

Regulated Elementary Madrasah in the Philippines as Basis for Policy Integration in the Bangsamoro Region

ABSTRACT

Madrasah is regarded as the Islamic culture's identity; however, its operation has not been given more attention. The study aimed to evaluate the operation of the regulated elementary Madrasah in the Philippines and suggest policy to integrate DepEd Order no. 41, s. 2017 and DepEd Order no. 51, s. 2004 in the drafting of education code for the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education in the Bangsamoro region. The study is a descriptive survey utilizing a researcher-made questionnaire administered to 138 teachers, principals, and administrators, using total population sampling, employing mean. Results show that educational planning and programming, learners' assessment, permit to operate, monitoring, and reporting financial support was low. Similarly, its attainment of objectives on educational opportunities was low. Hence, regulated elementary Madrasah still has helped improve pupils' competencies in Islamic studies and the Arabic language, which enhanced their spiritual and intellectual growth as Muslim youth. However, to function correctly in the regulated Elementary Madrasah operation require rigid planning, organization, coordination, and control. It is suggested to harmonize the integration of the policy guidelines on Madrasah in the k to 12 basic education program following standards curriculum for elementary for more responsive, effective, and efficient implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Keywords: *educational administration, Madrasah education, regulated elementary Madrasah, policy integration, descriptive survey, Philippines*

INTRODUCTION

More than a school, Madrasah is considered the Islamic culture's identities and a basic need of Muslim societies worldwide (Badrudin, 2017). It has a great and noble responsibility in forming characters with good moral values. It has a vital role in improving human resources quality (Siri et al., 2020). However, few flaws were traced in the formulation and implementation stages of the Madrasah reforms due to the state's sheer negligence (Amin & Siddiq, 2017) despite the significant role in developing the national character (Iqbal & Akram, 2020) and its remarkable contribution towards national growth (Awang & Nuriz, 2020).

In the United States, Madrasah as an Islamic school grapples with external and internal demands on religion and how this process impacts notions of what is religious. They sometimes downplay the "Islamic" in their Islamic Studies classes, policies, and school representation (Ahmed, 2020). Although, in Great Britain, Madrasah provides learners with an educational environment that exposes them to society's challenges and choices beyond the school gates. It enables them to navigate life with confidence and positive action. It is not about reading Qur'anic verses and values in an external Islamic school environment but rather creatively act upon Qur'anic values in a challenging context (Lahmar, 2020).

In Indonesia, the implementation of the regulated elementary Madrasah operation is associated with planning and leadership. If the planning program and the leadership are right, then the management implementation will be accomplished (Asmendri et al., 2018). The proper operation of regulated elementary Madrasah carefully reflects an improved working climate (Muwahid, 2018a), thereby improving education quality (Rahmi et al., 2020).

In the case of Singapore, Madrasah education has always been the focal point of national development. Common prejudice toward Madrasah usually pertains to the ineffectiveness of its educational system in contributing to nation-building. The phenomena of Islamophobia exaggerate after the tragedy of 9/11. Madrasah in Singapore was not exempted from being dichotomized as a center that advocates terrorism similar to Madrasah in Pakistan (Nor et al., 2017a), where it did not bring any effective change in the society; instead, they anchored the roots of some of the multifaceted problems such as militancy, sectarianism, and violence which are present even today in Pakistan (Amin & Siddiqa, 2017).

Further, the use of appropriate methods is essential in the teaching and learning process of Arabic. The evaluation of the implementation of any teaching methods for Arabic is a necessary task of every teacher. It is their duty that needs to be done continuously and cannot be handed over or neglected that the teaching method can improve Arabic learners' ability (Sumin, 2016). The existing problems include lack of teaching staff, facilities and infrastructure, less professional management, and many other problems (Syar'i et al., 2020).

