 – Very serious challenge

It can be gleaned from the table that teacher and staff competency is not a serious challenge for the administrators. Particularly, these include the following indicators: employee in madrasah are not all graduate in kuliyah/college (M=2.03); ustadz does not have sufficient knowledge on the topic he/she is discussing (M=1.94); ustadz is not well-prepared on his/her lesson (M=2.03); and ustadz is not updated on concepts and ideas he/she is discussing (M=1.85). These aspects are basically important when it comes to teacher and staff competence, but the data imply that these challenges are easy to handle for the administrators. It could be through trainings and further studies, but the opportunities for these professional development activities is the actual challenge for them. They revealed that the ustadz in madrasah does not have enough training and seminar for professional growth (M=2.84).

In general, findings show that the asatidz in Madaris institutions in BARMM there are major problems regarding competence of their asatidz and staff because accordingly most of them are graduate in college and others from abroad. They believed that they are competent enough to teach even though they have less support from government. However, they need training and seminar for professional growth. This goes to show that continuing professional development remains a luxury for madaris in BARMM and not everyone is given the opportunity to avail of such privileges. Hence, concerned authorities must implement programs that would address this need.

C. Challenges in terms of Facilities

Table 4 indicates the Weighted Mean Ratings of the Indicators on Challenges in terms of Facilities.

Table 4: Weighted Mean Ratings of the Indicators on Challenges in terms of Facilities

Statement Indicators	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Std. Deviation
1. There is no enough classrooms to accommodate the students in madrasah.	3.07	Moderately serious challenge	1.714
2. There is no library in the madrasah.	4.05	Serious challenge	1.529
3. There is no comfort room or toilet.	2.96	Moderately serious challenge	1.601
4. There is no enough school equipment like chairs and tables.	3.27	Moderately serious challenge	1.551
5. There is no sports complex in the madrasah.	3.34	Moderately serious challenge	1.513
OVERALL MEAN	3.3380	Moderately serious challenges	0.42611

Legend:

1.00-1.80 – Never, not a challenge at all
1.81-2.61 – A challenge but not serious
2.62- 3.42 – Moderately serious challenge
3.43- 4.23 – Serious challenge
4.25- 5.00 – Very serious challenge

Table 4 presents the weighted mean (WM) ratings of the statements on the challenges in terms of facilities. As indicated in the table, facilities are a great concern among madaris in BARMM. The administrators responded it is a serious challenge that there is no library in the madrasah (M=4.07). The rest of the indicators are moderately serious challenges for them, to wit: there is not enough classrooms to accommodate the students (M=1.714); there is no comfort room or toilet (M=2.96); there is not enough school equipment like chairs and tables (M=3.27); and that there is no sports complex in the madrasah (M=3.34).

In general, the Madaris institutions in BARMM suffer from the lack of madrasah facilities such as library, sports complex, comfort room, and school equipment like chairs and tables. The administrators agreed during the survey that having poor facilities in madaris can have an impact on both teacher and student outcomes. With respect to teachers, according to them, school facilities affect teacher commitment and effort while when it comes to students, school facilities affect their health, behaviour, learning, and growth in achievement.

According to Cayamodin (2019), the traditional Madaris are vulnerable to the threat of unnoticed infiltration of radical ideology due to various challenges faced by the students and administrators. These include lack of employability of graduates, poor facilities, unstandardized curricula and learning sources, parochial pedagogy, lack of instructional development, and unstable salaries for teachers (asatidz). This scenario is partly caused by the negligence of certain government agencies for not recognizing the potential role of these institutions to develop the Muslim communities and contribute to the nation-building.

D. Challenges in terms of Curriculum

Table 5 manifests the Weighted Mean Ratings of the Indicators of Challenges in terms of Curriculum. The table below presents the perceived extent of seriousness of curriculum challenges the administrators encounter in their respective Madaris. The data revealed that the indicators are considered a challenge but not serious ones. Among them, the absence of consultation of experts from foreign madrasah before preparing the curriculum (M=2.68) got the highest mean. This is followed by the lack of updating of curriculum (M=2.47), lack of participation from parents and other stakeholders in preparing the curriculum (M=2.08), absence of a unified curriculum (M=2.05), and absence of appropriate bodies and experts' consultation in the preparation and facilitation of the curriculum (M=1.84).

