

TRADITIONAL MADRASAHS' CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS FOR GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION AND IMPACTS OF NON-RECOGNITION ON STUDENTS' EDUCATION AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

A Thesis

**Submitted to the Master's Study Program of Education at the Faculty
of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

Master of Arts (M.A.)



by:

Rakim L. Sammy

04212320010

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM INTERNASIONAL INDONESIA

DEPOK

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ABSTRACT

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This study is to recognize the value of the traditional madrasah education system and to welcome its graduates into a more diverse educational and economic landscape. Traditional madrasah education in the Philippines has long been deprived of mainstream education and tagged as a training ground for extremism. The academic purpose and contribution remain unrecognized by the secular state government. Due to the inability of the madrasah to deliver quality education, their graduates face difficulty pursuing formal higher education compared to secular schools. Limited general knowledge and skills mean graduates are deprived of job opportunities, leading to economic disparity. However, madrasah education is the dominant form of teaching Islamic knowledge. As the level of recognition rises, Muslims in the region now have more chances to reshape their education. Using a qualitative multiple case study method of madrasahs in the Philippines, this study aims to (1) identify factors that influence traditional madrasahs not to apply for recognition; (2) explore the challenges and barriers for traditional madrasahs to gain recognition from the government; as this traditional madrasah fails to comply with government requirements and secure permits to operate, the study also explores (3) the impacts of madrasahs failing to obtain government recognition for their students to pursue higher education and job access. Semi-structured interviews with government officials, madrasah administrators, teachers, students, and alumni were used to collect data. Observation and document analysis were used as triangulation to ensure the accuracy of the information provided according to government standards and interview responses. Analyzing data through familiarity with codes and identifying themes to unveil the directions to the problems. The findings reveal that traditional madrasahs still hesitate to participate in government programs and seek recognition. (1) Madrasahs' hesitation originates from historical distrust and resistance to preserving religious identity, institutional and structural weaknesses, and the dual system burden. The Islamic Studies and Arabic Language (ISAL) program in public schools also affected its operation, doubting its role in providing Islamic knowledge, resulting in declining credibility and enrollment. Parents are declining support, and society is shifting its preference to education, hindering recognition applications. (2) The standard requirements pose significant challenges and barriers to compliance. Due to a lack of funds and support, bureaucratic and financial burdens exist, while curriculum and staffing constraints further trigger compliance. Some see this as a threat to madrasah autonomy and cultural integrity. (3) Due to non-recognition and a lack of general knowledge and skills, students lack formal credentials to pursue higher education in the country and have limited job opportunities. This forces them to participate in dual education systems, while others find pathways to other countries that recognize their education. Recognizing the value of madrasah education, students remain resilient and committed. Moreover, their motivation is boosted as the ISAL program gives them recognition and employment opportunities. Thus, a need to structure processes and requirements for recognition is essential to allow Madrasah access recognition. Furthermore, a longitudinal comparative study is suggested to track the results of recognition and non-recognition of madrasahs.

Keywords: barriers, challenges, government recognition, higher education, non-recognition, permit to operate, Philippines, traditional madrasah

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE	i
STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	ii
ANTI-PLAGIARISM STATEMENT	iii
THESIS ATTESTATION	iv
THESIS DEFENSE APPROVAL	v
ABSTRACT	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	x
APPENDICES	xi
LIST OF ABBREVIATION	xii
LIST OF GLOSSARIES	xiii
 CHAPTER I	
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.1.1 Historical Context of Islamic Education in the Philippines	1
1.1.2 Government's Madrasah Education Program	3
1.1.3 Importance of Government Recognition for Madrasah	5
1.1.4 Problem of Non-Recognition and Non-Participation	7
1.2 Statement of the Problem	8
1.3 Research Questions	8
1.4 Research Objectives	9
1.5 Significance of the Study	9
1.6 Scope and the Limitation	10
 CHAPTER II	
THEORETICAL FOUNDATION	11
2.1 Literature Review	11
2.1.1 Overview of Traditional Madrasah Education	11
2.1.2 Government Policies on Madrasah Education	15
2.1.3 Challenges and Barriers to Obtaining Government Recognition	18
2.1.4 Impact of Non-Recognition on Students in the Philippines	27
2.1.5 Research Gap	28
2.2 Theoretical Frameworks	29
2.2.1 Cultural Capital Theory	29
2.2.2 Social Capital Theory	31
2.2.3 Institutional Theory	33
2.2.4 Hegemony Theory	34
2.2.5 Barriers and Criticism	36
 CHAPTER III	
METHODOLOGY	38
3.1 Qualitative Approach	38
3.2 Multiple Case Study Design	38
3.3 Data Collection Techniques	39
3.3.1 Interview	40
3.3.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	40
3.3.3 Observation	41
3.3.4 Document Analysis	41

3.4	Sampling, Research Participants and Research Instrument.....	42
3.5	Triangulation	42
3.6	Data Analysis	43
3.7	Researcher's Positionality	43
3.8	Ethical Consideration	44
3.9	Time and Place of the Study.....	45
CHAPTER IV		
	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	46
4.1	Results	46
4.1.1	Description of research Sites	46
4.1.2	Madrasah A: Community-based Qur'anic School.....	47
4.1.3	Madrasah B: Politically Supported Madrasah	49
4.1.4	Demographic Profile of Participants.....	50
4.1.5	Cross-Case Analysis	52
4.2	Discussion	54
4.2.1	Motivation for non-recognition and non-participation in MEP	54
4.2.2	Institutional Challenges and Barriers Prevents from obtaining the PTO	67
4.2.3	Impact of non-recognition on students' academic and career opportunities	77
4.3	Summary of Key Findings	86
CHAPTER V		
	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	90
5.1	Conclusion.....	90
5.2	Recommendations	92
REFERENCES.....		95
APPENDICES		100

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1	Key informants
Table 4.2	Individual Interviews –Teachers
Table 4.3	Individual Interviews –Students
Table 4.4	Individual Interviews – Alumni
Table 4.5	FGD-Teachers
Table 4.6	FGD-Students
Table 4.7	FGD-Alumni
Table 4.8	Cross-case Analysis

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Research Instrument (Interview Guide)
Appendix B	Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide
Appendix C	Observation Guide
Appendix D	Document Analysis Guide
Appendix E	Research Permit
Appendix F	Research Consent Letter
Appendix G	Documentation
Appendix H	Sample of Codes and Themes
Appendix I	Recognition and PTO Requirements
Appendix J	Requirements for PTO Traditional Madrasah
Appendix K	Prescribed Madrasah Curriculum

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ALIVE	<i>Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education</i>
ARMM	<i>Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao</i>
BARMM	<i>Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao</i>
BEC	<i>Bangsamoro Electoral Code</i>
BOL	<i>Bangsamoro Organic Law</i>
DepEd	<i>Department of Education</i>
DGME	<i>Director General for Madaris Education</i>
DO. No. s.	<i>DepEd Order Number Series</i>
ISAL	<i>Islamic Studies and Arabic Language</i>
ISIS	<i>Islamic State of Iraq and Syria</i>
LGU	<i>Local Government Unit</i>
LIS	<i>Learners Information System</i>
LOI	<i>Letter of Instruction</i>
LRN	<i>Learners Reference Number</i>
MBHTE	<i>Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education</i>
MEP	<i>Madrasah Education Program</i>
MILF	<i>Moro Islamic Liberation Front</i>
MNLF	<i>Moro National Liberation Front</i>
MO No. s.	<i>Memorandum Order Number Series</i>
MOOE	<i>Maintenance on Other Operating Expenses</i>
MP	<i>Member of the Parliament</i>
NCMF	<i>National Commission on Muslim Filipino</i>
PTO	<i>Permit to Operate</i>
REMC	<i>Refined Elementary Madrasah Curriculum</i>
RPL	<i>Recognition of Prior Learning</i>
RSMC	<i>Refined Standard Madrasah Curriculum</i>

LIST OF GLOSSARIES

<i>ādab</i>	Islamic education model referring <i>to</i> good moral and conduct
<i>Asatidz</i>	Madrasah teacher or Islamic teacher in Public School
<i>Aqeedah</i>	Subject area taught in institution, foundation of Islamic belief
<i>datu</i>	traditional political leader, Muslim ruler
<i>Fiqh</i>	Subject area taught in institution with Islamic jurisprudence
<i>hadeeth or hadīth</i>	Subject area, about the practices of Prophet Muhammad <i>s.a.w</i>
<i>kulliyah</i>	Higher education institution that offers undergraduate program
<i>langal</i>	Traditional congregational praying area
<i>madrasah (pl. madaris)</i>	Islamic institution offers Arabic and Islamic knowledge
<i>makabayan</i>	<i>Tagalog</i> , country devotion
<i>makadiyos</i>	<i>Tagalog</i> , God fearing
<i>makakalikasan</i>	<i>Tagalog</i> , Nature caring
<i>makatao</i>	<i>Tagalog</i> , Humanist
<i>makhdumīn</i>	Arab missionaries, people of Sharif Karim Al-Makhdum
<i>muadala</i>	Formal recognition
<i>pandita</i>	Traditional Islamic teacher knowledgeable about Islam
<i>pondok (pl. s)</i>	Islamic boarding school with offer Islamic knowledge
<i>sadaqah</i>	donation, voluntary offered
<i>seerah</i>	subject area taught in consisting Islamic history
<i>tahdiriyyah</i>	Education offers kindergarten level education
<i>tahfīdz al-Qur'an</i>	Islamic institution focus on Qur'an memorization
<i>thanawi</i>	Senior secondary level in madrasah institution
<i>zakat</i>	compulsory amount, pillar of Islam

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Historical Context of Islamic Education in the Philippines

Historically, Islamic Education in the Philippines arrived by entering the country's southern part early in the 13th to 14th century. Traders and *makhdumīn* introduced it, the acknowledged knowledgeable, pious individuals educating locals about Islam (Milligan, 2017). Islamic education integrates spiritual, intellectual, moral, and physical development. It aims to produce individuals who serve as *khalīfatullāh* (vicegerents of Allah) on Earth, balancing worldly knowledge with faith (Yasin & Jani, 2013). The teaching of Islam was informal until Madrasah (*pl. madaris*) education was established, formalizing the teaching of the Quran and other Islamic sciences after the early establishment of the first Sultanate of Sulu, becoming the central area for local cultural and religious life. The evolvement of structured madrasah continuously changed over time but faced a decline due to the arrival of colonialism, which brought a new structure of education (Abu Bakar, 2011). Establishing the Sulu and Maguindanao sultanates fostered a long-standing tradition of madrasah education that serves religious and socio-political functions separate from colonial influence (Magdalena, 2017). Madrasah education offers to learn the Qur'an and Arabic text delivered by *Pandita*, a religious knowledgeable person about Islam, delivered in-house and later on to *Langal* as the location for congregational prayer (Putra, 2023).

The arrival of colonialism to the land brought the catholic religion and the secular state marginalized Muslim education. The secular education system brought by the American colonial rule views the status of madrasah education as incompatible with the modernized Western model approach imposed by the colonial government. The newly established educational system creates a marginal line between religious and secular education, resulting in a limit to the opportunities for Muslim Filipinos within the central government educational framework (Abu Bakar, 2011). Since this education concentrates on materialist and human-centered philosophies, failing to provide moral and spiritual guidance makes students culturally alienated since education in Islam is not solely about intellectual growth but also about cultivating ethical and moral behavior. The *ta'dīb* concept ensures that students embody Islamic values and ethics in their personal and professional lives (Yasin & Jani, 2013). Many view this form of education as fostering individualism, disrespect to authority, and disengagement from community values, which

will negatively influence students' behavior and rejection of Islamic principles (Arroisi, 2020). The long-standing marginalization brought by these colonials favoring Catholic and Secular states shaped the historical backdrop of segregation of Madrasah, continuously shaping the existing educational challenges as many of these institutions are still reluctant to fully engage with secular government states (Rido et al., 2022).

Islamic education continuously faced challenges after the colonial period of America under the subsequent Philippine administration, making it marginalized (Milligan, 2008). The legacy of country colonization of America and Spain, which assimilated from a Muslim to a Christian majority, the Christian and secular concepts resulted in the dualism of education for the Muslim minority, making Islamic education sideline learning and the Madrasah an underdeveloped and less valued institution. As the public secular schools became dominant in the country, Madrasah gradually declined due to their inability to meet the educational standard set by the government, which marginalized its students' access to higher education and employment opportunities (Abu Bakar, 2011). This marginalization and specification creates a cultural gap between the traditional madrasah system, as seen by the Muslim community, and government policies, conflicting with the effort to integrate and implement the provided program (IAG, 2019). The concept of dualism in the education setting separates the secular education that offers secular subjects in public schools that operate on weekdays and sideline education for Muslim learners in Islamic schools or Madrasah every weekend, providing them with religious knowledge that maintains their identity as Muslim in the secular Christian majority country.

The existence of secular education as a gateway to include Muslim Filipinos in mainstream education of the national government was influenced by the colonial and postcolonial governments. The policy shaped by the colonial ruler's clashes with Muslim identity fuels the Bangsamoro resistance. Due to its historical forced integration and secularization, it contributes to ongoing tensions, resulting in madrasah preferences for autonomy independence over government-led programs (Milligan, 2004). Through the collaboration of national and the newly established Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) government officials, integrating Islamic values in public schools, which provided an alternative to the existing pure secular model, began to operate. Including the subject in the mainstream education system served the interest of the Muslim community as more culturally relevant to their children and fostered peace through exercised autonomy (Milligan, 2004). This mainstreaming started by allocating Islamic Studies and Arabic Language in government public schools (Abu Bakar, 2011).

This is to balance the religious teachings and employable skills for Muslim children. The program for integration gained different perspectives from the Muslim community, with mixed reactions resulting in some madrasahs actively and voluntarily participating. At the same time, many resisted due to doubts and fears of government control and perceived it as a dilution of the religious teachings.

Traditional madrasah faces significant challenges, including a lack of resources, infrastructure, qualified teachers, a poor curriculum, and insufficient teaching aids. Their independent operation and a firm reliance on community support and volunteerism efforts resulted in limited financial assistance. This issue led to the call for curriculum standardization and better resources for sustainable development (Abu Bakar, 2011). Traditional Madrasah has difficulty competing with secular public schools as they are non-government funded, which limits the resources, standard curriculum, and adequate facilities. Madrasah also has difficulty maintaining quality education and competitive products as the secular state government limits the financial support to religious institutions (Hadji Latif, 2014). The low quality of education in madrasahs education further results in difficulty in accessing job opportunities for their graduates, having solid rivals to graduates of State College University recognized by the government end up employable only as poorly paid teachers in Islamic schools (Milligan, 2020), which results into exclusion and discrimination of Muslim community.

1.1.2 Government's Madrasah Education Program

The Philippines, in its uniqueness, has four types of Islamic institutions such as traditional Madrasah, Integrated Private Madrasah, preschool, which offers a balanced education system for Muslim learners (*tahdiriyyah*), and the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) through Madrasah Education Program (MEP), in the secular public schools that have different approaches and level of integration into the national education system (Samid, 2022). Traditional Madrasah is a non-formal education, according to Bangsamoro Education Code (BEC) section 49, designed outside the formal school system that operates during weekends, which also includes a stay-in program (*Tahfidz al-Qur'an* institutions) focusing on memorizing and understanding the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the prophet (Memorandum No. 06, s. 2024). *Private Madrasah* is a traditional madrasah that offers a K-12 curriculum with a madrasah curriculum or Standard Madrasah Curriculum (see BEC). *The Tahdiriyyah* program is developed by the UNICEF with the MILF for early childhood learners (IAG, 2019) and kindergarten to effectively develop the physical, cognitive, language, spiritual, moral, creativity and aesthetic domain of learners inside *the Tahdiriyyah* classroom (see BEC). Philippine

government initiatives, including the Letter of Instruction No. 1221 (1982) and DepEd Orders No. 51 s. 2004 and No. 40 s. 2011, aimed to integrate madrasah into the national education system. However, these efforts often failed due to curriculum differences, unqualified teachers, and insufficient funding, leading to limited participation among madrasahs (Guleng et al., 2017; Kulidtod, 2017). The ALIVE program implementation under DO No. 41 s. 2017 aims to provide culturally relevant education for Muslim learners while addressing inclusion and marginalization issues (Sali, 2023b).

The madrasah integration is designed to encourage and support madrasahs in broadening their curriculum and accommodating subjects taught in secular public schools (Milligan, 2020). This will open the opportunity for the Madrasah to seek government recognition and permit to operate and be legible to access funds and public support under the funds for assistance to private education. Meanwhile, including Islamic values in public school curricula through the ALIVE program and the effort to align the madrasah curriculum provides better educational access and support to Muslim learners (Samid, 2022). However, inadequate funding, lack of financial support for madrasah infrastructures, and limited teacher professional growth programs in teaching Arabic and Islamic values hinder the success of policy implementation programs in public schools (Rido et al., 2022). These factors significantly influence the effective delivery of MEP in public schools and traditional Madrasah due to its limited scope and limited resource allocation (Al-Raschid-Arsad, 2022). ALIVE teachers lack qualifications for teaching and, therefore, have barriers to achieving their professional development that impact the program's quality (Sali & Marasigan, 2020).

In 2019, the ARMM government was abolished and replaced by the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) government upon ratifying the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL). This ratification opens a broader function for the Autonomous region to practice and develop the concept of education. The autonomy change further strengthens Islamic and Madrasah education in the region. The Madrasah Education Program was redesigned to fit Muslim communities' interests, giving more value to their identity. The ALIVE program transitioned to Islamic Studies and Arabic Language (ISAL), and the function of Madrasah education widened its scope. The regional base took over from the centralized curriculum implemented in MEP. The regional-based autonomy policy and decentralizing education curriculum allow traditional madrasah to accommodate their desired curricula to community needs rather than strictly comply with the national standards. The autonomy will support educational

institutions in providing students with relevant skills, knowledge, and attitudes, preparing them for a diverse competing economy (Marbun, 2013).

The new policy guidelines released by the BARMM government and its BEC significantly changed the region's education concept. The education system change widens the inclusion and allocation of Muslim culture and identity by implementing ISAL in public schools. Islamic Studies and Arabic language (ISAL) is a set of subjects taught in traditional Madrasah integrated into public schools as a single subject that consists of Arabic language, *Seerah* (history), *Hadith*, *Fiqh*, and *Aqeedah* (see Policy Guidelines, 2023). Implementing the ISAL program gives teachers and students more opportunities to gain more understanding and knowledge about their culture and religion. It brought an immense change in education dynamics, developing physical and spiritual beings by implementing the Islamic faith among Muslim learners. Moreover, it opens job opportunities for traditional madrasah graduates by recruiting more teachers during the implementation with a total of 2,457 newly hired Arabic teachers in December 2020 upon the release of regional Memorandum no. 437 regarding the hiring process (Office of MP Maisara Dandamun-Latiph, 2021).

The development had made a significant impact on Islamic education institutions, especially on traditional Madrasah. According to Said et al. (2018), combining religious education and secular subjects in learning is important and aligned with Islamic pedagogy, which utilizes scientific and technological advancement. To address global challenges, Rohman et al. (2023) see the importance of bridging traditional and modern education models that provide students with the skills to survive in a developing society while preserving religious values. As an educational institution, Madrasah has to evolve with the growing society to meet its needs so that its products possess spiritually grounded and intellectual capacity. The inclusion of Islamic education in secular public schools has gained support from Muslim communities. The program will educate their children with religious and secular knowledge without overburdening them with the dual system education (Abu Bakar, 2011). However, traditional madrasahs continuously resisted the integration of secular subjects into their curriculum, viewing it as the door of intrusion for educational autonomy and religious identity, and the Muslim community perceived it as a form of assimilation or de-Islamization (Gamon & Tagoranao, 2022).

1.1.3 Importance of Government Recognition for Madrasah

The recognized madrasah benefits from access to government resources, including public funds, teacher professional development, institutional maintenance, instructional resources, and a standardized curriculum that enables and qualifies students

to access higher education more conveniently. This assistance will formalize student recognition and improve quality education and socioeconomic mobility (Magdalena, 2017; see Policy Guidelines, 2023). Participation of traditional madrasahs in MEP and government recognition will allow Muslim-Filipino learners to access quality and relevant education (Sali, 2023a).