In the Philippines, the implementation of Madrasah generally revealed some program goals through institutional support, pedagogical and instructional development, and enrichment of cultural diversity in the school community. However, some significant challenges affecting the program implementation such as lack of permanent infrastructure, limited instructional resources, learners' absenteeism, low and delayed teachers' allowances, and cultural variances among Muslim Filipinos (Abdul & Canales, 2020). Other challenges include difficulty in dealing and affiliating with their pupils in the classroom, madrasah environment, their fellow teachers' teaching, and the community's people (Lamla, 2018).

In the Bangsamoro region, the negative intuition that Madrasah is being used as the breeding ground for the violent extremist organizations are baseless but somewhat opposing these notions on which the school heads believe that the program provides a vital contribution for the harmonization of different sectors and religious affiliation within the region (Sattar & Arriola, 2020). However, the government appeared to have no profound, sustainable solutions to prevent the perceived infiltration of radical ideologies found in the Muslim communities. The lack of a well-designed education system for Muslims made Madrasah cyclical (Cayamodin, 2019).

This is why the Philippine government has started to accommodate regulated or more commonly known as private Madrasah, in their national education system (Murtadlo, 2015) through DepEd Order no. 41, s. 2017 and DepEd Order no. 51, s. 2004. These memoranda paved the way for the Madrasah educational system to be upgraded as a vital component of

the national educational system, similar to the mainstream school system. Thus, it gives way for more meaningful guidelines in implementing the madrasah education program in the country and ensuring the effective and efficient development and evaluation of private Madrasah.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

This study is anchored on DepEd Order 51, s. 2004 or known as the Standards Curriculum For Elementary Public Schools and Private Madaris as amended by DepEd Order 40, s. 2011 which highlighted the establishment of Islamic schools that would prepare generations of learned and intellectual Muslims imbued with Islamic values and spiritually prepared to serve the people and the country. Also, the DepEd Order 41, s. 2017 or known as the Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education In the K to 12 Basic Education Program, seeks to provide Muslim learners with appropriate and relevant educational opportunities while recognizing their cultural context and unique purposes for participating in the Program offerings; and to harmonize existing DepEd issuances on Muslim education, with new provisions for more effective and efficient program development, implementation and evaluation.

Furthermore, this study is hinged on (Sabki & Hardaker, 2013) concepts of Islamic pedagogy represented by the interplay between memorization, orality, and the use of the written word in supporting the learning process. The notion of Islamic pedagogy is defined from a madrasah perspective, which requires empathy with the Islamic premise of the inseparable nature of knowledge and the sacred.

This study is also anchored on change theory to promote educational reform (Noureen, 2015). At the heart of the theory of change is education transformation (Connell & Klem, 2000). (White & Levin, 2016) found that many school reform models use top-down approaches, with pupils at the bottom of the hierarchy acting as passive receptors of reform. In contrast, (Connell & Klem, 2000) implemented teachers and pupils as active agents of change and concluded that change needs to begin in the classroom as a practical approach to educational reform. (Connell & Klem, 2000) described the theory of change as a useful theoretical approach because it makes reform efforts more practical, more founded in current research, and demonstrates best practices for transforming education.

The change model theory was useful because it promotes local knowledge and community engagement, making educational reform more probable (Connell & Klem, 2000). This research places great emphasis on the transformation of education theorized by the authors as education planning and programming, curriculum implementation, learners' assessment, teacher support, securing permits to operate, local and international partnership, monitoring and reporting of financial support, and K to 12 and Islamic Studies and Arabic language competencies where Madrasah's program objectives provide educational opportunities and integrate content and competencies relevant and interest to the Muslim learners.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was meant to evaluate the operation of regulated elementary Madrasah in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. Specifically, it aimed to:

1. Determine the level of implementation of the operation of regulated elementary Madrasah in terms of educational planning and programming; curriculum implementation; learners assessment; teachers support; securing a permit to operate; partnership both in a local and international setting; monitoring and reporting of financial assistance from DepEd; and K to 12 and Islamic studies and Arabic language competencies.
2. Determine the attainment of objectives of regulated elementary Madrasah in terms of educational opportunities; and integration of content and competencies.
3. Suggest a policy to integrate DepEd Order no. 41, s. 2017 and DepEd Order no. 51, s. 2004 in the drafting of education code for the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education in the Bangsamoro region.