Table 5: Weighted Mean Ratings of the Indicators of Challenges in terms of Curriculum

Challenges on Curriculum	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation	Std. Deviation
1. There is no unified curriculum in madrasah.	2.05	A challenge but not serious	1.009
2. There is no update curriculum in madrasah.	2.47	A challenge but not serious	1.054
3. There is no consultation of expert from foreign madrasah before preparing the curriculum.	2.68	Moderately serious challenges	1.381
4. There is no participation of parents and other stakeholders in preparation of curriculum.	2.08	A challenge but not serious	1.133
5. There are no appropriate bodies and expert's consultation in preparation and facilitation of the curriculum.	1.84	A challenge but not serious	1.003
OVERALL MEAN	2.2240	A challenge but not serious	0.34166

*Legend: 1.00-1.80 – Never, not a challenge at all, 1.81-2.61 – A challenge but not serious
2.62- 3.42 – Moderately serious challenge, 3.43- 4.23 – Serious challenge
4.25- 5.00 – Very serious challenge*

In general, based on the results, they still have a little problem with their curriculum. In the survey with different Madaris administrators, there is no standard curriculum to follow and most of the madrasah curricula are patterned or based on the foreign Muslim countries. The lack of a uniform madrasah curriculum creates a gap among Madaris because of different structures and designs.

According to Cayamodin (2019), there is a need to integrate curricula and learning contents from all types of madrasah, which will eventually make Muslim children 'good man' (insan adabi) and reach the state of being a 'full man' (insan kamil). He further proposed the curricular and learning contents under the integrated holistic

madrasah education system (IHMES). In this case, the learning contents under the traditional Arabic madrasah and madrasah toril are integrated with the existing curriculum of the integrated madrasah that are accredited by the DepEd. Values and peace education are emphasized to prevent or counter violent extremism at the earliest stage of madrasah education.

Implications

Based on the findings of the study, the following implications are advanced: The challenges of traditional madrasah in terms of funding budget is generally perceived as a serious challenges, it shows that madaris institutions in BARMM are financially inadequate. This is attributed to the fact that madaris in BARMM are self-sustained and less or no support from come from the government and competency of faculty and staff is mostly alleged as a challenge but not serious. Hence, there is still a need for urgent trainings and seminar of *asatidz* in BARMM while their challenges on facilities are described as moderately serious challenges. This finding implies that the BARMM government should provide funds intended for the improvement of facilities and providing supplies in madarais institutions in BARMM. However, the challenges on curriculum are interpreted as a challenge but not serious. This implies that there was no major challenges on curriculum. However, it suggests that harmonized and standardized curriculum should be applied. The finding, implies that madaris institutions should have continuous upgrading of facilities and instructional materials so that students are constantly provided with relevant and updated learning resources and there should conduct seminar and trainings. They should be given opportunities like scholarship for masteral degree and doctoral degree and providing enough salary to sustain their basic needs. Moreover, the government should recognize them as educational institutions and providing them financial assistance to improve their facilities, instructional materials and supplies.

Recommendations

In view of the findings drawn from this study, the following are recommended: It is strongly suggested that there is a need to appoint qualified *asatidz*, trainers, consultants in every madrasah. Likewise it is deemed necessary that a provision for sufficient salary for the *asatidz* and administrators be given. Further, it is highly suggested a revision of the instructional materials shall be work-out to make it sensible, informative and updated so that the students may become interested in attending the class. Also, to form an Islamic/Arabic textbook writing committee in the BARMM to write appropriate textbooks and references for *asatidz*. But these can be possible only if enough allocation of funds be provided for the printing, distribution and funding support to purchase needed learning materials. Another strong suggestion is that there is a dire need for the classroom building and other facilities to be renovated. Thus funding allocation must be provided for the maintenance of the building especially in making the rooms conducive to leanings. It is also highly recommended that the traditional madrasah should select applicants for teachers who have an extensive experience and or academically qualified to teach the Arabic language and are able to communicate well in delivering the content of the lesson. Also it is strongly suggested that seminars and trainings should be conducted for additional inputs and learning insights for the new methods or strategies to be used by the *asatidz* in madrasah. Trainings related to Islamic education, Arabic language and Islamic values shall also be conducted. And lastly, maybe further studies be conducted to assess the need for traditional madrasah in the other areas in Mindanao, Luzon and Visayas. Studies could be done replicating the variables of the study in another setting and for other respondents could be done to validate the findings of the study.

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