The government's recognition of traditional madrasahs will financially support students with educational and career opportunities. In contrast, non-recognized institutions cannot support their transition to higher education and secure formal employment (Tomas & Bagolong, 2024). As mandated by the constitutions, all recognized Madrasah can receive maintenance and other operating expenses (MOOE) to ensure that they function according to the standard mandated. This program will open more opportunities for the students who graduated from traditional madrasahs to have access further to higher education and job employment in mainstream society, as it is among the main challenges faced by the institution's products regarding economic stability and limits the career path (Milligan, 2004).

Pursuing and accessing higher education is essential for every individual and society's development, contributing to economic stability and prosperity, social equity, and quality of life (Nascimento et al., 2022). However, poverty, geographic location, and discriminatory admission practices are persistent barriers to higher education, particularly for marginalized groups. Limited access to higher education contributes to socioeconomic opportunities, making traditional madrasah graduates vulnerable. The government demands a skilled workforce with access to higher education to contribute to broader economic development. In the case of the Philippines, where an educational background is always a prior requirement to secure a job in the public or private sector, this issue of traditional madrasah is intriguing. Therefore, a need to reinforce education for upward mobility and social inclusion is vital. Government recognition will provide traditional madrasahs with a quality education that aligns with the national curriculum to secure graduates who want to pursue higher education.

Moreover, MEP provides moral and spiritual guidance, enabling students to counter violent extremist narratives with a proper understanding of Islamic Principles that empower them to adopt non-violent ideologies, strengthening their ability to contribute positively to society (Sattar & Arriola, 2020). However, the limited resources and lack of access to formal education make students from these institutions vulnerable to extremist influence since traditional Madrasah has a structure that lacks programs that discourage radical groups and ideologies (IAG, 2017). Therefore, traditional madrasahs need

government recognition as the government supervision will provide security against extremist groups.

1.1.4 Problem of Non-Recognition and Non-Participation

According to Samid (2022), traditional Madrasah continuously operates without government funding and recognition through support and donations from international and community-based sources. However, this reliance on volunteerism makes the traditional Madrasah struggle to provide adequate facilities, conceptualize a formal curriculum, and minimize madrasah teachers' professional growth. The case of a community-based Madrasah designed by a Muslim village has shown stagnant progress and is incapable of sustaining the demand to support infrastructure. In general, donations from parents are not provided due to economic problems, considering that the region is among the poorest areas. International donations face challenges reaching out to institutions because cash flows are tracked and limited by the government due to the threat of links to extremist groups.

Institute for Autonomy and Governance (IAG) (2019) found that traditional madrasahs offering higher levels of education, such as senior secondary (*thanawi*) and undergraduate programs (*kulliyah*) lead to a lack of standardization because they are run independently from government supervision. This autonomy opens the door for institutional flexibility; however, this limits recognition for students and access to formal educational settings and employment sectors. Due to the poor curriculum offered by traditional madrasahs, graduates from this institution have faced limited employment opportunities due to their narrow scope of knowledge and skills, as Islamic-concentrated curricula are unsuitable for economic demand (IAG, 2019).

Non-recognized madrasah graduates are less competitive in the job market due to their limited exposure to general education, resulting in a socioeconomic gap and difficulty pursuing higher education. Traditional Madrasah as foundational education hinders academic future and career employment, making the region prone to radicalization. This non-government recognition further builds a funding issue as traditional Madrasah refers to community support, which makes it challenging to seek government recognition due to the lack of facilities (IAG, 2023a).

Traditional madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur, Philippines face complex challenges in achieving government recognition. This affects students' access to higher education and future employment opportunities. They are essential in providing religious education for the Muslim community but have difficulty integrating their system into the national education setting. Previous studies from the former autonomous region provide

insights into the barriers to achieving recognition, the impact on students, and possible solutions. Results prove that systematic barriers have been a significant concept that hinders formal recognition. Moreover, funding, infrastructure, curriculum integration, and personnel challenges are reported as primary obstacles. Recognized madrasahs participating in government programs face challenges in balancing the demands of both offered curricula, resulting in compromised quality of either Islamic or secular education (Husin, 2018).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to the IAG (2023), the direct supervision of Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education (MBHTE) to the public madrasah program gains positive, strong recognition support from madrasah teachers and heads as a result of the Muslim community's desire to standardize the madrasah education that promotes religious and secular curriculum subjects mandated by the national government, which further leads to financial stability support and government assistance. However, many traditional Madrasah resisted the previous government's MEP during the ARMM government, as it was the centralized curriculum at the national level due to bureaucratic challenges, regulatory requirements, and cultural concerns. Moreover, the fear of losing cultural and religious identity hinders traditional madrasahs from embracing the government program due to implementing secular subjects (Samid, 2022). The traditional madrasahs prefer religious autonomy over government-standardized curriculum (Rido et al., 2022). Consequently, they must rely on community support, volunteerism, and donations, resulting in inadequate facilities, an ununiformed curriculum, and a lack of teachers' competencies. Moreover, poor education hinders them from participating in the government program as the policy guidelines require them to meet national standards.

1.3 Research Questions

To address the current issues faced by traditional madrasahs, this study will answer the following research questions:

1. Why do traditional madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur choose not to participate in the government's Madrasah Education Program?
2. What are the institutional challenges and barriers that prevent these schools from obtaining the required Permit to Operate (PTO)?
3. How does the government's non-recognition of these institutions affect their students' academic and future career opportunities, particularly regarding access to higher education and employment?

1.4 Research Objectives

The designed research question will provide information about the general objectives of the study, which are to explore the motivation behind the non-participation of traditional madrasahs in MEP through government recognition and its impact on students' future academic success. Moreover, this research aims to address the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the factors influencing madrasah leaders' decisions not to apply for or secure the Permit to Operate.
2. To explore the barriers preventing traditional madrasah from complying with government requirements.
3. To unveil how non-recognition of traditional madrasah affects students' access to higher education and employment opportunities.

1.5 Significance of the Study

According to Samid (2022), understanding the significance and importance of Islamic education is vital to providing a holistic and integrated education system that will accommodate Muslims to perform the duty that their religion has emphasized. This study will contribute to academic settings by revealing the challenges and barriers of traditional madrasahs to government recognition to find a suitable education system that will accommodate and address the needs of the traditional madrasah. This study will also contribute to society's understanding of the current status of traditional madrasahs in providing quality education that is essential for the future career development of learners. The challenges that madrasahs face affect their ability to prepare students for adequate socioeconomic advancement, leading them to disadvantage in higher education and employment (Solaiman, 2021).

Moreover, the findings also help policymakers improve the Madrasah education program and facilitate better integration of traditional Islamic schools to provide a unified approach. The unified approach is an essential tool for madrasah education policies to respect diversity while promoting national integration, using the balanced curriculum to accommodate the country's religious diversity and welcome more participation from various madrasah types (Morales & Morales, 2020). This will further guide policymakers in reviewing the policy guidelines and requirements to provide government recognition and permit the operation of traditional madrasahs to accommodate them into the education system.

1.6 Scope and the Limitation

This research explores the barriers and challenges of madrasah to government recognition and its impact on students, which is a sensitive issue. The topic may cause discomfort, or defensive responses may occur among participants, potentially compromising data reliability. The researcher recognizes that responses might be overly guarded, incomplete, or influenced by social desirability bias, which could affect findings. During data collection, conducting interviews and focus group discussions, as participants may be more comfortable speaking in their dialects, could pose communication challenges that can cause a loss of nuanced meanings in participants' responses due to miscommunication or translation errors.

Moreover, the study incorporates social and cultural capital, institutional theory, and hegemony theory as theoretical frameworks for a solid foundation. Although it can be a strong foundation to analyze the dynamics between madrasah and government policies, researchers acknowledge the limits of fully capturing the unique or context-specific cultural and religious factors. This could affect the depth of analysis in understanding the nuanced motivation of madrasah administrators and resistance to government compliance, as postcolonial theory needs to be used to dig deeper into the historical and cultural context; however, it was only highlighted in a few sections of the discussion. Lastly, the study will focus on two madrasahs in Buluan. However, although it will provide deep insights into its cases, it still needs to expand the applicability of findings to other madrasahs or education contexts. The findings may only partially reflect the experience of madrasahs in 4th-class municipality settings, but not of those outside the Bangsamoro region.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

As written in Chapter I, this study will explore barriers and challenges that traditional madrasahs face to access government recognition, the motivation of nonparticipation to government recognition, and the impact that students may encounter in future academic access and job employment. With that, this chapter begins with an overview of traditional madrasah education, explaining the motivation for existence in a Muslim minority state and the need for government recognition of the institution. To strengthen this chapter, it provides a shortlisted summary of national government policies and programs to include madrasah education in the national government, including its ups and downs, and the themes on assumed barriers and challenges of madrasah to government recognition. With case studies from other regions, the inclusion is intended to broaden understanding about the status of madrasah education and inclusion in the government system and take it as a lesson for future discussion and the impact on students. This chapter is closed with the theoretical framework that will be used to address the existing problems and serve as a guide map to understand the possible reasons for barriers and challenges and their implications for the students.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Overview of Traditional Madrasah Education

2.1.1.1 Traditional Madrasah in the Bangsamoro Region

Islamic education flourished before the Philippine colonization but was gradually marginalized as the colonial and postcolonial education system was introduced (Al-Raschid-Arsad, 2022). It starts to spread through primary teaching in community-based *Pandita* schools, led by religious leaders or scholars that focus on teaching religious values and preserving the culture of Muslim communities (Samid, 2022). Islamic education in the Bangsamoro region has a historical foundation rooted in the *tawhīdic paradigm*, emphasizing the unity of knowledge and spirituality (Gamon & Tagoranao, 2022). Madrasahs have historically served as symbols of Islamic identity and as institutions for teaching Arabic and Islamic studies (Guleng et al., 2017). However, the arrival of colonialism brought Christianity, and secularization created a unique shape of education in the Muslim community, developing traditional Madrasah and public schools, resulting in the dualism of education. The dualism of education in Muslim communities exists to maintain their religion, but it creates division and marginalization (Milligan,

2008). Students of secular public schools feel disconnected from their religious identity as public schools do not allow the inculcation of religion in the institution. Meanwhile, students of the Madrasah lack the skills needed for socioeconomic development. This dualism often leads to discrimination between two groups as the previous one is more on skills and economic progress, which madrasah students see as a materialistic thing, while madrasah students are not contributing to community development as their knowledge is for religious aspect and can only benefit hereafter.

The marginalization greatly impacted the Madrasah's institutional development, creating a bracket between traditional Islamic education and the national education system. However, this did not stop the Muslim community from supporting the madrasah, as it is not just a place for educational purposes but also serves as a place for community development, religious-centered function, and social integration (Ismail et al., 2020). Madrasah education plays a significant role in protecting the cultural and religious identity of the Moro-Muslim identity, which is essential for maintaining cultural and spiritual values amid pressure from the secular education system (Mohammad et al., 2018). The madrasah system design reflects the common values of transparency, modesty, and shared responsibility. Sali (2023b) strongly emphasizes the importance of traditional community-driven Madrasah in preserving Islamic traditions while addressing the socioeconomic disparities experienced by the Muslim community. However, the reformist approach tries to make the Madrasah more geared towards a broader social engagement that suits the educational role and community needs. This creates different types of madrasah education in the country.

According to McKenna and Abdula (2008), there are four types of Islamic schools in the Bangsamoro region: community-based, traditional postwar, and Qur'anic reading madrasah, a particular study in the Maguindanao province. Community-based madrasahs are the standard type of Islamic school in the region or municipalities with predominantly Muslim populations. Almost every community has a traditional Madrasah to accommodate students who attend public schools every weekday and weekend operation for traditional Madrasah works. As community-funded Madrasah often offer elementary-level education without affiliation or accreditation from the government, they rely on parents' support; some refer to overseas organization funding. Traditional postwar Madrasah was founded by a member of the traditional aristocracy with a local or regional political office in his local district. This type of Madrasah continuously receives aid and funding from notable families that can provide adequate buildings and infrastructures to aid learning. Students of this madrasah study from Sunday to Thursday and follow the

standardized curricula for madrasah education at the national level and the Accrediting Association of Muslim Schools for Arabic program. Qur'anic reading school is a special category as students mainly focus on memorizing the Qur'an and Islamic studies, analyzing what is read, and delivering lessons in Arabic instruction, including hadith and Islamic jurisprudence. This type of Madrasah strongly emphasizes memorizing the Qur'an as sacred and is funded by international organizations, particularly in the Middle East. The stay-in program provides dormitories for students to attend full-time for weeks and distinguish grades based on progress in memorizing the Qur'an. Comprehensive Islamic Academies offer a more secular education, particularly in English education programs. This type of Madrasah has either accreditation or funding from the international or national level by having a scholarship sponsored by the Department of Education. Most of it relies on tuition fees, local donations, and subsidies from the Philippine Association of Private Education to provide teacher salaries.

Traditional madrasahs in the Bangsamoro region are central to religious education for youth (IAG, 2017). It is vital in countering violent extremism by promoting moderation, peace education, and inclusion of civic engagement in the curriculum (IAG, 2023a). Furthermore, it strengthens Muslim Filipinos' moral and spiritual desires. However, it cannot provide quality, competitive graduates with skills and earthly knowledge capable of facing challenges in a globalizing world and its nation's employment demands (Hadji Latif, 2014). Graduates of Madrasah are recognized and valued in religious roles, such as Imams and religious teachers and preachers (Ali et al., 2021). They serve as a bridge to contribute significantly to peacebuilding by teaching Islamic values that foster community involvement and reduce societal alienation (Sattar & Arriola, 2020). Moreover, the community sees the importance of traditional madrasah institutions in promoting moderate narratives and resilience against extremist ideologies. This role of madrasah enhances their trust in the institutions and continuously supports promoting peace and social cohesion (IAG, 2023a).

2.1.1.2 The need for government recognition and participation

According to Qornain (2023), the madrasah plays a critical role in preserving students' religious and cultural identity and preserved spaces where Islamic teachings and cultural heritage are maintained, especially in the face of globalization and cultural homogenization. However, as global challenges continuously rise and the appearance and advancement brought by technology and social changes, the madrasah system has to adapt and improve education quality through an updated curriculum, teacher training, and innovative teaching approach. As socioeconomic growth, madrasah education should

embrace this by positioning itself as an institution that can empower its students socially and economically by teaching life skills, entrepreneurship, and community development; non-government madrasahs miss the opportunities to promote their curriculum to enhance socioeconomic mobility. The balance of promoting and offering secular subjects like science, mathematics, and history alongside Islamic studies prepares students for their participation in diverse societies. The article emphasizes the teaching of respect for diversity and human brotherhood through promoting peace, tolerance, and interfaith dialogue in madrasah.

The Philippine Government has supported Islamic schools in the country that aim to counter stereotypes that link Islam to extremism (Deporos et al., 2022). This effort has been made through a dual Education system that teaches Islamic and secular curricula in one school setting. This is to foster balanced education, equip understanding of Islam, demonstrate its values, and promote peace, coexistence, and understanding with broader Filipino society while addressing wrong misconceptions. Implementing the MEP and ALIVE program in public schools provides Islamic knowledge following national criteria. It is designed to integrate Muslim learners into mainstream society without separating them from their religious identity. This program addresses the community's and Muslim learners' needs while complying with the state's national goal. Islamic schools are designed to promote peacebuilding and enrich a value that promotes and cooperates among different religious and cultural aspects. The institution has a significant critical role in bridging the division, as the region has a long history of conflicts.

After the 9/11 incidents, madrasahs all over the world have been addressed to have a link to violent extremism, especially in the case of the Philippines. As a Muslim minority group, the effort to integrate madrasah education with the national system has been intensified. The Armed Forces of the Philippine intelligence chief puts much blame on madrasahs for terrorism and addresses it as a teaching ground for children while they are young to wage jihad and become suicide bombers (Hefner, 2009). Madrasah leaders and stakeholders have grave concerns about the perception of traditional madrasahs as training grounds for the recruitment of terror groups. The recent violent extremism that triggered traditional madrasahs to have government recognition is the Marawi Siege in 2017, led by the Maute Group in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur (Sattar & Arriola, 2020). The crisis lasted for 6 months and caused the death of hundreds, the displacement of thousands, and the destruction of the city (IAG, 2017), a drastic decrease in enrollment, damping morale of the community and personnel, and decreased donations from the international support (IAG, 2019). This Maute group inspired by ISIS is reported to be a

member of traditional madrasahs in the area and recruiting students to join them. According to the IAG (2017), the youth in the area did not have a much better understanding of the concepts used by these extremists, and this low awareness led to risk exposure to this group. Without a practical and relevant program to counter the narrative, youth in traditional madrasahs will continue to be exposed to extremism that increases vulnerability to radicalization.

The Madrasah Education Program provides an appropriate teacher support system as teachers play a significant role in achieving quality education, and teacher pedagogical content knowledge and attitudes toward teaching influence learners (Marasigan, 2019). Said et al. (2018) advocate applying a pedagogical approach using critical thinking, scientific observation, and systematic reasoning beyond rote memorization. Madrasah teachers should participate and be encouraged to undergo or join in-service training programs to uplift their teaching approach and managerial skills and competencies (Kulidtod, 2017), as ample preparation, training, and skills in facilitating learning are crucial to curriculum implementation (Marasigan, 2019). The innovative teaching approach and interactive methods enhance students' engagement and foster deep understanding. Integrating the general education approach into Islamic education benefited madrasah graduates, significantly enhancing their employability (Ali et al., 2021).

2.1.2 Government Policies on Madrasah Education

Since the Marcos era, the Philippine government has attempted to mainstream madrasah education into the national system. These efforts stem from recognizing Islamic education's role in fostering cultural and religious identity among Filipino Muslims (Abu Bakar, 2011). This is to bridge the gap between Madrasah education and the secular system; the government and the President of the Philippines first initiated the Letter of Instruction (LOI) number 1221 on March 31, 1982 (Rido et al., 2022). The letter is intended to address the longing needs of the Muslim minority in the country to develop the madrasah education system. It is designed to optimize the development of human resources needed by the country while preserving the Islamic heritage and identity of Muslims. The letter instructed to formulate and adopt programs for madrasah schools development by improving teaching staff skills and instructional facilities, strengthening Islamic studies programs in higher education institutions in public state universities, and establishing and strengthening teaching and learning the Arabic language as vital to educational needs of Muslims in Mindanao (Putra, 2023).

The Republic Act No. 6734, signed in August 1989, leads the creation of ARMM, creating more opportunities to acknowledge the traditional madrasah in the region. Striving for autonomy and identity, the establishment of the region where the Muslim majority of the country is located, several efforts from the central government have been made to accommodate Muslim learners in the public education system, such as integration of madrasah education into the national public school system (Milligan, 2017). The Madrasah Education Program aimed to bridge the gap between religious and secular education by including core subjects required by the government while preserving Islamic teachings in madrasah teachings. The alignment of curriculum more closely with national standards integration enhances Muslim students' access to higher education and employment while reducing radicalism. As a secular state, it respects cultural diversity and provides religious freedom to its people, and Muslims are free to establish Islamic educational schools and practice and implement Islamic teachings. This is further strengthened by the establishment of ARMM, NCMF, and the Code of Muslim Personal Laws, which provides opportunities for them to support religious education (Hadji Latif, 2014).

DepEd Order No. 51, s. 2004 was designed to provide a standard curriculum for public schools and recognized private madrasahs so that Bangsamoro learners could have Islamic education imbued with Islamic values and spiritually prepared. This also complies with the Peace Agreement of 1996 recognizing madrasah education under the supervision of the national education system under the Bureau of Madaris. This also addresses the issue of Muslims in public schools being ignorant of their religion, as secular education leads to detachment of religious teachings that do not recognize the value of religious knowledge and spiritual values to learners (Arroisi, 2020). Meanwhile, traditional madrasah students, being foreigners to their country, formulate a standardized and unified curriculum for madrasah. The order was amended in 2011 by DO No. 40 s.2011, providing a Refined Elementary Madrasah Curriculum (REMC). The program reviewed resulted in the creation of two program models,, including ALIVE in public elementary schools and Refined Standard Madrasah Curriculum (RSMC) for recognized private madrasahs. It is designed to provide a welcoming transition of students from traditional madrasahs to be recognized in public elementary schools implementing the ALIVE program and vice versa. However, the schools still have to meet a minimum number of Muslim learners set by the government before the ALIVE can be implemented in Public schools, which has to be at least 15 Muslim pupils.