METHODOLOGY

The study utilized the descriptive-survey design to determine the implementation of regulated elementary Madrasah's operation and its attainment. The purpose of descriptive-survey research design was to collect data from questions and generalize those responses for a larger population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The goal of descriptive-survey research is to evaluate a current situation and draw conclusions on the interplay between variables and not change variables or determine causes of specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2002). Thus, by utilizing a descriptive-survey, the respondents can provide a more accurate and truthful way to evaluate the regulated elementary Madrasah's operation in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

The study was conducted in the Province of Maguindanao and Cotabato City, which are presently qualified to apply for a financial subsidy from the Department of Education. The study respondents were the principals and administrators chosen because of their direct involvement in implementing the regulated elementary Madrasah operation and the teachers who were recipients of the 80% financial subsidy. A total of 138 respondents were chosen using total population sampling.

The study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire using 4 points Likert scale in gathering information from the respondents, as seen in Table 1. The three experts of the field validated the survey questionnaire with a mean of 3.55, which was interpreted as a valid instrument. The reliability evaluation using Cronbach's Alpha method was used, which revealed a result of 0.950 described as highly reliable. The data gathered were analyzed and interpreted using mean.

Table 1. Likert scale for the implementation of the operation and program objectives of regulated elementary Madrasah

Scale	Range of Means	Interpretation
4	3.50 – 4.00	High
3	2.50 – 3.49	Moderate
2	1.50 – 2.49	Low
1	1.00 – 1.49	Very Low

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 presents the data on the implementation of regulated elementary Madrasah's operation, which revealed that teachers' support was moderately implemented with a mean of 3.12. This signifies that teachers who are supported of their job results in better performance. This can be observed in their loyalty and how they perform their duties in the classroom and even outside the classroom. In a study by (Muwahid 2018b), if teachers are adequately supported, their competence improves. Teachers' support includes attendance to training on instructional system design that could improve their pedagogical competence and understanding of learning planning and management activities (Saidah et al., 2018). Also, Madrasah teachers who have benefited from training support programs become equipped with the skills to respond to the needs of their pupils (Singapore Government News, 2021)

The data further revealed that there was the moderate implementation of K to 12 and Islamic Studies and Arabic language competencies with a mean of 2.97, which goes to show that the respondents see the relevance of Islamic studies and Arabic language competencies in instilling in their minds about Muslims' way of life (Nor et al., 2017b). Partnership with both local and international settings was moderately implemented with a mean of 2.89, which implies that forging partnerships may improve Madrasah's performance (Khan & Kendall, 2017). Also, it was found out that the Madrasah curriculum was moderately implemented with a mean of 2.62, which ensures that pupils receive a coherent learning experience that contributes towards their spiritual, educational, social, and psychological learning and development (MENA Report, 2019).

Table 2. Level of Implementation of the Operation of Regulated Elementary Madrasah

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Educational Planning and Programming	2.46	Low
2. Curriculum Implementation	2.62	Moderate
3. Learners Assessment	2.21	Low
4. Teachers Support	3.12	Moderate
5. Securing a permit to operate	2.45	Low
6. Partnership both in a local and international setting	2.89	Moderate
7. Monitoring and reporting of financial assistance from DepEd	2.42	Low
8. K to 12 and Islamic studies and Arabic language competencies	2.97	Moderate

Overall Mean	2.64	Moderate
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On the other hand, the respondents confirmed that learners' assessment was less implemented with a mean of 2.21. This is evident due to a lack of ability to communicate well and improve the aspects of knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Learners' assessment includes fair and equitable assessment, consideration of culture in the assessment process and results, and character changes in the assessment process and results (Riswani et al., 2019). That is why it is essential to consider selecting appropriate learning methods that can create a fun learning atmosphere and learners can achieve the desired competencies (Jannah & Usman, 2019).