DO 41, s. 2017, the Madrasah education program guidelines are implemented to provide a more accommodating learning experience for Muslims. This recognizes the cultural context, integrates content relevant to interest, harmonizes Muslim education in delivering efficient and effective development programs, implementation, and evaluation, and develops the existing MEP. It aims to integrate madrasah education into the K-12 national basic education program (Tomas & Bagolong, 2024). This provides frameworks for traditional and private madrasahs recognized by the government to align with the national level education standard while recognizing the inclusion of Islamic education needs. The MEP aims to accommodate Muslim learners by providing dual education through secular subjects while preserving and accommodating their Islamic teachings (Milligan, 2017). The integration and recognition of madrasah education create a unique concept of madrasah institutions in the region, such as traditional, developmental (private government-recognized madrasah), and standard under the policy supervision of Deped (Morales & Morales, 2020). Through the ALIVE program, madrasah education is integrated into public schools to balance Islamic values with secular education of Muslim learners that covers the Arabic language and Islamic studies (*Qur'an*, *Hadith*, *Aqedah*, and *Fiqh*), which is framed to preserve Islamic religious identity while promoting national cohesion (Abdulkarim & Suud, 2020). This program impacted Arabic teachers, Asatidz, improving their professional development and students' literacy in Arabic. Through this, Filipino cultural identity (*Makadiyos*, *Makatao*, *Makabayan*, *Makakalikasan*) is fostered by students and teachers as they demonstrate the values possessed by the integration.

The creation of BARMM opens vast opportunities for Muslims to enhance the education system. According to BEC Chapter 2, section 8, the new government shall promote and protect the constitutional rights of all Bangsamoro to quality and accessible education at all levels and establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, integrated system of education relevant and responsive to the needs, ideals, and aspiration of the Bangsamoro people. It provides the establishment, maintenance, and supervision of basic education in the school and madrasah system to meet learning needs and provide the foundation for subsequent learning (see BEC). The existence of BEC leads to the issuance of policy guidelines on the issuance of Government Permit to Operate, renew, and recognize private madrasahs in the region signed on July 2023. The guidelines provide requirements and standard procedures for application, renewal of PTO, and recognition for *Tahdiriyyah* curriculum implementer, private madrasah, non-formal

madrasah (traditional madrasah), and special institutions called *Tahfidz Qur'an* centers (see MO. 06 s. 2024).

2.1.3 Challenges and Barriers to Obtaining Government Recognition

The issuance of policy guidelines for government accreditation and recognition for traditional and private madrasahs clearly stated the regulations and requirements that must be complied with for the renewal and application for government recognition. In order to obtain a Permit to Operate (PTO) from the Director General for Madaris Education (DGME), traditional madrasah should include curriculum standards shaped and agreed upon by the regional and national level education system, prescribed school building facilities, and qualified teaching personnel and staff (see Policy Guidelines, 2023). These standards set by the government seem difficult for a community-driven madrasah to meet as they are limited to resource funding and the challenges of aligning the religious curricula with state guidelines. It emphasizes the bureaucratic and resource-related hurdles that traditional madrasahs face to acquire government recognition. Barriers include the historical marginalization of Muslims in the Philippines, resistance to integration policies perceived as assimilation, and inadequate resources for madrasahs to comply with government standards. The parallel system of Islamic and secular education complicates efforts to achieve recognition (Guleng et al., 2017).

The guidelines mandate the inclusion of secular subjects alongside the Islamic studies curriculum in traditional madrasahs, highlighting the government's intent to provide a balanced education to religious and general academic competencies (see Policy Guidelines, 2023). This mandatory integration of curriculum hinders compliance with government expectations. It creates tension in Muslim communities and traditional madrasahs that serve to preserve Islamic identity to suit the government. There is a dilemma within the Muslim and madrasah education systems on how Islam should be taught in schools- whether as an all-encompassing epistemological framework or as a bounded subject alongside other disciplines. This tension is significant regarding government regulations, as policymakers face difficulty implementing balanced religious education with modern curricula (Thobani, 2007).

2.1.3.1 Administrative Barriers

Policy or community factors can influence challenges and barriers to madrasa recognition and adaptation to secular integration. Challenges are mainly rooted in bureaucratic delays, funding issues, and resistance from traditional madrasah administrators or Communities (Putra, 2023). Influenced by the colonial era, government

policies toward Muslim communities often mimic the colonial-era approach that emphasizes control of the Madrasah rather than integration (Magdalena, 2017). The strong advocacy to align the madrasah curriculum with national standards while limiting financial assistance, inadequate facilities, and insufficient government support hinder the integration process. Furthermore, traditional Madrasah is still perceived as a military hub that hampers reception and support. Inadequate funding and government discrimination are also among the challenges resulting from Islamic educational institutions' independence (Marbun, 2013). This discrepancy often limits the resources and views that Islamic education is not valued equally, leading to doubt and questions for the community about the efficiency and effectiveness of government-funded programs (Marbun, 2013).

Current status faced by a government-recognized Madrasah, the MEP encountered sustainability challenges, such as a shortage of technical and financial support, which affects the Madrasah's ability to meet the national standard recognition (Marasigan, 2019). Furthermore, Sali (2023b) found that inadequate training for *Asatidz*, scarcity of instructional materials, and lack of dedicated learning space also influence the non-recognition and nonparticipation of traditional Madrasah. Insufficient funding, resource shortage, and unstandardized curricula hinder government requirements. The economic gap limits access to resources, and long historical mistrust created between secular state government policies and the Muslim community continuously challenged the program (Milligan, 2017).

Funding is a significant source for the madrasah to operate thoroughly. This is also a significant issue in the region, resulting in a limited budget for essential expenses, such as teacher salaries, school facilities, and supplies (Solaiman, 2021). The lack of financial assistance makes traditional madrasahs struggle to sustain their operation. However, madrasah administrators continue their service as dedicated to providing religious knowledge and beliefs over financial compensation (Solaiman, 2021). Traditional madrasahs use community support, such as *zakat*, *infaq*, *sadaqah*, and *waqf*, to alter the funding. Support coming from parents as financial aid for operations continuously plays a vital role in traditional madrasahs. Parents' commitment to their children's education reinforcing religious values further strengthens the influence of madrasah on society (IAG, 2023b). This community-based reliance on funding sources creates barriers to meeting the requirements for government recognition (Safriadi et al., 2023).

Morales and Morales (2020) mentioned that lack of proper funding, structuralized curriculum, and inevitable religious ideology domination of government-supported

curricula serve as barriers that hinder traditional madrasahs from participating in the government Madrasah Education Program. These factors led to resistance from various groups, including indigenous Islam practitioners viewing the curriculum as influenced and shaped by foreign interpretations and the use of a top-down approach designed at the national level. This top-down approach often fails due to its lack of understanding of the local cultural and religious context, as it is viewed as imposition and fostering mistrust among local communities and madrasah leaders (Abu-Nimer & Nasser, 2017). This centralized curriculum model implemented in the program creates a disconnection between the unique needs of traditional madrasahs and the Muslim community to government recognition and a strong emphasis on teaching Islamic religion as the curriculum is designed at the national level (Sali, 2023a).

Traditional madrasah administrators' skepticism of integrating secular subjects due to concerns over funding, autonomy, and the potential loss of control over religious instruction are among the challenges the program faces (Milligan, 2004). The challenge of convincing them to adopt the new integration system, including a secular curriculum, without adequate financial assistance and institutional support significantly hinders program success. The strong resilience of traditional Madrasah is rooted in strong leadership and community support. The traditional Madrasah's strong commitment to providing and prioritizing preserving Islamic values over preferring to integrate secular subjects into their curriculum, which is required by government recognition, continuously attracts the community's trust to choose it as an institutional space for religious learning (IAG, 2019).

2.1.3.2 Institutional Capacity

Compliance with government recognition and traditional madrasahs is hindered by strong qualifications securing access to Permit to Operate (PTO) due to the need for infrastructure and adequate teacher training since they lack the support set for the standard accreditation (Tomas & Bagolong, 2024). Traditional madrasahs are not government-funded; due to their independence, many non-recognized madrasahs rely heavily on community donations, volunteerism, and tuition from parents, making their operations financially unstable. The lack of support leads madrasahs to face common issues of inadequate facilities and the disappearance of libraries, sports complexes, and basic amenities that impact quality education outcomes (Solaiman, 2021). Therefore, the limited funding to provide quality education and good facilities hinders the requirements and standards imposed by the government, impacting their access to official recognition and public funding and resources (IAG, 2019).

Solaiman (2021) found that while faculty competency is not considered a serious challenge, many madrasah teachers lack professional development opportunities that limit their growth. Teachers in Madrasah are untrained or lack formal qualifications; therefore, to enhance pedagogical skills and knowledge in Islamic and secular subjects (Muhlisin & Ma'as Shobirin, 2023), there is a need for more formal training for teachers; however, few are available. There is a lack of qualified teachers in traditional Madrasah, and trained teachers are a significant sustainability concern (Marasigan, 2019). Many lack formal teaching background and credentials, the primary need for DepEd teachers' policies. Teachers also have problems with pedagogical knowledge due to a lack of teachers training and educational background. This institutional barrier to providing and hiring qualified teachers and the shortage of adequately trained teachers teaching in Madrasah also hinders government recognition.

2.1.3.3 Cultural and Religious Concerns

The resistance of Muslim communities to the inclusion of secular subjects in madrasahs is motivated by the fear of diluting religious teachings (Said et al., 2018) that serve as a challenge in combining Islamic and secular education as they may lose cultural and religious identity, wary on the influence that secular may bring (Rohman et al., 2023). Socio-cultural and religious barriers also lead the way as Muslim communities view the inclusion of secular knowledge as eroding the Islamic identity and leading to Christianization. Secularizing education can drive the decline of moral values and decrease students' respect for their traditional values, as this system contributes to the lack of religious groundings, which is among the aspects that trigger the concern of traditional madrasahs to maintain Islamic values preferences (Arroisi, 2020). The substantial compliance with national standards leads traditional madrasahs to avoid formal recognition to preserve their religious focus and community-driven mission (Magdalena, 2017). The process for integration needs sensitivity to religious values while implementing the necessary modern skills (Rohman et al., 2023). However, the separation between secular and Islamic education systems results in students specializing in religious or secular knowledge, with limited integration (Yasin & Jani, 2013).

The curriculum offered in traditional madrasahs is always seen as outdated and unstandardized, as it is still on foreign models that are not aligned with local or national standards (Solaiman, 2021). Traditional madrasahs prioritize religious subjects like Arabic, Qur'an, and Hadith over general education subjects such as mathematics, science, and technology (Ali et al., 2021), which leads to curriculum imbalance. The lack of standardized curriculum in traditional madrasahs leads to inconsistent educational

content, redundancy of instruction, and an overemphasis on Arabic and Qur'anic studies (Muhlisin & Ma'as Shobirin, 2023). This is because designing the madrasah curriculum is influenced by different beliefs, specific ideologies, and foreign countries' influence (Marasigan, 2019), contributing to their inability to meet the government recognition standard.

Addressing the community's cultural and religious concerns, Ismail et al. (2020) illustrate how reforming madrasah integrates locally appropriate design elements and prioritizes communal accessibility, modesty in structure, and the use of local materials. This reformist design resonates with the community's expectations but might contradict the government standards, which are not designed for specific cultural accounts.

2.1.3.4 Case Studies of other Regions: Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore, Pakistan, and Indonesia

A comparative case study of Al-Hasani (2020) on government-recognized and independent madrasahs in Bangladesh shows a fascinating insight. A traditional madrasah, Qawmi, was established in response to the British colonization of the country, preserving traditional Islamic teachings free from secular influence. During the colonial era, madrasah Aliya was established to accommodate secular learning and religious knowledge in one institutional setting. To maintain religious purity, the earlier mentioned resists government recognition and operates independently. At the same time, the latter enjoys government funding by implementing standardized curricula, which opens a door for more job opportunities for their graduates. The refusal of Qawmi madrasah to go to government programs creates a disparity, making their graduates face limited career opportunities that are restricted to roles within religious institutions or communities. Because of the broader areas of learning provided to their students, Aliya graduates are more competitive and have broad career prospects. This result provides a significant effect of government recognition on student's career paths and positive change in economic development. However, the government should also recognize the autonomy of religious institutions to provide optional pathways for integrating programs to bridge the disparities.

Malaysia, as a Muslim-majority country, also faces problems with inviting traditional madrasah *pondoks* to participate in government programs. According to Mughal and Ibrahim (2021), the call of the government to reform madrasah to integrate with the national system requires the adaptation of standardized curricula and administrative practices. This addresses the issue of students from traditional madrasahs facing difficulty transitioning to higher education and employment due to their lack of

standardized qualifications. They further suggest the use of "*Hikmah* pedagogy," an open dialogue, inquiry-based learning, and critical thinking method inspired by both traditional Islamic and modern educational theories, as it will develop students' religious commitment while enriching their analytical thinking that addresses the needs for modern methods of teaching framed into religious concept. However, the integration is hindered by resistance to secularization, lack of resources, and government scrutiny, resulting in a lack of full participation in the formal government system.

The comparative case study of Latief et al. (2021) in Kelantan, Malaysia, on two madrasahs, as government-recognized and independent madrasahs, highlights institutions' challenges to preserve autonomy and legacy. Both madrasahs faced financial difficulties that forced them to consider government funding options, which require strict compliance requirements and may potentially cause the institution to lose its autonomy. Although the benefits from the government will help to improve the quality of education, school facilities, and funding, *Pondok Lubuk Tapah* opts to remain self-funded through the support and assistance of community donations and entrepreneurial projects to preserve the independence of the madrasah from government control in consequences, facing ongoing financial instability. Seeing the benefits of government recognition, *SMA Darul Anuar* initially accepted the state funds but had to comply with the government standard, leading to a change of administration and curriculum implementation. Deemed to realize that the madrasah had lost its autonomy, it reverted to private management to reclaim autonomy despite the financial struggle.

Similar to the case of Singapore as a highly secularized and multicultural state, a lesson on how Madrasah has adapted and survived was brought by Mohd et al. (2017). The incorporation of both the religious and secular subject curricula of madrasahs in Singapore is due to regulatory pressure proposed by the government to meet the standards in providing a balanced accommodation of education in both. The need for addressing the state's economic and multicultural objectives runs alongside the teachings of Islamic identity in the madrasah curriculum. Madrasahs in the country must address the government's Compulsory Education (CE) policy, ensuring that the students meet the specific academic benchmark, and failure to comply with it leads to potential madrasah closure. This policy allows traditional madrasahs to reform, obligating them to adapt their curricula to integrate subjects that align with national standards, such as mathematics and Sciences.

Furthermore, Madrasah has to integrate technology and provide an interactive learning environment and teaching methods in response to the state's Knowledge-based

Economy (KBE) model, preparing its students for more diverse competitive economic engagement while preserving its religious curriculum. Therein, traditional madrasahs have tried to foster multiculturalism and social harmony through association in interfaith dialogues, serving as a door to reduce societal tensions and stereotypes linked to Islamic education. According to Helmiati (2021), madrasahs in Singapore were pressured to reform the system to align it with national cohesion and economic goals. It faced scrutiny for its inability to contribute effectively to the knowledge-based economy and concerns about fostering religious exclusivity. The government implemented curriculum reforms to madrasahs incorporating science, mathematics, and English alongside traditional Islamic studies to make their graduate competitive in the job market under the Joint-Madrasah System (JMS) to align with the national priorities while fostering flexibility in religious knowledge. Furthermore, this also aims to end the stereotypes associated with madrasahs with extremist groups, provide interfaith activities, and foster values of diversity and tolerance among students.

Traditional Islamic schools teaching core religious subjects in Singapore are pressured by the government to gradually include more secular topics and modernize their approach to align with the national goals (Steiner, 2011). This reform for the madrasah curriculum faced resistance from the Muslim community, as the change was seen as a threat to religious identity, leading to debates from educational content and administrative control, with the state-driven reforms clashing with traditional Islamic education values. Singapore seeks to include mathematics and science learning areas in the madrasah curriculum to prepare its students for modern employment opportunities. Although the intention for integration is good, preparing graduates from this institution to be more equipped and competitive still faces criticism from the Muslim community. To be government-recognized, madrasah must comply with the national standard. Otherwise, their students will face limited career prospects as they lack a formal secular education, resulting in low academic and employability issues. This standard reinforces the inclusion of modern sciences and vocational training in the country's religious education system.

In Pakistan, though considered a Muslim-majority country, Madrasah still faces barriers to accessing modern education (Iqbal et al., 2023). Challenges Madrasah faces, such as inadequate infrastructures, limited lab supplies, and access to internet and technology resources, hinder them from effectively allocating modern subjects like ITC to their curriculum. Moreover, teachers and students both perceive modern education as a detractor to religious instructions, making them astray. This social resistance, as many community members in the country and religious leaders and scholars believe these

modern subjects will conflict with religious values. The impact of media and societal stereotypes portraying traditional madrasah education as outdated or extremist negatively affects students' motivation to pursue modern subjects. These damaging paints make students from madrasahs build more hate and not embrace the secular modern type of education, which is considered to threaten their religious values. Another influence comes from inconsistent support and insufficient funding from the government, as seen by the madrasah administrator, in improving their facilities and successful integration of modern subjects, which hinders upgrading curriculum and professional training for teachers. Therefore, the government must allocate funds for better facilities and training for madrasah teachers to improve the integration of modern subjects.

Reforming madrasa is essential for integrating students' education into the mainstream system and is the essential step for the Pakistani government to address security concerns related to extremism (Rabbi & Habib, 2019). However, religious scholars perceive this program as skeptical, fearing the dilation of religious teachings and compromising autonomy, illustrating the tension between the government and community concerns compromising their religious concerns. *Dars-i-Nizami*, an outdated curriculum, is predominantly in traditional Madrasah, which emphasizes the preferences of memorizing rather than critical thinking approach and excludes modern subjects. Many religious leaders refuse to update their curriculum due to fear of shifting to a secular education model, which leads to neglect of religious learning. To avoid government oversight, traditional Madrasah rejects government funding and prefers to rely only on funds from community donations. Financial independence will emphasize their control and pride. However, due to lack of access, it hinders them from the modernization effort. Therefore, the proposed reformation of traditional Madrasah will help improve students' socioeconomic status and equip them with skills that will be applicable and useful for their future careers and job employment. Gradual reform implementation concerning the religious mission while integrating secular subjects to facilitate better integration into Muslim society will work better.

Indonesia has influenced the Islamic education concept in the region. The Philippine government sees Indonesia as a model for madrasa education in integrating Islamic education with national curricula and provides scholarship programs for madrasah teachers in the region (Rido et al., 2022). This successful integration of the Indonesian government to accommodate madrasah education into the national curriculum serves as the guidelines for associating and encouraging traditional madrasahs in the region to participate in national and regional government programs. The government's

integration should allow traditional madrasahs to hold on to their religious identity while providing a pathway for students to access higher education and future employment. Therefore, Muhlisin and Ma'as Shobirin (2023) suggested that Madrasah education, particularly in the Bangsamoro region, can look up to Indonesia as a role model for curriculum integration in combining Islamic studies and secular subjects as the approach proven effective in balancing religious education with modern academic needs. Many of these madrasahs in the region continuously operate with inadequate facilities as they rely heavily on funding from the community and foreign donations.

Basri (2015) emphasizes that Aceh, as an autonomous region in Indonesia, needs an education system that integrates Islamic principles into curricula of all levels. Integrating spirituality, intellectual growth, and socioeconomic relevance in substitute to the dichotomy between secular and religious education with a unified Islamic education system aligns with the local cultural and legal framework. Islamic education system aligns with the local cultural and legal framework. Cultivating values such as spirituality, intellectual excellence, social harmony, and moral integrity through education in madrasah curricula is essential to support holistic development. The secular education system inculcated during the colonial era marginalized Islamic education, resulting in a loss of cultural identity and autonomy for Islamic schools. He suggests a call for reform that adapts Islamic education to a modern context by incorporating subjects such as science and technology without affecting Islamic principles. Aceh, an autonomous region of Indonesia, needs the same education system as the Bangsamoro region. Therefore, this can be considered a step for traditional madrasahs to consider the government program.

Like other countries, traditional madrasah in the Philippines depends on self-sustained community funds to provide Islamic education separated from the state's secular form. Timely, under the influence of reformist scholars, modernization is introduced while maintaining the religious core focus (Muhlisin & Ma'as Shobirin, 2023). In order to access government recognition, traditional madrasahs must comply with the government standard criteria, including operation and regulations, which challenge the capacity. The set standard hinders the traditional madrasah from complying due to the lack of resources, limited funding, administrative capabilities, and the community's resistance to secular curricula (Abu Bakar, 2011). Much like the Philippines, non-recognized madrasah in other countries limits students' access to academic fields and career opportunities since the credentials provided by the institutions lack the criteria, learning areas, and skills that suit qualifications (Milligan, 2020). The approach of the

Indonesian government, state-supported integration, is a successful model for the country to balance education (Muhlisin & Ma'as Shobirin, 2023).

2.1.4 Impact of Non-Recognition on Students in the Philippines

The nonparticipation and accreditation of government to madrasahs limit future access of students. The graduates from this institution have difficulty continuing their education in higher education as non-recognized madrasahs struggle with lower academic preparedness and employment opportunities (Putra, 2023; Tomas & Bagolong, 2024). Non-recognized madrasahs often produce graduates with limited career and educational opportunities. These schools focus on religious subjects, leaving students unprepared for university education or jobs outside religious roles, perpetuating socioeconomic exclusion (Guleng et al., 2017). The nonparticipation of traditional madrasahs in the recognized education system restricts students' access to public resources, technical training, and future employment (Morales & Morales, 2020). An institution with limited or no government certification lacks essential skills training since the concentration is still primarily on providing religious knowledge, impacting students' socioeconomic mobility.

Madrasah education lacks an integrative Islamic framework in education, limiting Islam to subject risks diluting its moral and intellectual influence. Graduates lack skills or knowledge deemed necessary by secular institutions, limiting their access to higher education or employment (Thobani, 2007). Non-recognized madrasahs can produce students proficient in Arabic and Islamic studies but lack competitive English and general education skills, which limits employment opportunities outside religious roles (Kulidtod, 2017). The heavy focus of non-recognized madrasahs on religious education and neglecting essential aspects of learning and knowledge leads to socioeconomic disadvantages for their graduates, facing limited options outside religious vocations for job opportunities (Magdalena, 2017). Moreover, students from this institution lack the knowledge and necessary academic skills to access admission to universities and higher education and eligibility for jobs, resulting in long-term socioeconomic mobility (Marasigan, 2019).

Including secular subjects enables graduates from madrasahs to access higher education, enrich their skills, and have a high rate of competition in the job market (Rohman et al., 2023). Balancing religious values with modern education is important to make madrasah graduates competitive in a globalized economy (Husin, 2018). Without the government recognition and integration of secular subjects, students of traditional madrasahs fail to comply with the requirements needed to access higher education in recognized universities and end up unemployed. The non-recognition of madrasahs

restricts the development of students of culturally relevant education, exacerbating feelings of marginalization, and they miss out on the social and economic benefits provided by a formal education system that qualifies them for higher education (Sali, 2023b).

According to Mohammad et al. (2018), UPCAT has become a recent barrier for students with an Islamic education background. The admission policy for standardized entrance examinations to access the university level made students from madrasahs struggle as the items cover mostly secular subjects, resulting in limited access to pursue higher education. Traditional madrasah curricula mainly focus on religious subjects, with limits or, moreover, no inclusion of secular disciplines such as mathematics, sciences, or language, which limits their graduates to further options in higher education and employment access. The limited academic growth of students in madrasahs results from limited government funding, inadequate facilities, and minimal classroom resources.

The report of the IAG (2017) reveals that the significant factors driving the youth to radicalization are the high poverty rate and limited access to formal higher education and employment opportunities. Traditional madrasahs, as their academic background, cannot provide pathways for employment, leading them to be drawn towards participation and embracing extremist groups promising their financial support for the family. Moreover, financial resource constraints and the lack of government lookout to traditional madrasahs that are located in conflict zone areas are prone to extremist groups, leading to recruitment and participation of students (IAG, 2023a). Meanwhile, marginalized groups face barriers to pursuing higher education due to poverty, geographic location, and discriminatory admission practices (Nascimento et al., 2022).

2.1.5 Research Gap

Studies from other countries have shown challenges and barriers for the traditional madrasah to commit their education system to the national standard of education. Moreover, case studies in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Malaysia show that traditional madrasahs that aimed to be part of the government education system failed and returned to their original concepts. This proves that the existing national-level system for integrating traditional madrasahs into mainstream education contradicts society's needs and expectations that suit the community's needs. Lack of government support, funding, and instructional and learning materials fails the integration; the institution's inability to comply with the government standard hinders them from being part of the program. Meanwhile, the national government's MEP and ARMM have also faced the same approach and acceptance from traditional madrasahs in the region, leading the program to

fail in accommodating the madrasah system into the government's educational standard. As the new autonomous government exists, there is a lack of knowledge and studies about the possible challenges and barriers for traditional madrasahs to be part of government-recognized institutions bound to the unveiling. Furthermore, since the education system is transferred to the regional level, do the graduates of traditional madrasahs have more opportunities to pursue higher education and job employment, or still struggle due to their insufficient knowledge and skills, due to their traditional curriculum in madrasah? This study addresses the issue of traditional madrasah institutions and their students.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

To understand the firm foundation of madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur, this study assumes that it is not the strong commitment of madrasahs to provide Islamic knowledge that hinders participation in government recognition and madrasah education programs—however, the bureaucratic challenges, substantial regulatory requirements, centralized government curriculum, and cultural concerns. Moreover, with government standards, traditional madrasah is affected by its inability to comply due to its lack of resources, infrastructure, qualified personnel, poor curriculum, and insufficient teaching support. The Islamic philosophical foundation of the madrasah is consistent with the need to reshape the system as it is designed to provide a holistic approach.

Through the lens of social capital theory, the madrasah commits to providing Islamic knowledge to preserve identity supported by the community. Cultural capital is the foundation of the Muslim parent and community, and they continuously look forward to helping the madrasah. The institutional theory looks at how the structural foundation of the madrasah is governed and influenced by the previous theories. To further unpack how these dynamics are interpreted and contested, this study also draws on Gramsci's Theory of Cultural Hegemony underscores how the state's educational policies and recognition mechanisms reinforce dominant secular norms, subtly marginalizing traditional Islamic institutions through ideological control rather than overt force (Gramsci, 1971). These theories provide a multidimensional lens to determine the reasons behind institutional resistance, barriers to recognition, and the implications for students' future academic and employment.

2.2.1 Cultural Capital Theory

According to Throsby's (1999) definition, cultural capital is both tangible (e.g., heritage buildings, art) and intangible (e.g., traditions, values, beliefs) assets that embody,

store, or generate cultural value alongside economic value. Intangible cultural capital includes networks and shared cultural norms within a community. For Sullivan (2001), cultural capital includes familiarity with the dominant culture, linguistic competence, and participation in activities that enhance intellectual resources. It is primarily transmitted from parents to children within the home environment rather than through formal school. For Bourdieu, the concept of cultural capital arises from his exploration of the duality between natural (inherited, familial) and acquired (institutional, societal) culture. This duality underpins his work on how educational systems perpetuate social stratification by privileging certain forms of cultural knowledge (Robbins, 2005).

Cultural capital's value is relational and context-dependent; it gains significance within specific social structures and educational systems. Bourdieu emphasized the dynamic interaction between agents' habitus (dispositions) and institutionalized cultural expectations (Robbins, 2005). Habitus, a system of dispositions shaped by social and cultural environments, reinforces social structures. It determines how individuals interact with their social worlds and perpetuates existing inequalities (Ramsey, 2024). In madrasah, it reflects community values and traditions but clashes with the expectations of a state-recognized system that contributes to the challenges madrasah students face. This position of traditional madrasah to incorporate knowledge and skills for students is undervalued in the government-state educational structures that are mismatched to institutions' expectations.

Bourdieu advocated for reflexivity, urging researchers to recognize how their positions influence their analysis of cultural dynamics, and emphasized the need to contextualize concepts like cultural capital to avoid perpetuating social inequalities (Robbins, 2005). This is needed to review state policies to align madrasah education in order to address marginalization and potential bias as the neglect of Islamic cultural and educational needs has widened the socio-political divide between Muslims and non-Muslims (Gamon & Tagoranao, 2022). Meanwhile, leveraging cultural capital that carries economic and cultural values, economic value is quantifiable (e.g., through willingness to pay for preservation), and cultural value is multifaceted, encompassing symbolic, social, and spiritual (Throsby, 1999). This can be among the support systems of madrasah for not urging to induce in government policies to maintain a role in Islamic identity and social cohesion.

Bourdieu initially used "linguistic capital" in his analysis of cultural capital, as language and cultural exposure are critical components of educational success and social mobility (Robbins, 2005). Meanwhile, the Madrasah medium of instruction uses Arabic.

At the same time, secular subjects need English and the national language, Filipino, which acts as a cultural capital mismatch for Madrasah students and graduates, contributing to limited access to higher education and employment. Cultural capital influences educational success by developing linguistic ability and cultural knowledge, which can be received in a formal education system (Sullivan, 2001). The inability of madrasah to provide such cultural orientation to students in broad dominant cultural norms and linguistic practices in a secular state hinders their performance in the state-recognized education system.

Cultural capital enables individuals to navigate social structures, influencing educational and economic outcomes, as those with more outstanding cultural capital are better positioned to succeed in institutional settings (Ramsey, 2024). This resonates with the struggle of madrasah graduates to transition to a higher education institution with a different environment from what they have. Moreover, Bourdieu's studies highlight how education systems reproduce existing social hierarchies by privileging specific forms of cultural capital, disadvantaging students from non-dominant cultural backgrounds (Robbins, 2005). At the same time, cultural capital requires maintenance and investment to sustain its value over time. The national government integration system's top-down approach resulted in a systematic barrier for traditional madrasahs to gain government recognition and perpetuated socioeconomic disparities for their students. This includes infrastructure funding, teacher training, and curriculum development education systems (Throsby, 1999). This is seen to be inconsistent in the government's MEP, which results in the unsuccessful integration and acknowledgment of traditional madrasahs into the program. The centralized curriculum model for the MEP is designed to be integrated upon government recognition, noting a disconnect between the curriculum's design and the unique needs of Madrasah educators and communities (Sali, 2023a). Therefore, there is a need to include grassroots voices (teachers, community members, and stakeholders) in curriculum planning.

2.2.2 Social Capital Theory

Social capital, according to Putnam's definition, is trust, norms, and networks that facilitate coordinated actions that are crucial for sustainability and mutual benefits, which are critical elements to fostering economic and social development (Fukuyama, 2000; Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Munjin, 2017). The relationship between madrasah and communities enhances trust, support, and norms and creates networks that improve the quality of education and community engagement (Salim et al., 2021). This is further categorized into structural (networks, associations) and cognitive (share values, trust)

dimensions and classified as bonding (with tight-knit groups), bridging (across diverse groups), and linking (connecting to institutions with power and resources) (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). These dimensions help the madrasah to bridge gaps in providing support funding, resource allocation, and policy support (Munjin, 2017). The trust and cultural values that the madrasah embodies allow them to maintain community support amid resistance to change (Serigar, 2024).

Trust is enhanced in social capital, reduces transaction costs, and fosters collaboration, making it vital for individual and collective success without formal contracts or institutions (Fukuyama, 2000; Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Trust between the madrasah and its surrounding community has been built over time. This pillar contributes significantly to increasing enrollees and active participation in madrasah activities, a sign of madrasah development. A firm relationship between madrasah and community trust enables the development of a program that meets the Muslim community's desires (Salim et al., 2021). Trust is built through philosophical, institutional, and practical approaches that foster community collaboration and participation (Munjin, 2017). Despite limited formal recognition, trust is a cornerstone for the traditional madrasah, which sustains their needs. Philosophical trust is affiliated with shared religious and cultural values, while institutional trust is strengthened through transparency operations and consistent quality improvements.

Another critical pillar for the madrasah's functioning is norms, crucial in preserving the balance between tradition and innovation (Serigar, 2024). Norms embody mutual respect, care, and tolerance, which serve as ethical and operational guidelines for madrasah. Norms help the madrasah maintain relevance and align with the community's expectations; cultural and religious norms influence madrasah stakeholders' decision-making to ensure long-term acceptance and integration (Salim et al., 2021). The Islamic school of thought influences traditional madrasahs as the foundation of operation; madrasah always makes sure that they are aligned with their norms and ideologies and build networks that lead them to support or oppose government recognition (Morale & Morales, 2020).

Salim et al., 2021 emphasize that strong network connections with local and national organizations, including religious and governmental institutions, enable madrasahs to access resources and maintain their relevance. This networking connection is a structural tool for madrasah sustainability and adaptation to external pressures. Munjin (2017), on the other hand, emphasizes madrasahs that foster inclusivity and remain non-affiliated with specific organizations or sects, which can help build broader

community trust. Furthermore, community involvement and inclusivity in decision-making, setting shared goals, and promoting student achievement reinforce trust.

Moreover, leadership plays a vital role in this theory. Strengthening social capital requires the function of madrasah leaders and teachers. Leaders such as madrasah principals, teachers, and religious leaders play a crucial role in fostering trust and maintaining networks. Their active participation in community activities reinforces social ties and enhances the institution's reputation (Salim et al., 2021).

Madrasah Education Program builds social trust and reduces marginalization through community participation in school activities, demonstrating the role of social capital in addressing violent extremism (Sattar & Arriola, 2020). Thus, institutional collaboration and community dynamics are essential to overcome systematic barriers and ensure program sustainability (IAG, 2023b). However, traditional madrasah decisions regarding compliance with government standards conflict with the Islamic and Western educational paradigms. This is where reliance on social capital, such as community support, plays a crucial role in sustaining the madrasah to overcome these challenges (Kulidtod, 2017). Using the concepts of social capital, such as trust, shared norms, and networks in the community, enables madrasahs to sustain themselves amid challenges in policy standardization and resource limitation to negotiate their role as religious education and cultural institutions (Marwazi & Abid, 2021).

Social capital fosters educational outcomes through networks and shared norms that promote learning and civic management (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). Integrating trust, norms, and networks helps madrasahs adapt to modern societal changes without losing their traditional identity. As educational institutions, madrasahs transmit social capital by instilling norms and values. This role extends beyond teaching academic content to fostering a sense of civic responsibility and cooperation (Fukuyama, 2000). Madrasah that leverages social capital to sustain operations, maintain community trust, and achieve educational goals. It further acts as a bridge for them to balance traditional Islamic values while adopting evolving educational demands.

2.2.3 Institutional Theory

According to Lawrence and Shadnam (2008), institutional theory is a theoretical framework for analyzing social phenomena that cite the social world as significantly compromised of institutions' enduring rules, practices, and structures that prove conditions to specific actions. This theory is the second most well-known theoretical framework utilized in visualization. It further analyzes organizational forms and expounds on the reasons beyond homogeneous organizational structures of firms

operating within the same frame. Institutions play a crucial role in shaping the social world as they are deeply embedded within the social fabric and influence the trajectory of social interactions (Scott, 20114). Organizations function within a dynamic social landscape that evolves due to new legislation, emerging standards and norms, shifting behaviors, and introducing new actors (Scott, 2014). Institutional theory aims to understand how structures, processes, and professional roles are established and spread within and among organizations (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). They serve as the stable elements that establish the guidelines for change. Institutions shape behavior because deviations from them are promptly corrected by social mechanisms, making it costly to stray from established norms (Scott, 2014). These definitions provide an in-depth understanding of how traditional madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur are shaped and influenced by their strong foundation.

According to Marwazi and Abid (2021), Institutional theory examines how institutions influence the behavior of individuals within them. This theory can help us understand how these institutions maintain their cultural and educational practices over time. Furthermore, it emphasizes how organizations conform to societal norms, rules, and expectations to gain legitimacy (Chowdhury, 2015) and survival (Lammers & Garcia, 2017). Institutions, according to Chowdhury (2015) and Lammers and Garcia (2017), are shaped by three key elements such as regulative (formal rules and policies), normative (social norms and values), and cognitive (shared beliefs and mental models), which rise the conflicts when misaligned. As madrasahs evolve through interactions with their environment and a policy change, societal expectations or economic conditions can force them to adapt. However, resistance to change often stems from fears of losing their core identity.

2.2.4 Hegemony Theory

Hegemony Theory, rooted in the work of Antonio Gramsci (1971), explores how dominant groups maintain control not only through coercive means but also through ideological dominance. It explains how state institutions, including education systems, propagate a particular worldview that becomes accepted as "common sense" or normative, even among marginalized groups.

In the Philippine context, where Western and secular educational paradigms dominate, the government's Madrasah Education Program may implicitly privilege state-defined knowledge systems over traditional religious epistemologies. This leads to the marginalization of madrasah education, which often lacks formal credentials and

recognition. As Apple (2019) argues, curricula and institutional standards are sites of ideological struggle where dominant powers institutionalize their worldview.

Madrasahs often adhere to established norms and traditions, which can resist change but help preserve madrasahs' unique identity and educational philosophy, ensuring continuity and stability. However, the madrasah's adherence to norms and religious teachings often resists integrating secular subjects like STEM, fearing diluting religious identity as a barrier between tradition and modernity in educational reforms (Serigar, 2024). However, Islamic education has been evident to adapt to changing societal needs, evolving from traditional religious instruction to more inclusive curricula in response to external pressure of social and economic demand as designed in the Madrasah Education Program (Said et al., 2018).

Madrasah institution has a strong philosophical foundation of *tarbiyyah* (holistic upbringing), *ta'lim* (knowledge dissemination), and *ta'dīb* (inculcation of *ādab* or good conduct) that shape their purposes (Yasin & Jani, 2013). Madrasah education historically focused on religious instruction influenced by regulative elements that must adapt to the increasing development of secular subjects such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics to prepare students for modern job markets. Traditional madrasahs must integrate a holistic curriculum that promotes spiritual and intellectual development (Serigar, 2024). Madrasah acted as an independent institution preserving Islamic traditions. However, it shifted in response to state-driven standardization and societal needs, reflecting a dynamic interaction between religious values and public policies (Marwazi & Abid, 2021).

The program integrating religious and secular curricula can produce a well-rounded graduate without compromising religious identity. Madrasah's system can adapt to Nursi's approach since his educational philosophy emphasizes that actual knowledge stems from integrating divine revelation with empirical sciences (Embong et al., 2017). He believes science complements religious teachings, where both realms lead to the ultimate truth. Moreover, his theory aligns with an epistemological framework that avoids compartmentalizing knowledge. The application of this approach is evident in other countries' approaches to madrasah education, emphasized by Said et al. (2018), that Islamic education adapts to changing societal needs and evolves from traditional religious instruction to more inclusive curricula responding to external factors addressing the social and economic needs.

Traditional madrasah transformation is shaped by state policies and educational standardization, which pushed it to evolve and risk marginalization (Marwazi & Abid,

2021). Transformation is influenced by systematic barriers that create challenges and opportunities that pressure their operation—resulting in a lack of formal teachers' training in pedagogical methods or knowledge about modern subjects, which hinders the integration and implementation of holistic curricula. Resolving these issues requires systematic reforms and professional development (Serigar, 2024).

2.2.5 Barriers and Criticism

Evidence has shown that some aspects of educational inequality are explained by cultural capital. However, it does not account for all disparities, as factors such as material resources and institutional practices also play a significant role (Sullivan, 2001). Highlighted by their multifaceted challenges, what Madrasahs need to adapt is an integration that recognizes their unique cultural contribution.

Similarly, social capital has proven beneficial to madrasah operations. However, it faces criticism for being context-dependent, difficult to quantify, and prone to vague interpretations (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). These limitations underscore the need for contextual application and tailored strategies, which become barriers that challenge traditional madrasahs and need further understanding for effective utilization. Moreover, Munjin (2017) emphasizes trust as a key component, and maintenance requires ongoing efforts, as its decline can lead to apathy and reduced participation. This theory provides insight into how social networks, community support, and relationships impact the ability of traditional madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur to access resources and navigate the PTO application process. It also explains the limited opportunities available to students in unrecognized madrasahs due to the lack of formal credentials and connections.

According to Bourdieu (1986) and Passeron, cultural capital is a key mechanism through which the educational system reinforces social inequalities, as students from privileged backgrounds possess cultural assets that align with institutional expectations (Robbins, 2005). Although the government policies aim to integrate madrasah into mainstream education, they unintentionally marginalized traditional madrasah students because they did not recognize their cultural capital. In the case of madrasah government recognition, the three key elements mentioned above impacted the realization of the government program. Regulative pressures, including compliance with government standards, conflict with the normative and cognitive factors in preserving Islamic values and community trust, and policies that conflict with madrasah cultural values create tensions and inefficiency that may serve as challenges and barriers to obtaining government recognition.