Other results revealed that monitoring and reporting financial assistance from DepEd, securing a permit to operate, and educational planning and programming were less implemented with 2.42, 2.45, and 2.46, respectively. It can be observed that the Madrasah administrators are accountable for the available funds and financial reports on the assistance they received from the government can be monitored and the financial application to what extent including the allocation of expenditures which need to be prioritized (Jaelani & Masnun, 2019).

As part of the Department of Education's mandate to enhance the quality of education for Muslim pupils as well as strengthen peace and development in the region, each Madrasah should secure a permit to operate to sustain its operation and adopt the standard curriculum (Bagolong, 2011) prescribed by the Bureau of Madaris Education. However, the Standard Curriculum has no official syllabi or instructional materials to support its use in the classroom. Although a small number of Madrasah are attempting to introduce secular subjects though their efforts are greatly limited by funding, few if any instructional materials, and no suitably trained teachers (Jamaluddin & Cadir, 2017a). Also, data show that educational planning and programming require Madrasah-based management through close cooperation and coordination among the principals and administrators to improve the quality of education carried out can be useful and efficient (Anwar et al., 2019).

To sum up, the level of implementation of regulated elementary MadrasahMadrasah's operation in the Province of Maguindanao and Cotabato City, Bangsamoro region was moderately implemented with an overall mean of 2.64. This implies that its implementation provides instructional design, covers monitoring programs for madrasah administration, and monitors learning facilities. However, inadequate facilities and infrastructure and weakness in the management system are some of its challenges encountered in its implementation (Suryapermana Institutu Agama Islam Negeri Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten Jl Jenderal Sudirman No et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, to deal with all of these challenges, a Madrasah must strengthen in managing and organizing the implementation of its managerial supervision activities (Kiram et al., 2020). Respondents agreed that Madrasah had improved the effectiveness of modern Madrasah education functions, improved madrasah functions in shaping religious character, encouraged pupils to become creators, improved madrasah functions as a miniature of the family, strengthen the education of the values of goodness and truth prevailing in schools and the community), and improved the synergy of the tri-education centers, namely education in the

family, formal education in schools /Madrasah, and general education in the community (Samsudin, 2020).

As presented in Table 3, the data on the attainment of objectives of regulated elementary Madrasah, which revealed that integration of content and competencies was moderately implemented, got a mean of 2.96. This shows that subject contents like English, Mathematics, Science, and Health, Filipino, Ijtimaiah (Makabayan), and Islamic values, including Islamic studies and Arabic language competencies as stipulated in DepEd 51, s. 2004 was somehow integrated into the curriculum. The integration of content and competencies in the curriculum is significant because if it is well implemented, the learning outcomes will be better. Makruf, (2015) as cited by (Jannah & Usman, 2019), a well-planned program will guide the program implementer (teacher) to perform better guidance. However, a well-crafted program plan will be worth nothing if it is not done in earnest; thereby, it is expected to have a high absorptive capacity and know the level of teachers' level of ability in carrying out their profession.

Table 3. Level of Attainment of Objectives of Regulated Elementary Madrasah

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Educational opportunities	2.40	Low
2. Integration of content and competencies	2.96	Moderate
Overall Mean	2.68	Moderate

However, in terms of educational opportunities, it was less attained with a mean of 2.40. Although, Madrasah contributes significantly because they serve the poor, is inexpensive, and operates in rural and isolated areas, it has few educational opportunities due to less financial and academic support that will sustain its operation. This support will be impossible to realize without government resources, especially as Madrasah faces a double burden of teaching public schools' general curriculum while also teaching a religious curriculum. Graduates of regulated elementary Madrasah has been found to be weak in either area as the amount of instructional time dedicated to each subject is reduced in an attempt to cover both curricula (Husin, 2018) This study discovered that the principals' strategies to improve the quality of teachers are manifested through supporting teachers studying for advanced studies will help them become motivated to perform better and achieve the school goals (Muwahid, 2018c).