Meanwhile, Hegemony Theory offers valuable lenses for understanding the marginalization of traditional madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur; however, it also presents theoretical limitations that must be acknowledged. Hegemony Theory rooted in Gramsci's (1971) work, helps explain how dominant educational ideologies, such as those promoted by the state through the Madrasah Education Program, impose cultural norms that delegitimize traditional Islamic schooling. While this theory effectively reveals how power operates through education policy and discourse, it is sometimes critiqued for portraying marginalized groups as passive victims of ideological domination. This can obscure the active role that madrasah actors play in negotiating, resisting, or selectively engaging with state systems. Furthermore, it may overlook madrasah communities' internal diversity and agency. Therefore, while both theories contribute critical insights into the sociopolitical positioning of traditional madrasahs, they must be applied alongside more grounded, institutional perspectives that capture both the structural barriers and localized forms of agency in the Bangsamoro region.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides information about the methodological procedures the researcher considered to offer an exemplary research structure. The research approach and design that the researcher believes to be appropriate for the research will be discussed. Data collection techniques, sampling of research subjects and instruments, triangulation for research validity and reliability, and data analysis techniques are set to have accurate information and findings. Moreover, this also provides information about the researcher's positionality, ethical issues that have been considered about the research, and the time allocation and setting of the study. Each subsection has a coordinating explanation of why the researcher decided to consider specific aspects of the study and why it was made through consulting research methodological references to provide reasoning in making sense of all the research's technical processes.

3.1 Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research focuses on understanding participants' meanings, perspectives, and experiences in their natural context (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It uses an emergent design where methods may evolve during the research process. Furthermore, it uses inductive approaches to explore social phenomena, focusing on understanding meanings, subjective experiences, and context (Leavy, 2017). This design is appropriate for exploring the madrasah's barriers and challenges to government recognition and the impact of non-recognition on students. The emergent design allows flexibility in understanding complex issues. Flexibility in qualitative research is iterative, allowing researchers to adapt as new insights emerge during data collection and analysis, accommodating unexpected findings or challenges during fieldwork.

3.2 Multiple Case Study Design

A case study approach explores specific contexts or issues in depth (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It allows the researcher to study multiple bounded systems (cases) and compare findings to identify themes and patterns. This method allows an in-depth examination of phenomena within their real-life context (Yin, 2018), as it is suitable for addressing descriptive and explanatory research questions. The flexibility of using multiple data collection methods for this study allows the researcher to explore social units comprehensively (Priya, 2020).

Combining descriptive and explanatory types to explore and explain is used to document phenomena in detail and investigate causal relationships. This approach will provide comparative insights and a wide understanding of the selected madrasah in the study. The design supports exploring the unique dynamics of the chosen community-based and politically supported madrasah.

To give a background for the research setting, Buluan municipality is a 4th class municipality and capital of the province of Maguindanao del Sur, established in 1973. The geographical location provides a rich socio-cultural, political, agricultural, and religious diversity, homing Muslim majority with few Christianity. Its strategic location cultivates a diverse income, agricultural, business, fisheries, coastal lake, and broad land farming. The two selected traditional madrasahs as research subjects provide more phenomenological information and have been a subject for research by some researchers, including McKenna and Abdula (2008). The first case study, madrasah, is a Tahfidz Quran with a unique curriculum concentrating on memorizing the Quran. The funding for this madrasah comes from community support and international organization funding, established in 1987. The second case study subject is a traditional post-war madrasah, the oldest madrasah in the province, established in 1976. The madrasah support system comes from wealthy, known families, political families, and *datu*, supporting infrastructures and teachers' salaries (McKenna & Abdulla, 2008). The researcher chose these two madrasahs for their unique historical foundations to provide more diverse and valid information about their resilience to Islamic education institutions.

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

According to Creswell (2012), the qualitative data collection process involves selecting participants, obtaining permissions, gathering multiple types of data (e.g., interviews, focus groups, and documents), organizing data collection protocols, and anticipating ethical and field issues. Creswell and Gutterman (2019) discuss qualitative data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and document analysis. They highlight the importance of flexibility and openness in qualitative research. Gay et al. (2012) and Yin (2018) emphasize triangulation by using multiple data collection methods (e.g., interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and document analysis) to establish converging lines of evidence, strengthen findings, and generate rich, detailed data (Leavy, 2017). This will enhance the reliability and validity of the research (Priya, 2020). Each method is suitable for understanding the unique challenges faced by madrasah. Therefore, this study will employ semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and document

analysis to gather relevant information and a broader understanding of madrasah stands. Since each method highlights different facets of empirical reality, using multiple data collection and analysis techniques enriches the research process, and combining these methods is common in fieldwork (Patton, 1999).

3.3.1 Interview

Creswell (2012) defined an interview as a qualitative data collection method where researchers ask participants close or open-ended questions and record responses. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, depending on the level of flexibility in the questions asked. It is known for being a time-consuming and costly approach, especially conducting individual interviews. Questions are designed beyond a yes or no or a true or false response (Leavy, 2017). Collecting data through one-on-one interviews is a popular approach for recording the subjects' answers, and it is ideal for participants who can respond actively and meaningfully, articulately, and comfortably share meaningful ideas. I will interview:

1. Government officials (director of Directorate General for Madaris Education) to gather information on the government's vision for Madrasah education, policies and recognition, traditional madrasah barriers and challenges, the impact of non-recognition of madrasah, and recommendations to madrasah administrators.
2. Madrasah administrators to investigate their madrasah's vision, perceptions about participating in MEP, challenges in obtaining government recognition, and possible impacts on their students.
3. Madrasah teachers to explore their teaching experience, perceptions about curriculum and government recognition, teaching challenges, and student outcomes.
4. Madrasah students to discover their learning experience, aspirations, opportunities, and challenges in madrasah education.
5. Madrasah Alumni to learn about their experience, reflecting on their madrasah education, pursuing higher education and employment, and the impact of none/government recognition.

This will provide detailed, firsthand accounts of participants' experiences and perspectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.3.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group discussion explores shared views and group dynamics (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It also explores collective experiences and viewpoints from madrasah

staff, alumni, and students. FGD allows collective discussion to share a common understanding and differing perspectives, which is vital to managing group dynamics and ensuring all voices are heard (Gay et al., 2012; Leavy, 2017). FGD will involve teachers in madrasahs to have collective ideas about integrating madrasah education into the secular system and government recognition. Moreover, students explore their collective ideas on their future academic and employment careers jobs and their reasoning for continuous support and study in the madrasah despite non-government recognition and their educational learning. Including alumni and students is aimed at gathering their learning experience and thoughts about their career and higher education status and how the non-government recognition influences their career choice.

3.3.3 Observation

Observation is a method of collecting data where researchers systematically watch and record the behavior, actions, or events in a particular setting (Creswell, 2012). Observation gives an eye-picture of madrasah facilities, infrastructures, and educational aids to broaden understanding of challenges and barriers to complying with government standards. Observation and field notes are crucial for capturing descriptive and reflective information during observations. They will include detailed, chronological records and reflective comments to enhance analysis (Gay et al., 2012). I will observe the madrasah's physical environment (including facilities, teaching materials, and resources), teaching practices implemented by teachers, student engagement, cultural and community context, and administrative operations. This will provide a clear picture of the madrasah situation regarding delivering and providing educational experiences to students.

3.3.4 Document Analysis

Document analysis will provide researchers with contextual and supplementary information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) by examining government policies, madrasah records, and curricula. This can guide and understand the systematic challenges that madrasahs face. Documents include public and private records that qualitative researchers gather about a study's site or participants. These may include newspapers, meeting minutes, personal journals, policy guidelines, memoranda, or institutional guidelines that could provide valuable information that aids researchers in comprehending key phenomena in qualitative research (Creswell, 2012). The documents to be analyzed will include madrasah curriculum documents and records, PTO application guidelines and policies, records of communication between madrasah and government bodies, and teacher training materials. This is to ensure and observe madrasah curriculum alignment

to government standards, provide evidence of PTO requirements, observe discrepancies in government and madrasah practices, and reference for policies and curriculum.

3.4 Sampling, Research Participants and Research Instrument

Creswell and Gutterman (2019) emphasize the importance of purposeful sampling in qualitative research to select participants who can provide detailed insights relevant to the research question. In qualitative research, purposeful sampling is used to select participants who are most knowledgeable about or involved in the issue being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to enhance the depth and relevance of the data collected (Creswell, 2012). Moreover, purposeful sampling ensures the selection of cases that best address research questions (Priya, 2020).

Research participants such as madrasah leaders, teachers, alumni, students, and government officials are strategically chosen to address the barriers and challenges the madrasah faces and the impact on the student's future education and career employment—their inclusion as subjects on their direct involvement to madrasah with or understanding of madrasah operations and policies. Meanwhile, the purpose of choosing two types of madrasah, community-based and politically supported, is to represent a contrasting context.

As for the research instrument, since the study approach uses qualitative methods, the researcher acts as the primary instrument to collect relevant information through guided interviews, FGD, and observation (Gay et al., 2012). In practice, the author, as a researcher, used research instruments such as an interview guide, an observation guide, and a guide for FGD. The interview guide was carefully designed to provide the necessary information to address the research questions and aims. The structured interviews were consulted and approved by the thesis supervisors. The guidelines for focus group discussion are appropriately structured to capture relevant responses and to ensure that respondents will easily communicate and express ideas. The observation guide is also outlined to provide the proper sequence and capture the reality of traditional madrasah situations.

3.5 Triangulation

Creswell emphasizes the importance of rigor in qualitative research through triangulation, member checking, and providing detailed descriptions to enhance credibility and validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For Mertler (2019), triangulation involves relating different data sources to verify the trustworthiness or consistency of the received information or data while addressing inherent biases. Using multiple data

resources allows researchers to understand better the field's reality, which will provide confident research results. Implying triangulation is vital because, for Patton (1999), the logic of triangulation is that no single method adequately resolves rival explanations' issues. According to Priya (2020), validity is achieved through triangulation, thick description, and peer review, while reliability is enhanced by maintaining a clear case study protocol and documentation of methods. Triangulating data by using various methods of data collection (e.g., interviews, documents, and observations) or by asking various sources strengthens validity by cross-verifying information (Leavy, 2017). Strategies such as prolonged engagement, triangulation, member checking, and audit trails are recommended to establish trustworthiness and ensure that findings are credible and transferable (Gay et al., 2012). The study incorporates various data collection strategies and involves different types of respondents to capture significant information. These various types are collectively used and carefully discussed to support statements and information. The triangulation of data and informants' quotes strengthens the arguments and claims of respondents. This enhances the result of the study.

3.6 Data Analysis

Creswell and Gutterman (2019) explain that coding involves organizing data into meaningful segments and identifying patterns. The thematic analysis allows the researchers to derive insights by grouping codes into themes. The process is iterative and often involves comparing themes to broader conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Techniques like pattern matching, explanation building, and cross-case synthesis for Yin (2018) are essential for analyzing data in this case study research. This analysis will help track and identify patterns such as administrative barriers to government recognition, community support and resistance to government programs, and their educational impact.

3.7 Researcher's Positionality

Positionality encompasses a researcher's worldview and place within the research, shaped by ontological and epistemological assumptions and personal attributes, including race, social class, and religious beliefs (Holmes, 2014). Creswell and Gutterman (2019) highlight the importance of reflexivity, when researchers reflect on their biases, backgrounds, and roles in shaping the research process. Reflexivity is critical in qualitative research as it can influence data collection and interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The author is a product of traditional madrasah education and the secular educational system in the Philippines; he occupies an insider position in this study. The author's educational experience in an unrecognized madrasah and navigating the

challenges of transitioning into the formal academic system strengthens insider positionality. As an insider, the researchers' background in madrasah education and the dual education system may shape the interaction with the participants and interpretation of data, as the primary instrument for data collection in qualitative research is the researcher. This dual exposure shaped the author's understanding of the complexities of madrasah administrators, teachers, students, and alumni seeking recognition and legitimacy. This involves being immersed in the setting and maintaining reflexivity to minimize bias (Gay et al., 2012). Leveraging it allows to build rapport and gain deeper access to participants' lived realities. The shared language, religious background, and cultural understanding fostered trust during interviews and focus group discussions. However, this insider status also required him to remain critically reflexive—to balance empathy with analytical distance. The interpretations of the data were influenced by his history of negotiating between two educational paradigms, which sensitized him to the tensions between tradition and state policy. They deepened the authors' recognition of postcolonial exclusion embedded in institutional practices. The insider position of the researcher is leveraged to gain trust and access to participants; meanwhile, the researcher wants to inform that his experience will not influence the interpretation of data. According to Yin (2018), a good case study investigator combines data collection iteratively, adapting the research approach based on emerging findings, and the researcher must remain impartial and diligent in uncovering insights that balance insider knowledge with objectivity. The author sought to conduct this research ethically and rigorously, recognizing that the background enriched the analysis and demanded constant reflection to avoid bias.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Ethical research practices involve obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and respecting participants' rights. Creswell & Gutterman (2019) and Priya (2020) emphasize ethical sensitivity, especially when dealing with vulnerable populations or sensitive topics, and avoiding harm. Moreover, Gat et al. (2012) added that building trust with the participants is essential for gathering honest and meaningful data. Therefore, the researcher should consider that ethics are integral throughout the research process, not just during data collection (Leavy, 2017).

The research ensures that the above-mentioned was compiled, such as obtaining informed consent from participants, protecting their identities during interviews and document analysis, and respecting the cultural and religious context of the madrasah. Pseudonyms were used to secure the identity of respondents when presenting them in

results and analysis. Key informant interviews were conducted for government officials and Madrasah administrators (K1, K2, K3), and teachers for individual interviews were assigned as T1 and T2, while FGDs were T3, T4, and T5. Students involved in individual interviews were identified as S1 and S2, while S3, S4, and S5 were involved in FGD. Similarly, individual interviewed Alumni were hidden as A1 and A2, while FGD participants were identified as A3, A4, and A5. The decision to hide the identity and real name of Madrasah institutions as a site of study is to secure future changes of the system and administration. Therefore, instead of identifying the madrasah's name, it is used as Madrasah A and Madrasah B. However, the madrasah's name can be found in a book chapter in McKenna and Abdula's (2008) study.

3.9 Time and Place of the Study

Case studies emphasize understanding phenomena within their socio-cultural and political contexts (Priya, 2020), while context is crucial in qualitative, as phenomena are best understood within their specific social, cultural, and political settings (Creswell, 2012; Leavy, 2017). The setting of the two traditional madrasahs as research subjects is suitable to provide phenomenological events with their socio-cultural and political demographic location. The institutions are located in Buluan, Maguindanao del Sur, and are known for their long historical establishment. Buluan is the central capital of Maguindanao del Sur province, the newly established province in September 2022 from its original one, Maguindanao province. Gathering support evidence for the study, which includes chapters 1 to 3 of the research, started in November 2024. The time allocation for the study occurs when gathering data intakes upon the approval of the thesis proposal. For efficient time to gather information, two weeks were accommodated for the interview session, another two weeks for FGD, and two more weeks for document analysis and field observation of the madrasah environment. The following steps were the transcription of the data, including translation, re-reading, and consultation with the respondents to review the results of the interview and discussion. After all data was provided, analysis and interpretation occurred. These were accommodated for at least three weeks alongside proper monitoring and consultation with the academic supervisor. Setting all prepared, presentation of the research result to the panels is expected to be delivered effectively.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter analyzes and discusses data gathered through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document analysis in two traditional madrasahs in Buluan, Maguindanao del Sur. This analysis aims to explore the factors influencing madrasah for non-participation in government programs and barriers to acquiring government recognition, understand the institutional dynamics, and assess how the lack of recognition affects students' access to higher education and employment. Data collection includes one-on-one interviews with the regional director of DGME, madrasah administrators, teachers, students, and alumni. To further see another angle, separate FGDs were conducted for teachers, students, and alumni. Moreover, documents are humbly requested to support analysis, and permission to observe the madrasah environment, facilities, and student-teacher interaction was designated to give more views of research findings. The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis, guided by four interrelated theoretical frameworks: Cultural Capital, Social Capital, Institutional, and Hegemony Theory. These lenses help explain how institutional norms, cultural knowledge, and social relationships shape the functioning and legitimacy of traditional madrasahs in a transitioning political context. The two cases—Madrasah A, a community-based Qur'anic school, and Madrasah B, a politically supported institution—offer contrasting yet complementary perspectives on how different madrasahs navigate recognition and legitimacy within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Description of Research Sites

To give a background for the research setting, Buluan municipality is a 4th class municipality and capital of the province of Maguindanao del Sur, established in 1973. The geographical location provides a rich socio-cultural, political, agricultural, and religious diversity, homing Muslim majority with few Christianity. Its strategic location cultivates a diverse income, agricultural, business, fisheries, coastal lake and broad land farming. The two selected traditional madrasah as research subjects provide more phenomenological information and have been a subject for research by some researchers, including Mckenna and Abdula (2008). The first case study, madrasah, is a Tahfidz Quran with a unique curriculum concentrating on memorizing the Quran. The funding for

this madrasah comes from community support and international organization funding, established in 1987. The second case study subject is a traditional post-war madrasah, the oldest madrasah in the province, established in 1976. The madrasah support system comes from wealthy, known families, political families, and *datu*, supporting infrastructures and teachers' salaries (McKenna & Abdulla, 2008). The researcher purposely chose these two madrasahs for their unique historical foundations to provide more diverse and valid information about their resilience to Islamic education institutions.

4.1.2 Madrasah A: Community-Based Qur'anic School

Madrasah A began as a small program focused solely on Quran recitation for elderly community members. Initially founded by the current administrator's grandfather, it is operated under a mosque. Located in the Poblacion of Buluan, this madrasah primarily teaches Qur'an reading for elders, tajwīd, and basic Islamic jurisprudence. The madrasah gradually evolved to include memorization (*Tahfidz*) and understanding of the Quran. As student interest grew, the program expanded into a boarding school, accepting resident and non-resident learners. It even offered an orphanage program at one point, which was later closed due to the withdrawal of donor support during the COVID-19 pandemic. The madrasah currently runs two main programs: Quran memorization and *Dirasah' Ammah* (general Islamic studies). It does not offer the Department of Education (DepEd's) Madrasah Education Program (MEP) due to its commitment to providing Islamic knowledge. The administrator emphasized their independence and commitment to "pure Islamic instruction," stating: "We are here to teach the Qur'an for the sake of Allah, not for worldly requirements."

However, upon observing the output of the government program, the madrasah applied for a permit to operate (PTO) last school year, 2024. Due to the number of applicants and the application process, results might be released for the coming school year, 2025, starting in May. Compared to the previous government program on recognizing traditional madrasahs, the current program has attracted more traditional madrasahs to seek recognition. According to IAG (2019), there are at least 1,534 traditional madrasahs in the region, and Maguindanao province hosted the most significant number, with at least 643 or 34.8% of the total population in the area (IAG, 2023b). Among these numbers, 90% show interest in government recognition (IAG, 2019). This change and progress were strongly emphasized by Key Informant 1 being grateful as regional administrator for the impact of the government program on traditional madrasah. He stated, "Many traditional madrasahs are now willing to cooperate with us."

This indicates the positive effects of a government program to attract traditional madrasahs to acquire recognition.

The administrator, now the fifth to lead the madrasah, emphasized the institution's mission to nurture Bangsamoro children in Quranic memorization and Islamic values. The administrator aspires to "strengthen the desire of Bangsamoro children about Islamic knowledge, especially memorizing the Quran," aiming to produce students who "possess Islamic knowledge" and are grounded in Islamic values. He highlighted that while the community continues to play a vital role in funding, significant past support came from donors in Saudi Arabia. The madrasah is in a strategic area underserved by other Islamic schools, making it vital for surrounding communities. The administrator noted, "It is far from any other schools or madrasah... about 3–4 kilometers away from us," making it accessible for nearby children. Its operations rely on modest tuition, examination fees, and occasional local government and organizational support. Despite financial challenges, the madrasah thrived due to strong community support and past foreign sponsorships. However, sustaining teacher compensation and maintaining facilities remain ongoing challenges. The teachers are volunteers, and the students are primarily from low-income families. Alumni often go on to study in Islamic institutions in Cotabato or abroad but face difficulties when attempting to enroll in local colleges due to the lack of recognized credentials.

Looking to the future, the administrator envisions greater development for the madrasah, particularly through gaining a Permit to Operate (PTO) from the Bangsamoro government. PTO recognition would bring legal access to government support, improve facilities, and attract more students. "If we are to be approved, then we are expecting to attract more students and parents," he explained, emphasizing the need for legal recognition to receive government support. He also expressed concern over declining student interest in traditional madrasah education, particularly due to the rise of ISAL programs in public schools. He fears changing attitudes toward Islamic education: "We wanted to restore the love of the Bangsamoro to madrasah education and Quran memorization," noting the decline in student interest. The administrator stressed the importance of collaborative leadership, community involvement, and sustained government support to revive and protect the role of madrasahs in Bangsamoro society. He views compliance with government requirements like PTO as crucial to ensuring the region's relevance and survival of madrasah education.

4.1.3 Madrasah B: Politically Supported Madrasah

Madrasah B, located in the Poblacion of Buluan, was established by traditional leaders and supported by a local political leader. It benefits from logistical and financial support. This madrasah is considered the oldest in town. It has a formal school building and receives intermittent support from the Local Government Unit (LGU) aid (McKenna & Abdulla, 2008), but all it was before. The madrasah is an institution with a core mission to instill authentic Islamic faith in its students and the broader Muslim community. As the respondent states, "The straightforward vision is to instill the right and correct Islamic ideology (*Aqidah Islamiyah*) in the heart of our learners and... to the Muslim communities and surroundings."

Founded during martial law, the madrasah served as a protective space for youth, shielding them from military suspicion. The respondent shares, "It was initially started in a mosque, operated and served as a shield for the youth not to be taken by the military during martial law." Initially operating in a mosque, over time, the school transitioned to a donated building donated by a local leader and expanded to serve more students, reaching "600+ in numbers... because few madrasahs existed at that time."

The madrasah's central vision revolves around instilling correct Islamic belief (*Aqidah Islamiyah*) in students and the broader community. The administrator metaphorically likens the madrasah to a shining beacon, saying "We see this madrasah like gold, illuminating lights." The mission emphasizes the importance of strong faith as a foundation for moral behavior, community development, and even the physical safeguarding of the madrasah itself. In terms of its future direction, the administrator dreams of transforming the madrasah into a well-equipped institution, even envisioning a boarding school. Despite facing significant financial and leadership challenges, it is still driven by a vision for revival and development: "If the administrator will handle this well and work hard, we can still revive it."

However, the journey is hampered by financial constraints, administrative gaps, and past misconceptions about government involvement. The lack of a Permit to Operate (PTO) has made accessing legal government support or donations difficult. The madrasah operates independently without consistent funding, with administrators even personally covering costs: "We don't receive a salary; instead, we are using our own money... not from the madrasah office or any other person's donation."

Despite this, the current leadership is determined to apply for PTO, acknowledging its potential to bring infrastructure, supplies, and financial aid that could revitalize the institution. It has aspirations to be government-recognized, with the current

leadership actively working toward obtaining a Permit to Operate (PTO) "I am willing to take a risk... I am pursuing to build the boarding school, as it may attract donors across or overseas."

Efforts are being made, including the creation of a campus map and proposals, all personally funded by the administrator. Ultimately, the respondent views the madrasah as a foundation for moral and social development, asserting, "If the people around it have a good foundation of faith... they will join and participate in madrasah activities."

4.1.4 Demographic Profile of Participants

This section presents the demographic and professional profiles of the participants involved in the study, which aimed to explore the challenges and barriers faced by traditional madrasahs in obtaining government recognition and how this affects their students' access to higher education and employment opportunities. The respondents were selected through purposive sampling to provide rich, context-specific insights. They include a regional director for madrasahs education, madrasah administrators, experienced teachers, current students, and alumni from two traditional madrasahs—referred to as Madrasah A and Madrasah B. Data were gathered through individual interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), ensuring a diverse range of perspectives across institutional roles and levels of experience. The following tables summarize the respondents' affiliations, roles, years of service or educational level, and other relevant characteristics. Codes such as K1= key informant (administrator), T1=madrasah teacher, S1=madrasah student, A1=madrasah alumni were used to protect the privacy of respondents.

Table 4.1
Key Informants (Administrators)

Code	Role	Affiliation	Years in Service	Age	Notes
K1	Regional Director	BARMM	5	55	Government official
K2	Madrasah Administrator	Madrasah A	4	48	
K3	Madrasah Administrator	Madrasah B	7	56	Also lecturer in College

Table 4.2
Individual Interviews – Teachers

Code	Role	Affiliation	Years in Service	Age	Notes
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Code	Role	Affiliation	Years in Service	Age	Notes
T1	Teacher	Madrasah A	12	32	Also ISAL Teacher in Public school
T2	Teacher	Madrasah B	29	50	

Table 4.3

Individual Interviews – Students

Code	Role	Affiliation	Grade Level	Age	Notes
S1	Student	Madrasah A	Grade 12	21	Also Student in Secular school
S2	Student	Madrasah B	Grade 10	19	

Table 4.4

Individual Interviews – Alumni

Code	Role	Affiliation	Current Status	Age	Notes
A1	Alumni	Madrasah A	Public school teacher	32	Finished only SHS in Madrasah
A2	Alumni	Madrasah B	Undergraduate student	20	With certificate from secular school

Table 4.5

FGD – Teachers

Code	Role	Affiliation	Years in Service	Age	Notes
T3	Teacher	Madrasah B	29	52	Also ISAL Teacher in Public school
T4	Teacher	Madrasah A	22	50	
T5	Teacher	Madrasah B	16	45	Also ISAL Teacher in Public school

Table 4.6

FGD – Students

Code	Role	Affiliation	Grade Level	Age	Notes
S3	Student	Madrasah A	Grade 8	20	Also student in secular school
S4	Student	Madrasah B	Grade 9	17	
S5	Student	Madrasah A	Grade 8	17	

Table 4.7

FGD – Alumni

Code	Role	Affiliation	Current Status	Age	Notes
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Code	Role	Affiliation	Current Status	Age	Notes
A3	Alumni	Madrasah A	Undergraduate in secular school	20	Graduated Senior High school
A4	Alumni	Madrasah A	Undergraduate in Islamic school	19	Graduated Senior High school
A5	Alumni	Madrasah B	Undergraduate in secular school	19	

4.1.5 Cross-case Analysis (Madrasah A vs. Madrasah B)

Table 4.8

Cross-case Analysis (Madrasah A vs. Madrasah B)

Aspect	Madrasah A	Madrasah B
Institutional Background	Established as a full Tahfidz center; focuses on intensive Qur'anic memorization; partially supported by international donors	Oldest madrasah in the area; originally supported by MNLF; now neutral and community-led; initially supported political family
Mission and Philosophy	Strong emphasis on memorization of the Qur'an (<i>Hifz</i>) and spiritual formation; views teaching as <i>Ibadah</i> (worship)	Committed to preserving Islamic identity and community values through basic Arabic and Islamic education
Curriculum Focus	Qur'an memorization, <i>tajweed</i> , and limited Arabic grammar; minimal integration of secular content	<i>Fiqh</i> , Arabic, <i>Tawhid</i> , <i>Akhlaq</i> ; informal structure; no written curriculum or alignment with DepEd standards
Recognition Status	Actively applying for PTO; received training and is partially prepared; aligned some efforts with DGME expectations	Not yet recognized; began pursuing PTO only recently; lacks full documentation and infrastructure
Barriers to PTO	Lack of full-time paid staff- Unclear PTO requirements- Fear of compromising Islamic curriculum- Document preparation challenges	Leadership disunity (prior admin vs. current admin)- MNLF origin and mistrust of MILF-led institutions- Infrastructure and facility decay- No formal admin staff

Teachers' Profile	Young, volunteer teachers who also teach ISAL in public schools; teach for honor and responsibility to Islam	Long-serving volunteers; some trained in Pagadian; mostly unpaid or minimally supported by <i>sadaqah</i> ; rely on personal resources
Student Outcomes	Some alumni accepted into Islamic universities abroad; strong Qur'anic foundation; few pursue secular degrees	Graduates pursue Islamic studies in local madaris and a few abroad (Madinah, Jordan); others are dual-enrolled in public schools
Impact of Non-Recognition	Similar issues; graduates rely on international options or religious employment; experience stress from dual-system pressure	Students face difficulty enrolling in public higher education; certificates not accepted; employment limited to religious sectors
Community Engagement	Strong parental and community support; positive feedback due to discipline and <i>hifz</i> success	High community respect due to history; receives minimal funding support; some conflict with residents over land use
Perception of Government Recognition	Supportive of DGME reforms; cautiously optimistic that recognition will improve student access and madrasah structure	Open to applying if Islamic curriculum is respected; PTO seen as potential help for facilities and credibility
Reform Orientation	Sees potential in merging Islamic curriculum with core subjects; supportive of contextualized reforms that do not dilute <i>hifz</i> focus	Willing to adopt balanced curriculum (Islamic + secular) if 50/50; calls for inclusion of math, English, science

On the other hand, both madrasahs struggle with a lack of qualified staff, consistent funding, and insufficient infrastructure. Although both are struggling to provide madrasah facilities, madrasah B is significantly affected based on field visit observation. Students and alumni from both institutions experience difficulty in entering mainstream higher education or finding jobs due to non-recognition. Most accommodated students for stay-in programs concentrate on Quran memorization, while students residing outside struggle to balance their education in public and madrasah. Both communities value the madrasah as a center of moral and spiritual formation. Students recognize the contribution of the madrasah to building their moral and spiritual values. Moreover, both

madrasahs are increasingly open to reform, especially if it preserves Islamic identity, as deliberated by administrators.

Meanwhile, both madrasahs have unique perceptions and views regarding discussing interest in government programs. Madrasah A is more active in pursuing PTO and interacting with DGME as it is more active and prepared for participation in 2022. Madrasah B's challenges are compounded by its historical ties to the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and weak prior leadership. The current administration is eager to participate in the government program, realizing that the madrasah was left behind for development. Madrasah A has set clearer curriculum goals (focused on Tahfidz), while Madrasah B struggles with fragmented content delivery. FGD and interviews with madrasah B administrators and teachers reveal the current state of the implemented curriculum, which depends more on teachers' resources.

Furthermore, the requested documents, upon analysis, have supported that Madrasah A has provided a better structure than Madrasah B. Regarding location, Madrasah A is much more strategic and placed in high areas. At the same time, Madrasah B struggles with floods due to its low area location, nearby public schools, and integrated madrasah.

4.2 Discussion

This section presents the emergent themes based on interviews, focus group discussions, document reviews, observation, and other data analysis. Thematic analysis was used to code and categorize the data into recurring patterns related to the research questions. The findings are discussed in terms of the theoretical frameworks: Cultural Capital Theory (Bourdieu), Social Capital Theory (Putnam), Institutional Theory, and Hegemony Theory.

4.2.1 Traditional madrasahs motivation for non-recognition and non-participation in MEP

This section explores the motivations behind the non-participation of traditional madrasahs in the government's MEP. Drawing from in-depth interviews with administrators, teachers, students, alumni, and focus group discussion involvement to see different angles provides several interrelated themes that emerged, shaped by historical experience, religious commitment, institutional limitations, and shifting community perceptions—discussion and analysis supported by document analysis and observation of the madrasah environment and facilities. Traditional madrasah motivations for non-recognition are deeply rooted in historical district and resistance, as well as concerns

about preserving religious identity, institutional and structural weaknesses, dual system burden, and declining credibility and enrollment concerns. These themes merely had a significant influence on pushing traditional madrasahs to seek government recognition, which will be further elaborated.

a. Historical Distrust and Resistance

The result of long historical marginalization, particularly during Martial Law and post-colonial secularization efforts, is the most dominant theme across stakeholders. A deep-rooted distrust of government suppression led to persistent skepticism of government motives. Respondents articulated a lingering fear that government involvement in Islamic education would eventually dilute religious teachings or compromise autonomy. Strong statements from key informants strengthen the claims that central government intervention in several programs leads to stakeholders' doubting. According to them;

We are afraid that they will change the way we teach Islam. They say integration, but will they allow us to focus on memorizing the Qur'an? (Author's interview with K3, Buluan, March 20).

Before... in the back of our mind... any program of the government is part of their plan to colonize the Bangsamoro... even distort the teaching of Islam. (Author's interview with K1, Cotabato city, March 03)

Historically, Milligan (2004) strongly claimed that Bangsamoro's resistance to government-led programs is due to forced integration and secularization. As mentioned in Policy guidelines for granting permits to operate 2023, page 18, there is a need to comply with the inclusion of the curriculum introduced at the national level. This page shows the distribution of time allotment offered to implement the said additional learning areas, especially for basic education. The portion provided time allotment for learning areas for Islamic and religious subjects is much less than for Western or secular subjects. The claim of fearing government intervention is evident in a comparative study by Latief et al. (2021), where SMA Darul Anuar lost its freedom to decide on the curriculum implemented and changed leadership to be governed by the central level.

These accounts align with the Institutional Theory (Marwazi & Abid, 2021), which explains how organizations resist change when external structures are seen as conflicting with internal values. Traditional madrasahs function under a distinct normative system shaped by Islamic principles, making state-aligned curricula appear intrusive. Siregar (2024) explains that a madrasah's adherence to established norms and traditions that preserve a unique identity leads to resistance to change.

Moreover, the perception that the government once tried to censor critical parts of Islamic history, such as the concept of jihad, deepened this resistance: “They tried to manipulate and control what has to be taught in madrasah... they do not include prophets' history of jihad and other Islamic teachings”. (Author’s interview with K3, March 05)

This expression and statement of the madrasah B administrator reflects the findings of Putra (2023) and Magdalena (2017), where traditional madrasah administrators and the community commonly resisted attempted integration due to the emphasis on control and manipulation of the madrasah rather than real integration. The teacher's indication shows that madrasah education does not need to be intervened in, as they believe they have a functioning system. This expression and statement of the madrasah B administrator reflects the findings of Putra (2023) and Magdalena (2017), where traditional madrasah administrators and the community commonly resisted attempted integration due to the emphasis on control and manipulation of the madrasah rather than real integration. The teacher's indication shows that madrasah education does not need to be intervened in, as they believe they have a functioning system.

Through Cultural Capital Theory, traditional madrasahs' historical distrust and resistance toward government programs can be seen as a response to the devaluation of their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). The main capital for traditional madrasah refers to the non-economic assets that enable social mobility, such as language, knowledge, skills, and religious values. For generations, madrasahs have cultivated a distinct form of Islamic cultural capital rooted in religious texts, Arabic literacy, and traditional pedagogy. However, state education policies often privilege Western-oriented, secular knowledge and qualifications, thereby marginalizing the cultural capital of madrasah education (IAG, 2023b; Iqbal et al., 2023; Samid, 2022). This systemic disregard fosters distrust and resistance among madrasah stakeholders, who perceive government interventions not as support but as attempts to assimilate or erase their educational identity (Gamon & Tagoranao, 2022). The reluctance to participate in the government's Madrasah Education Program or seek a Permit to Operate thus reflects a defense of their valued cultural capital against what they view as cultural domination or epistemic injustice. What madrasah needs is recognition and acknowledgment of their capacity, as said. What madrasah needs is recognition and acknowledgment of their capacity, as said, “why should we follow a system that does not recognize our way of teaching and system?”. (Author’s interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)

For many madrasah leaders, non-participation is not passive neglect but an active decision to preserve religious independence and reject systems that have historically

marginalized them. The enduring resistance of traditional madrasahs stems from long-standing, socially constructed narratives of mistrust toward state institutions. This explains the historical distrust and resistance toward government programs, which are viewed as instruments of an external system misaligned with local Islamic values. Hegemony Theory explains how this resistance challenges the state's attempt to extend its ideological control through educational reforms (Gramsci, 1971). Traditional madrasahs reject the dominant narrative that equates state recognition with educational legitimacy.

b. Preservation of Religious Identity

Preserving Islamic identity and upholding the sacred mission of religious education remain core motivations for non-participation; in a country like the Philippines, which is dominated by a secular state, the traditional madrasah is seen as a place to preserve and protect the Muslim community's cultural and religious identity (Mohammad et al., 2018). Many respondents emphasized nurturing *akhlaq* (character) and *aqidah* (faith) over meeting state standards. Madrasah A and B administrators have emphasized cultivating Bangsamoro youth with a strong Islamic foundation. On the other hand, teachers emphasize the strong requirement imposed by their madrasah to provide this education. As quoted:

Students are required to memorize the Qur'an completely before they can graduate. (Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22)

The purpose of the madrasah is to strengthen the students' *aqidah* and *akhlaq*. (Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27).

Said et al. (2018) and Rohman et al. (2023) strongly emphasize the refusals of any intervention by secular subjects to madrasahs. It may overlap with the importance and role of providing religious identity and diluting religious teachings. Preserving its identity and spiritual role, Pondok Lubuk Tapah refrains from complying with government programs (Latief et al., 2021). Madrasah promotes the strong preservation of religious identity, which is seen as the purpose of its existence (Abdulkarim & Suud, 2020; Magdalena, 2017;). Moreover, Steiner (2011) also emphasizes the strong preservation of traditional Islamic schools in Singapore to religious identity in the Muslim community.

This reflects Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory, according to Throsby (1999), in which religious knowledge and practices function as symbolic capital within the community, valued, transmitted, and respected, even though they are unrecognized by dominant educational systems. Symbolic capital is a support system for traditional madrasahs to operate without government recognition to uphold Islamic identity and

social cohesion (Throsby, 1999). Both institutions aim to preserve pure Islamic knowledge and teachings. This is evident in how teachers from both madrasah emphasize strong preservation of what was the original purpose of the madrasah establishment, as quoted:

We want to continue what our forefathers established in this madrasah.
(Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)

We want to keep our madrasah the way it is — pure and according to Islam.
(Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22).

This statement and position of the madrasah indicate that it is a productive institution that delivers strong Islamic religious knowledge that helps maintain its identity. Solaiman (2021) claims that madrasah administrators and teachers are dedicated to providing religious knowledge and beliefs, prioritizing it over financial concerns, supporting the evidence of traditional madrasah's reality. The strong emphasis of Sali (2023b) on the crucial role of community-driven madrasah in preserving the Islamic traditions of the Muslim community supports the claim of respondents on a strong preference for providing Islamic knowledge. Teachers and students also spoke with pride about their school's reputation, reflecting internal cultural legitimacy:

...every *musabaqah* (academic competition), our students are always in the top rank. (Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22)

When they heard I am studying in Khairie, they say the students there are smart. (Author's interview with S2, Buluan, March 21)

The good thing in this Madrasah.... produces very competitive students of the town... (Author's interview with S1, Buluan, March 20)

This supports the authentic foundation of traditional madrasah in providing religious knowledge to Muslim Filipinos despite many colonial attempts to rule madrasah education in the country. Regarding academic concentration and recognition, Madrasah A was known for producing students who memorized the Quran correctly. In 2022 and 2023, during the Ramadan Quran memorization competition, Madrasah A representative showed this as they secured the championship at the provincial level. Despite limited material support, these institutions gain moral legitimacy through their continuity and community standing, reinforcing their decision to resist integration.

Madrasahs construct their identity around religious authority and moral instruction. The preservation of religious identity becomes central to this resistance. Madrasahs often interpret compliance as a dilution of theological integrity, displacing Islamic educational priorities. The imposed curriculum and standards do not suit their constructed notions of Islamic knowledge and purpose. Gramsci's (1971) hegemony

theory helps explain how the state's imposition of a dominant secular curriculum functions as a cultural force to realign these identities within state norms—prompting resistance to protect religious authenticity. The state promotes a secular national curriculum that implicitly positions Islamic education as "inferior" or "incomplete," leading madrasahs to resist such ideological assimilation.

c. Institutional and Structural Weakness

Madrasah administrators and teachers express their willingness and eagerness to obtain government recognition; practical challenges such as a lack of funding, unqualified teachers, and weak administration prevent progress. When establishing the regulation in 2022, they had already complied with the requirements but failed to secure recognition. The attempt for the 2024 school year, according to the madrasah administrator, is expected to be positive before the opening of the academic year. Many studies have proved the lack of funds. It is the traditional nature of madrasahs to face such a problem. Putra (2023) notes on funding issues, Marbun (2013) and Milligan (2017) stress insufficient funding, and Safriadi et al. (2023) pinpoint that these funding issues are leading to a lack of boundaries to meet the requirements for recognition. According to them;

The community funds the madrasah... we do not receive any support from the government. (Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)
We want to apply but do not have enough teachers or documents to process. Some of us are volunteers only. (Author's FGD with T5, Buluan, March 26)

The Policy guidelines released for application for government recognition for Academic Year 2024, Annex H, page 34, list the documents needed to secure government recognition. Based on the provided documents requested from the office of Madrasah A and B, the required documents have been merely compiled. These institutions cannot hire licensed teachers as employees due to their incapacity to sustain their needs, as stressed by teachers during focus group discussions. These issues reflect low organizational capacity, a key barrier in Institutional Theory, as "institutional thinness." Without formal structures or documentation, madrasahs struggle to meet the bureaucratic demands of the PTO process. Due to independence, as traditional madrasahs operate (IAG, 2019), existing institutional and structural weaknesses may result in failure attempts for application.