In summary, the attainment of objectives of regulated elementary Madrasah in the Province of Maguindanao and Cotabato City, Bangsamoro region was moderately attained, which got an overall mean of 2.68. This indicates that the Madrasah education serves as the bedrock of Muslim communities where more than anything else, they are established to strengthen the safeguarding and well-being of Muslim children for their religious, spiritual, moral, and social development (Mogra, 2018). Thus, given this result, DepEd 41, s. 2017 ensures that for more effective and efficient program development, implementation, and evaluation, supervision of education such as activities in the form of intensive observation of the learning process and management of educational institutions, followed up with the feedback is highly necessary (Suryadi, 2018).

The result of descriptive analysis on the suggested mechanism to integrate DepEd Order no. 41, s. 2017 and DepEd Order no. 51, s. 2004 is shown in Table 4. Results revealed that the recurrent augmentation cost of operation is highly suggested policy integration with a mean of 3.82. This implies that there is a need to augment the recurrent cost of operation of regulated elementary Madrasah in order to sustain it. This further implies that the role of educational operational costs in this study influences educational output. This means that the high average operational costs of education result in better education outputs (Imad, 2018).

Table 4. Proposed Policy Integration Based on DepEd Order no. 41, s. 2017 and DepEd Order no. 51, s. 2004

Suggested Mechanism	Mean	Interpretation
1. Implement DepEd mandated curriculum	3.80	High
2. Raise quality instructions	3.78	High
3. Augment recurrent cost of operation	3.82	High
4. Strengthen local and foreign partnerships	3.65	High
Overall Mean	3.76	High

Also, the DepEd mandated curriculum's implementation was highly suggested, which got a mean of 3.80. This result indicates that the Madrasah curriculum shall strictly conform to the Department of education standards by the DepEd Order no. 51, s. 2004. Although some regulated elementary Madrasah follows a standard curriculum but sometimes represents a compromise between the Department of Education and religious leaders and Madrasah operators on the other. This is why the Department of Education (DepEd) continuously supports the institutionalization of the Madrasah Education Program by providing the support mechanism necessary for its continual adoption in public schools with Muslim learners, for Muslim out-of-school youths, and for private Madrasah implementing the Refined Standard Madrasah Curriculum (Jamaluddin & Cadir, 2017b)

Similarly, the raising of quality instruction was highly suggested, as evident in the result shown with a mean of 3.78. This reveals that quality instruction must be prioritized to increase access to quality and inclusive education for all learners without compromising the 21st-century learning standards. According to (Safwandy Nugraha et al., 2016), implementing quality instructions is closely linked to increasing teachers and education personnel's competence and professionalism without ignoring other factors such as infrastructure and financing. They added that effective instructional delivery and quality instructions are enhanced through regular checking both internal and external supervision of the school and must be entirely concerned with the physical environment and other facilities around the school corners (Nugraha & Rohayani, 2020)

Another highly suggested policy integration is strengthening local and foreign partnerships, which got a mean of 3.65. This implies that various agencies and partners' involvement may help improve the regulated elementary Madrasah through donations or assistance. According to (Sumarsono, 2017), there is a need for synergy between Madrasah and partners to realize a quality school. Madrasah cannot stand alone in meeting all the needs and development of

pupils. Therefore, the partners' meaningful involvement is always required, thereby resulting in a significant impact on equity growth (Pusporini et al., 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers conclude that regulated elementary Madrasah still has helped improve pupils' competencies in Islamic studies and the Arabic language, which confirms concepts of Islamic pedagogy by (Sabki & Hardaker, 2013) that are represented by the interplay between memorization, orality and the use of the written word in supporting the learning process, thereby enhanced their spiritual and intellectual growth as Muslim youth. Furthermore, it affirms the theory of change by (Noureen 2015), where the need to promote educational reform and the transformation of education by (Connell & Klem 2000) is a practical approach to sustain its operation. However, to function correctly in the regulated elementary Madrasah operation require rigid planning, organization, coordination, and control. It is suggested to harmonize the integration of the policy guidelines on Madrasah in the k to 12 basic education program following standards curriculum for elementary for more responsive, effective, and efficient implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

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