Curriculum challenges further complicate recognition. According to the Bangsamoro Education Code (BEC), traditional madrasahs should comply with the standard madrasah curriculum (SMC) that imposes the K-12 standard. According to Ali et

al. (2021), the madrasah's priority is providing religious subjects, which leads to curriculum imbalance. This lack of compliance with the national standard leads to inconsistent educational content (Muhlisin & Ma'as Shobirin, 2023). Most madrasahs are focused on Arabic and Islamic studies, with limited or no integration of secular subjects, such as science or technology. Foreign standards greatly influence these madrasahs (Marasigan, 2019), compromising the set standard at the national level (Solaiman, 2021). Undoubtedly, traditional madrasahs are committed to imposing such knowledge with clear emphasis during individual and focus group discussions. Further responses stated that:

We have Arabic grammar and basic mathematics, but our main focus is on Islamic studies. (Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)
In madrasah, we do not teach computers or cooking... if students do not have Islamic and secular skills, how can they survive? (Author's FGD with T5, Buluan, March 26)

Internal disunity and leadership gaps are also significant constraints. Madrasah B's willingness to comply with government recognition is hampered by the appearance of disunity within the madrasah leadership. Though a teacher from a madrasah sees this case, it is not very influential on the application process. Meanwhile, Madrasah B is greatly affected by this factor. Adaptation of administrative practices from the national standard level is needed to comply with government recognition (Mughal & Ibrahim, 2021). However, these madrasahs face conflict in providing quality leadership, as expressed by teachers in interviews and group discussions. The absence of strategic planning or continuity in leadership has stalled efforts to formalize operations:

We really want to apply [for PTO], but because of disunity and no cooperation among teachers and admin, we cannot move forward. (Author's FGD with T3, Buluan, March 26)
...no other next presidents come after him with strong leadership... (Author's interview with K3, Buluan, March 05)

From a Social Capital theory lens, madrasahs rely heavily on bonding capital (community ties) but lack bridging capital—connections with formal institutions that can provide legal or bureaucratic guidance. Although traditional madrasahs are tied to the organization of *Shu'awn Tarbiyyah*, they fail to address issues of providing proper guidance on managing and guiding madrasah administrators. Connections of madrasah administrators will provide a strong bond in providing and supporting each other's progress and development. Moreover, social bonds and unity within the madrasah faculties and administrators, according to Fukuyama (2000), Bhandari and Yasunobu

(2009), and Mujin (20017), will provide and foster sustainability and mutual benefits, leading to social development.

Meanwhile, institutional and structural weaknesses, such as a lack of administrative staff and funding, reinforce this stance, as these schools cannot fulfill state requirements. These weaknesses (e.g., lack of infrastructure, fragmented governance) are not just logistical. However, they are interpreted by madrasah communities as evidence of their marginalization in national education discourse. The perceived and actual incapacity to comply with state requirements is also socially constructed — shaped by the community's understanding of their roles and limitations.

d. Dual System Burden

Another recurring theme is the physical and cognitive burden of running a dual system: students attend public school on weekdays and madrasah on weekends (or vice versa), creating exhaustion and confusion over differing curricula. Secular and Islamic religious education has long been a separate issue in the education system in the Philippines. The separation resulted in specific gaps, creating marginalization between religious and Western knowledge (Abu Bakar, 2011). A Muslim student has to participate in weekend madrasah education to be attached to religious teachings, as secular education detaches them from religious values (Arroisi, 2020). Teachers and administrators confirm that most of their students are on the same track in the education system. Students and Alumni are involved in this education system to ensure a secure future. According to respondent, “One of the challenges I have is the difference in the two education systems. I have to adjust my time and learning approach”. (Author’s FGD with A3, Buluan, March 20)

Many students in traditional madrasahs are involved in the dual education concept of the education system. Many students in traditional madrasahs are involved in the dual education concept of the education system. As reflected by respondents and information from administrators and teachers, many students, especially in weekend madrasah programs, are engaged in dual education. From the perspective of Social Capital Theory, the dual system burden experienced by students enrolled simultaneously in traditional madrasahs and public schools reflects a strain on the networks, relationships, and support systems that shape their educational experiences (Bhandari & Yasunobo, 2009). As Putnam (2000) defined, social capital emphasizes the value of social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trust that enable individuals to achieve shared goals. In the case of traditional madrasah students, their divided enrollment—attending secular schools for formal credentials while remaining in madrasahs for

religious education—often results in weak institutional linkages, limited coordination between systems, and reduced access to comprehensive support. This dual enrollment not only exhausts students' time and energy but also limits their ability to fully integrate into either educational community, weakening the social bonds and mutual support necessary for academic and personal development.

Furthermore, the absence of government recognition for madrasahs (e.g., lack of access to the Learner Information System) exacerbates this burden, isolating students from formal networks and resources available to their peers in the public system. As a result, the social capital that should ideally empower these learners becomes fragmented and insufficient. However, students show frustration in dealing with both systems, as quoted, “The two education systems are different... particularly in academic aspects”. (Author’s FGD with A4, Buluan, March 20)

According to Samid (2022), madrasah education programs in traditional madrasahs, and integrated programs in secular public schools have different approaches and levels of integration. The Bangsamoro Education Code section 49 identifies the level of traditional madrasah as a non-formal education that operates outside the formal education system on weekends. Moreover, secular public schools are centrally governed. Students enrolled in public schools have a Learner's Reference Number (LRN), which has a record of their identity number containing all the learner's information and progress. With this system, students enrolled in certain schools cannot be admitted to another institution run by the Department of Education (DepEd). According to Guleng et al. (2017), this parallel system of madrasah and public schools complicates the pathways of madrasah to access recognition.

This parallel enrollment system creates a dual burden on students and institutions alike and significantly complicates efforts toward government recognition. The madrasah system must have independent students who study and be admitted to madrasah education alone. The provided LRN secures a no-double entry of students' records into two educational institutions. A key reason for this hesitation is the "double entry" issue—wherein a single student is officially registered in a public school and a madrasah. Under current policies, this can result in administrative inconsistencies, particularly in learner information systems like the Learner Information System (LIS) of the Department of Education (DepEd), which does not readily accommodate dual enrollment. Madrasah administrators fear that applying for a Permit to Operate (PTO) and entering student data into the formal system may conflict with the records already existing in public schools, potentially leading to audit issues, funding complications, or penalties.

This theme reflects the tension between cultural-religious commitment and the pursuit of state-recognized credentials, as theorized under Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital. The cultural capital acquired through madrasah education—deep Qur'anic knowledge, Arabic fluency, and Islamic values—remains unrecognized by the formal education system, thus reducing its exchange value in higher education and labor markets. This further reflects Cultural Capital Theory, where students must simultaneously navigate two value systems—one based on state-sanctioned credentials and another on religious virtue (Bourdieu, 1986). Neither system fully recognizes the other, placing students in a position of double marginalization. According to the alumnus, I have to make an adjustment about my time and the system of approach in learning. (Author's FGD with A5, Buluan, March 20)

This cognitive dissonance and logistical strain also reinforce reluctance to integrate fully into a standardized system, as doing so may compromise the integrity of Islamic instruction. Madrasahs must straddle religious and secular curricula, creating cognitive and operational burdens. Students attending public schools and madrasahs endure what is socially interpreted as educational inequality. This reflects the internalization of two conflicting knowledge systems. This duality is interpreted as a survival strategy and a compromise. The state's singular path to legitimacy requires madrasah students to overcompensate, effectively reinforcing the hegemonic norm that only government-recognized systems produce valuable education. The LIS (Learner Information System) is a gatekeeping mechanism that recognizes only one formal institution per student. This technical restriction is not neutral — it reflects a hegemonic assertion of what counts as "real" education. Moreover, it illustrates how state pressure reshapes madrasahs to conform without necessarily empowering them.

e. Declining Credibility and Enrollment Concerns

The declining credibility in the eyes of the community may also influence traditional madrasah access to recognition. This directly impacts enrollment levels and parental support. This issue is primarily attributed to the madrasahs' limited capacity to provide adequate infrastructure and diversified curricula. Non-recognition has also led to challenges in public perception. Parents gradually lose interest in sending their children to traditional madrasahs, undermining public trust and losing confidence as a viable pathway for accessing Islamic religious knowledge. Parents increasingly choose public schools offering Islamic Studies and Arabic Language (ISAL) over traditional madrasahs, believing that secular institutions now meet their children's religious needs. The ISAL subjects integrated into K-12 public schools' basic education (Tomas & Bagolong) allow

students to learn moral and spiritual guidance (Sattar & Arriola, 2020), acquiring secular knowledge while preserving Islamic teachings (Milligan, 2017). Though the ISAL program significantly impacted the madrasah operation, it also brought significant changes and development for recognition and job opportunities for madrasah graduates. The impact of the program is further highlighted in response to RQ3. Furthermore, questioning the value of admitting children to traditional madrasah, Madrasah A administrator often encounters parents asking about it when Islamic subjects are already covered in public schools: “Some parents will say they also learn that [in] public schools, so why do I have to send them to madrasah?”. (Author’s interview with K2, Buluan, March 20)

This perception is rooted in a practical concern: duplicated content and absent tangible educational or economic returns from madrasah attendance. Without formal recognition from the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education (MBHTE), many madrasahs struggle to demonstrate the relevance of their programs beyond moral and religious instruction. Policy guidelines require traditional madrasahs to present a total population of students admitted to the institutions. These numbers may affect the funds released by the office if it successfully acquires recognition. As a result, some parents see madrasahs as redundant or even a burden on their children's time.

The lack of government recognition and support further affects the madrasah's reputation and capacity to retain and attract students. As an alumnus explained and quoted: “We faced challenges in promoting our madrasah and attracting students, as the absence of recognition affected its credibility”. (Author’s FGD with A5, Buluan, March 20)

This erosion of trust and legitimacy aligns with institutional theory (Scott, 2014), which argues that organizations unable to conform to evolving normative and regulatory environments risk marginalization. In this case, the inability to meet government standards for recognition and provide competitive offerings compared to public schools has pushed many madrasahs to the periphery of the local educational landscape. The social capital theory (Salim et al., 2021) helps illuminate this dynamic: without recognition and investment, madrasah credentials have low exchange value in broader social and economic systems. As a result, students and parents become hesitant to commit time and energy to an institution that appears isolated from formal pathways to employment and higher education.

This demonstrates a shift in community social capital. Where madrasahs once held exclusive religious authority, the blending of Islamic content into public education

has eroded their centrality. This sentiment captures a significant shift in community social capital. Traditionally, madrasahs served as primary institutions of religious learning and moral formation, holding central roles in local identity and authority. However, integrating Islamic content into public education through the Department of Education's Madrasah Education Program (DepEd MEP) and MBHTE initiatives has blurred the distinction between formal and traditional Islamic education. As a result, madrasahs no longer possess exclusive religious authority, leading to a diminished sense of urgency among parents to send their children to these institutions.

Under the framework of Hegemony Theory, the declining credibility and enrollment in traditional madrasahs can be interpreted as a consequence of the dominant state's success in normalizing a particular form of "legitimate" education—namely, the secular, state-recognized system—while marginalizing alternative forms such as Islamic education. Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony highlights how dominant groups maintain control not just through coercion but through the shaping of cultural norms, values, and beliefs. As the state defines what counts as quality or modern education, traditional madrasahs that do not conform to its standards are increasingly considered outdated or irrelevant (Marwazi & Abid, 2021). This delegitimization affects how communities perceive traditional madrasahs, leading parents to prefer public schools that implement ISAL programs or integrated madrasahs that can provide recognized credentials and future career structures. Over time, this hegemonic framing erodes trust in traditional madrasahs. It contributes to their declining enrollment, not because of a failure in their religious mission, but due to their exclusion from the state's dominant educational narrative and system of validation.

Another support statement of the alumnus elaborated on how credibility concerns erode parental commitment. As quoted from the statement; “The absence of recognition affected its credibility... some parents are not really supporting their children's madrasah education”. (Author’s FGD with A3, Buluan, March 20)

This declining support is not just about recognition but also about infrastructural inadequacy. Declining parental support is due to low-quality education outcomes (Solaiman, 2021) and the production of unrecognized madrasahs in providing quality, competitive graduates who qualify for employment (Hadji Latif, 2012). Many madrasahs operate in cramped or makeshift facilities without libraries, proper classrooms, or teaching aids. These deficits directly affect the learning experience and diminish the institution's appeal to parents and students. This reinforces the importance of external recognition for funding and maintaining community legitimacy in a rapidly changing

educational landscape. As Nascimento et al. (2022) believe, this recognition will provide a quality education that madrasah graduates will need and parents to admire.

As madrasahs remain outside the state system, their credibility is socially reconstructed as inferior. Parents and students begin to question the future value of purely religious education due to hegemonic state narratives that favor formal credentials. As this hegemonic model becomes normalized, madrasahs unable or unwilling to adapt face declining credibility and enrollment, reinforcing the marginalization of their alternative educational model. Socially, this reflects a shift in how value and success are constructed — increasingly aligned with state-defined qualifications and economic mobility. Madrasahs resist state interventions not only for religious reasons but as a form of postcolonial resistance, preserving indigenous Islamic identity in the face of imposed national narratives and educational homogenization. The reluctance to adopt DepEd's curriculum can be seen as a postcolonial act of resistance, where madrasahs defend their epistemic sovereignty. As Said (1978) emphasized, knowledge systems imposed by colonial powers delegitimize native ways of knowing, which continues under modern state systems.

Although the new autonomous government took over and proposed a holistic education system approach for Bangsamoro, madrasah education seems hesitant to the proposed program. Historical distrust from the colonial era still hampered the hesitation for government participation, resulting in Muslim Filipinos' resistance (Milligan, 2017). Madrasahs are built for strong commitment and preservation of religious identity (Magdalena, 2017). The dual system burden for students and madrasah institutions may hinder government recognition where double entry is prohibited—dualism exists to address the religious gap that public schools could not address (Milligan, 2008). Moreover, declining credibility and enrollment concerns will affect the recognition process as parents lose interest in investing children in madrasahs, where the target enrollment number may be affected.

These findings identify the factors influencing traditional madrasa's decision not to consider government programs. Previous programs had faced similar factors of non-participation, including historical distrust (Abu-Nimer & Nasser, 2017; Milligan, 2017), preservation of identity (Abdulkarim & Suud, 2020; Magdalena, 2017), Institutional and structural weaknesses, dual system burden (Milligan, 2008). Meanwhile, the declining credibility and enrollment concern may significantly resonate with failing the recognition. Traditional madrasah education values are now being questioned after the implementation

of new programs in secular public schools. This further may be affected if Public madrasah is successfully implemented.

4.2.2 Institutional Challenges and Barriers which Prevent from Obtaining the PTO

This section addresses the institutional, administrative, and cultural barriers that hinder traditional madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur from securing the government's Permit to Operate (PTO). Despite the Madrasah Education Program's (MEP) intentions, multiple layers of challenges—from bureaucratic obstacles and financial constraints to autonomy concerns and policy gaps—continue to impede meaningful participation. Drawing from the insights of administrators, teachers, and students, several key themes emerged, such as bureaucratic and financial barriers, inadequate government support, threats to autonomy and cultural integrity, curriculum deficiencies and staffing constraints, and declining parental support and societal shifts.

a. Bureaucratic and Financial Barriers

One of the most persistent and widely cited challenges is the bureaucratic rigidity and financial cost of acquiring a PTO. Putra (2023), states that traditional madrasahs' challenges are rooted in bureaucratic and funding issues. Morales and Morales (2020) further state that the lack of proper funding hinders access to recognition. Traditional madrasahs' reliance on sources of community supports and donations from NGO's and international assistance, further contributes into challenges seeking government recognition (IAG, 2023b; Samid, 2022). This creates barriers to complying with government recognition requirements (Safriadi et al., 2023). Administrators and teachers described the complex procedural and documentation requirements—such as land titles, certified building plans, library and clinic availability, and formal registration—as overwhelming, especially for small community-based madrasahs with limited resources. According to respondents, the demand of requirements contradicts the reality of traditional madrasah aspect and capacity, as quoted:

They ask for so many papers—tax declaration, land title, certified building—but we do not even have sufficient madrasah facilities. (Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)
There are lots of requirements... I think it is almost 100+ pages... if not properly addressed or missed a few requirements, the effort will be useless. (Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22)

The lack of resources and funds to comply with set standards compliance hinders traditional madrasahs from considering recognition (Abu Bakar, 2011). According to a study by Iqbal et al. (2023), there are similar cases of madrasahs from Pakistan where

insufficient funds lead to insufficient facilities needed for government recognition. The financial struggle of the madrasah hinders the proper sustenance of operations (Solaiman, 2021). Policy guidelines for government recognition annex H enlisted a set of required documents and procedures for application.

From the lens of Institutional Theory, these challenges reflect a rigid regulatory isomorphism—the state imposes standardized rules and procedures without adapting them to the diversity of traditional madrasah contexts. According to Scott (2014), organizations that do not conform to the dominant normative and regulatory structures risk being labeled illegitimate or unrecognized. For Lawrence and Shadnam (2008), this phenomenon significantly compromised madrasah in enduring rules, practices, and structures. Many of these institutions operate informally, often without registration, infrastructure, or full-time salaried staff. The process requires not just documentation but institutional literacy, leadership, and strategic planning—elements many madrasahs lack. As stated by respondents, they said that:

We are not fully aware of all the documents needed or the process itself.
(Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)
SEC registration will cost 12,000 pesos and above... the previous administration could not afford it. (Author's interview with K3, Buluan, March 05)

Teachers and administrators also reported acute infrastructure and human resource deficiencies, such as overcrowded classrooms, unpaid teachers, and the absence of libraries or administrative offices. Limited funding faced by traditional madrasahs hinders providing good facilities that support learning, impacting access to recognition (IAG, 2019). Lack of financial aid leads madrasahs to fail to provide libraries, classroom facilities, and other supportive learning equipment to provide quality learning (Solaiman, 2021). Limited government funding results in inadequate facilities and minimal classroom resources that affect the quality of students' learning (Mohammad et al. (2018). There is substantial compliance for providing conducive classrooms, which traditional madrasahs could not afford to provide. Further responses from the participants stated that:

Sometimes, we are reaching 80+... shortage of classroom buildings and school facilities. (Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22)
Sometimes we can receive 300 pesos each [as salary]... imagine that, every 3 months. (Author's interview with K2, Buluan, March 20)
They checked the comfort room, library, clinic, faculty office... we cannot afford to provide all of it. (Author's FGD with T5, Buluan, March 26)

These findings align with Social Capital Theory, which emphasizes the limited bridging capital—weak connections between madrasahs and external actors (government, NGOs) who could help navigate the PTO process or fund improvements. If the social capital concept is leveraged well through building networks and connections, it could help sustain operations (Fukuyama, 2000; Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009) amidst challenges in policy standardization and resource limitation (Marwazi & Abid, 2021). The reliance on local donations, informal tuition, and occasional foreign donors (e.g., from Saudi Arabia) further highlights institutional vulnerability.

The government frames the bureaucratic demands of obtaining a PTO—curriculum alignment, staff qualifications, and infrastructure requirements—as neutral and objective. The requirements for recognition are embedded in a formal bureaucratic culture unfamiliar to many traditional madrasahs. Socially, these structures are constructed as distant and inaccessible. This construction renders madrasahs' community-based models illegitimate in the eyes of the state.

b. Inadequate Government Support

While the Bangsamoro government and the Department of Education have framed the MEP as a vehicle for equity and inclusion, respondents consistently expressed frustration over the lack of tangible government support. Compared to government public schools and public madrasahs, funds come from public funds (see Bangsamoro Education Code, pp. 38). Meanwhile, non-government institutions (madrasahs) have no direct and consistent source of funds. Marbun (2013) emphasized that inadequate funding, lack of government support, and discrimination challenge participation in government programs. While policies exist, their implementation is often inconsistent, fragmented, or inaccessible for grassroots madrasahs as expressed by the following informants:

We encountered difficulties obtaining funding and resources to support our madrasah. (Author's FGD with A3, Buluan, March 20)

Every move and step needs money, and no one is willing to work voluntarily. Author's interview with K3, Buluan, March 05)

It is a long process, so you really have to work for it... time-consuming, effort, and money. (Author's interview with K2, Buluan, March 20)

From the Institutional Theory perspective, this points to a disconnect between institutional policy and field-level reality. Policy intent does not translate into operational support, especially in communities with minimal infrastructure or political representation. The transformation of the madrasah system is influenced by central state policy and set standards, triggering evolution and risk marginalization (Marwazi & Abid, 2021). Traditional madrasahs are set to be regulated by normative (social norms and values) and

cognitive (shared beliefs), while the state mandates regulative (formal rules and policies) that shape institutions (Chowdhury, 2015; Lamer & Garcia, 2017). Constitutional constraints—such as the rule that public funds cannot be directly used for religious institutions—compound these gaps. Madrasahs, being religious institutions, have no access to public funds, resulting in poor quality education (Hadji Latif, 2014). This is more emphasized by the key informant stating that:

The Philippine Constitution says public funds cannot be used for religious institutions. That is why it is difficult to assist them officially.
(Author's interview with K1, Cotabato, March 03)

In the context of hegemony theory, as conceptualized by Gramsci (1971), inadequate government support for traditional madrasahs can be understood as a manifestation of cultural and ideological dominance exercised by the state. Rather than overt force, the state maintains control by promoting a specific educational paradigm aligned with national, secular, and often Westernized standards, thereby marginalizing alternative systems like traditional madrasahs. This lack of material and institutional support is a subtle mechanism of exclusion, reinforcing the dominance of state-recognized institutions and delegitimizing madrasahs that do not conform to prescribed norms. Inadequate funding leads to the exclusion of the education system, which creates disparity, resulting in the exclusion and discrimination of madrasahs (Mrabun, 2013). As the government fails to provide equitable recognition, funding, and pathways for accreditation, it reinforces a hierarchy in which traditional madrasahs' knowledge, values, and educational practices are seen as inferior or irrelevant. The dominance and preferences for Western secular education marginalized the equal value of education provided by traditional madrasahs, resulting in poor quality of education (Marbun, 2013). This systemic neglect, therefore, is not merely an administrative oversight but a form of hegemonic control that shapes public perception and restricts madrasah communities' agency to define their educational futures.

Moreover, in social capital theory, this structural gap also aligns. Traditional madrasahs lack the social networks and institutional access needed to activate support systems. Salim et al. (2021), a strong emphasis on building strong network connections at both the local and national levels with religious and government institutions will assert madrasah access to resources and maintenance. Madrasah's situation contrasts with Mujin's (2017) concept of leveraging inclusivity and non-affiliation with specific organizations or sects, which he believes will help to sustain Madrasah's functioning. As

seen in this madrasah situation, losing connection with specific organizations affects the madrasah's operation.

Support is often minimal, sporadic, or conditional, reinforcing madrasahs' perception that they are structurally excluded. The perceived lack of material and technical support is interpreted as further confirmation of institutional neglect, reinforcing the government's disinterest in genuinely integrating traditional madrasahs into its system.

c. Threat to Autonomy and Cultural Integrity

A consistent concern expressed by respondents is the fear that recognition means compromise. Doubting government programs is not new to Muslim society, as proven by decades of historical resistance. The respondents' claim is evident in Husin's (2018) claim that madrasahs that comply with the government program face difficulty in compromising, leading to poor education quality. The demand for balancing both Islamic and Western secular knowledge is challenging to sustain in a madrasah. Madrasah leaders worry that PTO will result in enforced changes to curricula, pedagogy, and administration that may conflict with Islamic teachings and traditions. Evidence of concern is clearly emphasized by the teachers and administrators stating that:

Recognition means control. They might insist on some curriculum and a change system we cannot accept. (Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22)

If we apply for PTO, we fear we will be forced to teach things that contradict our beliefs. (Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)

We do not want to be like other madrasah... where they tried to manipulate and control what has to be taught in madrasah. (Author's interview with K3, Buluan, March 05)

This statement of the administrator implies a strong indication of doubt about the government's intentions. A study by Rohman et al. (2023) claims that the secular system will lead to a loss of cultural and religious identity, and secularizing students will cause a decline in Islamic moral values (Arroisi, 2020). Fear of shifting to the system may gradually neglect religious learning, barriers that religious leaders and madrasah administrators leave to refuse reform madrasah Dars-i-Nizami in Pakistan (Rabbi & Habib, 2019). Loss of cultural identity and autonomy for madrasah and Islamic schools in the Autonomous Region of Aceh is the result of secular education inculcation, according to Basri (2015).

This theme strongly resonates with Cultural Capital Theory. The madrasah's primary capital lies in its religious authority, Qur'anic instruction, and communal

legitimacy. This aligns with Throsby's (1999) definition of cultural capital as an intangible asset that includes traditions, beliefs, and values. State-imposed standards may be threatening this capital. Furthermore, Institutional Theory explains this as a conflict between institutional logic: the state's standardization and the madrasah's religious preservation logic. The central state may interrupt the Madrasah's strong philosophical foundation of providing holistic knowledge and inculcation of adab (Yasin & Jani, 2013). Furthermore, teachers express their observation to already recognized institutions, saying that:

We have seen others change their ways after joining the DepEd program.
(Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)
Just like previous years, we tend also to reject it as we want to be independent and maintain our identity. (Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22)

Mistrust, therefore, becomes both a product of experience and a defense mechanism to protect perceived authenticity. This supports the claim of Abu Nimer and Nasser (2017), as the local Muslim communities and madrasah leaders view the program as the imposition of the central state that fosters mistrust. Although the new government designed it, Muslim communities still do not realize the true intention of the program. This is still related to how the previous Madrasah Education Program claimed by Sali (2023a) creates a disconnection between the needs of traditional madrasah at the national level.

Hegemony theory explains how these barriers are not only technical but ideological. The state's education system exerts soft power by establishing the norms of acceptable education (Gramsci, 1971). Gramsci's concept of passive revolution—where change is imposed top-down under the guise of inclusion—aptly applies here. Madrasahs fear that aligning with government standards would compromise their independence and religious mission. When madrasah leaders speak of the threat to autonomy and cultural integrity, they resist administrative burdens and the imposition of a dominant worldview. While the state encourages registration, madrasahs perceive it as a subtle form of ideological assimilation that erodes their autonomy and cultural distinctiveness. This fear is socially constructed from historical experience. Gramsci's theory explains that state efforts to "support" often come with hidden ideological demands that push madrasahs to conform to dominant norms.

d. Curriculum Deficiencies and Staffing Constraints

Strong religious teachings open a wide deficiency in curriculum between madrasahs and public schools. A persistent theme that emerged across interviews with

alumni and administrators is the inadequacy of curriculum offerings in traditional madrasahs, especially in non-religious subjects such as mathematics, science, and language. These curriculum deficiencies are tightly interwoven with a second major issue: a shortage of qualified teaching staff to deliver a balanced, integrated education that meets religious and secular learning needs. Moreover, recognition also requires meeting curricular and teacher qualification standards, which many traditional madrasahs cannot fulfill. As one alumnus reflected:

We still need more knowledge... science, mathematics, and language.
(Author's FGD with A3, Buluan, March 20)
In madrasah, we do not teach computers or cooking... if students do not have Islamic and secular skills, how can they survive? (Author's FGD with T5, Buluan, March 26)

This statement stresses a gap in academic preparedness that may affect graduates' access to higher education and employment. Mohammad et al. (2018) stress that non-including secular disciplines and learning areas limit graduates' further options in higher education and career choices—the further impact of the lack of such knowledge addressed in RQ3. Traditional madrasahs focus primarily on Quranic memorization, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and Arabic literacy (Samid, 2022), leaving students unprepared for university (Guleng et al., 2017). The alumnus expressed concern about his preparation acquired, stating that:

It implies that there is a need to improve the curriculum. We still need more knowledge... science, mathematics, and language. (Author's FGD with A4, Buluan, March 20)

However, curriculum improvement is constrained by multiple institutional limitations, particularly the lack of trained educators who can competently teach secular subjects. Many teachers in traditional madrasahs are volunteers with limited pedagogical training or formal qualifications (Tomas & Bagolong, 2024). A significant concern is the lack of formal teaching background and credentials to qualify for government recognition (Marasigan, 2019). Untrained teachers lack improvement in pedagogical skills to teach secular subjects (Muhlisn & Ma'as Shobirin, 2023). As a result, the capacity to do so effectively is lacking even when there is a willingness to incorporate math, science, or English (Marasigan, 2019). There is willingness for madrasah B administrators to include such areas of learning; however, it cannot sustain qualified teachers to handle such subjects, ending in voluntary teachers alone. The willingness is evident as he stated: "I want to implement balanced education; however, we do not have enough income to hire licensed teachers". (Author's interview with K3, Buluan, March 05)

From an institutional theory perspective (Chowdhury, 2015; Scott, 2014), this reflects a misalignment between normative expectations of quality education—defined by state standards—and traditional madrasahs' norms and traditions (Seriger, 2024). Institutions that cannot adapt their instructional content to meet evolving external pressures are at risk of being sidelined in policy and funding frameworks despite their community relevance. This situation contradicts how Said et al. (2018) emphasize that Islamic education can adapt to changing societal needs.

Additionally, this mismatch exacerbates student disadvantages in standardized assessments, university entrance exams, and job market qualifications—fueling a cycle where madrasah graduates are excluded from mainstream opportunities, as theorized in cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986; Robbins, 2005; Sullivan, 2001). Without proficiency in nationally prioritized subjects, students carry a symbolic educational deficit that limits their social mobility.

Madrasahs operate within epistemological frameworks prioritizing Islamic knowledge, which the state does not formally value unless "standardized." Staffing and curriculum are tailored to religious aims and may not meet state metrics. Meanwhile, this reflects a hegemonic educational hierarchy in which state-defined subjects and certifications are the gold standard, marginalizing alternative forms of expertise. Hegemony operates in these definitions, determining which knowledge and credentials are accepted (Gramsci, 1971).

Without a diversified curriculum and professionally qualified educators, traditional madrasahs will struggle with limited institutional credibility and reduced graduate opportunities—despite their rich cultural and religious contributions. These curricular limitations affect eligibility for PTO and reduce students' readiness for higher education and employment; a theme further explored in RQ3. Teachers operate with minimal resources and limited professional development, weakening instructional quality.

e. Declining Parental Support and Societal Shifts

One significant factor influencing the sustainability of traditional madrasahs is the declining parental support amid shifting societal values and educational priorities. As the new government took over and integrated Islamic knowledge into secular public and private schools into their curricula, many parents questioned the added value of enrolling their children in separate madrasah programs—particularly those that lack government recognition. A key informant clearly articulated this sentiment: “Some parents will say they also learn that [in] public schools, so why do I have to send them to madrasah?” (Author’s interview with K2, Buluan, March 20)

This quote reflects a broader transformation in community social capital. Traditionally, madrasahs were revered as the primary source of Islamic knowledge and moral education. However, mainstreaming Islamic values into public education—such as Islamic Studies and Arabic Language (ISAL) programs—has led to the perception that madrasah education is redundant. Public schools are often considered sufficient to meet academic and religious needs, especially for parents prioritizing formal qualifications and future employability.

Furthermore, lack of recognition fuels parental skepticism regarding the value of madrasah education. According to the Bangsamoro Education Code, madrasahs are informal education institutions labeled as outdated by parents, leading to the withdrawal of support entirely. As per observation, Traditional madrasahs are overwhelmed for enrollment at the beginning of the calendar; however, as the secular education school calendar begins, numbers gradually drop. Secular public schools operate based on the Gregorian calendar, while the madrasah system operates based on the lunar calendar. These reasons make traditional madrasahs initially have many students, but a significant drop in the middle. Parents' preferences over secular education result in pulling back their children to madrasah. As one teacher observed: Students not fully supported by their parents easily drop out and end their madrasah education (Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22). Moreover, after securing senior high school level in madrasah, graduates who engage in dual education system are often shifting to pursue undergraduate degree in secular education. This marks the end of their madrasah education journey.

This trend is especially pronounced in communities where socioeconomic pressures compel parents to prioritize time and resources toward formal schooling over religious education. Socio-economic disadvantages push parents to deny it, as they see no clear future for their children's education in the madrasah. The decline in parental support affects enrollment and undermines student retention and commitment, contributing to high dropout rates in madrasahs. From the perspective of social capital theory, Putnam's definition (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009; Fukuyama, 2000; Munjin, 2017), this shift represents an erosion of the traditional relational networks that once supported madrasah education as a communal responsibility (Putnam, 2000). Where the built relationship between madrasahs and communities symbolized religious and cultural continuity (Salim et al., 2021), they are now increasingly marginalized in favor of institutions aligned with the state's educational system.

The declining parental support and changing societal attitudes have become critical barriers for traditional madrasahs to pursue recognition. Societal shifts affect

enrollment numbers, which may affect madrasah validity. This shift reflects a transformation in social capital structures—a reorientation from traditional community institutions toward formal state systems. This underscores the need for strategic reforms that restore public confidence—such as improving recognition mechanisms, modernizing curricula, and demonstrating clear pathways from madrasah education to higher education and employment.

Traditional madrasahs operate within a system still shaped by colonial logics—Western schooling, certification, and governance models. The Permit to Operate (PTO) is part of a bureaucratic structure inherited from colonial administration, prioritizing secular, Westernized education forms. The PTO application process reflects remnants of colonial governance that standardize educational legitimacy based on Western metrics, excluding indigenous models such as the madrasah. This institutional imposition mirrors Bhabha's (1994) concept of "colonial mimicry," where the colonized are expected to resemble the colonizer's system to gain acceptance.

This erosion of community support is socially constructed through dominant discourses about success and mobility. This tension is exacerbated by declining parental support and societal shifts, as families increasingly buy into the hegemonic belief that only recognized, state-aligned institutions can secure their children's future despite the cultural dissonance this may entail. With this, madrasahs lose social capital, which is evidence of hegemony operating at the level of public consciousness (Gramsci, 1971). These changes result from broader societal pressures that valorize state-recognized education as the only legitimate path to opportunity.

Occurred themes clearly emphasize the challenges and potential barriers that may hinder traditional madrasahs in securing permits to operate and government recognition. As the previous Madrasah Education program was implemented by the previous government, the ARMM, the current program is still facing the same challenges. Morales and Morales (2020) found that a lack of proper funding, structuralized curriculum, and religious ideology domination may hinder the participation of madrasahs in government recognition. Similarly to the current program, madrasahs face bureaucratic and financial barriers, funding issues, resistance (Putra, 2023) as a threat to autonomy and identity, and curriculum deficiency. Themes such as bureaucratic and financial barriers, inadequate government support, and curriculum deficiencies highlight how madrasahs are structurally excluded due to these state-imposed definitions of what a "valid" school looks like.

The interesting theme that emerged in the finding that may significantly contribute to non-government recognition is due to declining parental support and societal shifts. This theme can also address the issue of non-participation in the government program. As parental support declines, it will significantly impact the function of madrasah and the enrolment population. As funds and support come from parents and the community, societal shifts may contribute substantially. The new government program in public schools, the ISAL, is seen taking the role of traditional madrasah in providing religious knowledge, which was only previously offered in madrasahs.

4.2.3 Impacts of non-recognition to students' academic and future career opportunities

This section explores the personal, academic, and professional effects of non-recognition on students and graduates of traditional madrasahs. Despite the strong religious commitment and moral formation, the lack of formal accreditation significantly limits access to higher education, formal employment, and long-term career development (Putra, 2023; Thobani, 2007; Tomas & Bagolong, 2024). With that, it is deprived of funds, creating a gap and difficulty competing with government public schools to produce quality education for graduates (Hadji Latif, 2014). However, the data also revealed remarkable resilience among students who remain committed to religious service and pursue alternative trajectories, including studying abroad. Through deep analysis, this study shows the impact of non-recognition of madrasah on students' results in the absence of formal credentialing, limited career mobility, forced dual learning trajectories, pathways abroad as alternatives, and resilience and religious commitment.

a. Absence of Formal Credentialing

The absence of state-recognized certification emerged as a primary constraint facing traditional madrasah students. Students encounter barriers to college admission, government employment, and even private sector opportunities without accredited diplomas. Traditional madrasah credentials lack the criteria, learning areas, and skills required to pursue education or job opportunities (Milligan, 2020). requesting the documents for the Madrasah curriculum; Madrasah has a more structured curriculum design for each grade level. Meanwhile, Madrasah B does not outline subjects offered at each grade level. The absence of teaching materials, such as books for references, is observed, leading to unstructured learning for each grade level. Unlike secular public schools, traditional madrasahs do not offer formal grade levels or a clear educational trajectory. As respondents stated that:

We are not similar to a secular public school that offers skills for senior high... our graduates struggle. (Author's interview with K3, Buluan, March 05)

Without a concrete designed curriculum, you can say that although they had a madrasah education... You cannot identify what they finished. (Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22)

From an Institutional Theory perspective, traditional madrasahs are excluded from the dominant institutional framework governing education and employment. Institutional theory (Scott, 2014) helps explain how education systems privilege formal documentation and compliance with national standards. When madrasahs do not conform to these structures, their outputs are systematically excluded. National systems do not recognize their internal credentialing (e.g., shahada), leading to gatekeeping at the transition point into higher education. Students lack preparation for diverse learning at the university level. Graduates are deprived of skills and knowledge needed by secular institutions that limit access to formal schooling (Thobani, 2007). Concerning the exclusion of educational value in madrasah system, the claim is further emphasized by respondents as quoted:

That is the main problem: graduates of traditional madrasah are not recognized by the system. (Author's interview with K1, Cotabato, March 03)

Our students have no proper diploma, so they cannot enter public college easily. (Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)

The additional requirements for entry, such as remedial courses and placement exams, create extra burdens for madrasah students. University of the Philippines College Admission Test (UPCAT), according to Mohammad et al. (2018), found a recent barrier for students with a strong Islamic education background. State colleges and Universities require entrance examinations before a student can be admitted to the university level. The available field choice will depend on the result of the exam. Taking entrance examinations from public state universities significantly affects madrasah graduates' access to the university level. Noting that items will cover much Western knowledge while offering knowledge in madrasah dominates Islamic knowledge. The lack of required knowledge and necessary academic skills for university admission results in socioeconomic mobility (Marasigan, 2019). Even when madrasah students attempt to pursue further education, they often encounter bureaucratic and academic hurdles, such as being required to undergo bridging programs or remedial courses. These obstacles delay their educational progression and increase dropout risk, as the alumnus stated: "Universities require students who graduate in madrasah to enroll in a few courses, take

exams, literacy education, or basic English”. (Author’s interview with A1, Buluan, March 24)

These barriers represent symbolic violence in Cultural Capital Theory, where a student's religious knowledge is devalued in formal education, even when it is highly respected in the local community. This phenomenon reflects what Bourdieu (1986) would describe as a lack of institutionalized cultural capital—madrasah graduates possess knowledge and skills, but without recognized credentials, these are devalued in formal settings. Restricting students' culturally relevant education creates marginalization that misses social and economic benefits (Sali, 2023b). Thus, the deprivation of Muslim youth to access formal schooling may result in radicalization and participation in extremism (IAG, 2017). The result of access to higher education and university will create socioeconomic gaps, depriving access to formal and decent job opportunities.

Credentialing is a socially constructed gatekeeping mechanism rooted in the hegemonic idea that only state-recognized institutions produce valid knowledge. For students, the absence of formal credentialing and limited access to higher education are not just logistical problems but reflect deeper processes of social exclusion. Credentials serve as gateways to access legal and diverse opportunities. Students without them are excluded from many formal pathways.

b. Limited Career Mobility

One of the most profound consequences of the non-recognition of traditional madrasahs is the limited career mobility experienced by their graduates. Several madrasah institutions already offer undergraduate degree programs even before the existence of the new government. However, these programs are merely equipped with Islamic knowledge and Arabic Language. Graduates of unrecognized madrasahs are typically restricted to informal or religious occupations, such as teaching the Qur'an or serving as imams. They are provided with Arabic proficiency and Islamic knowledge background; however, lacking general education and skills limits access to employment outside religious roles (Kulidtod, 2017). While some consider this a noble calling, others expressed frustration over the lack of alternative options. Graduates often face career limitations, especially in public sector jobs or professions requiring formal educational backgrounds. Key informants emphasize the existence of madrasahs that offer undergraduate degrees. However, the education system does not acknowledge knowledge limited to Islamic jurisprudence and Arabic language. As stated:

Most traditional madrasahs that offer Kuliyah are not recognized by the ministry... How could they take exams if their schools are not recognized? (Author's interview with K1, Cotabato, March 03)

They mostly become imams or teach in other madrasahs. (Author's interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)

Although some are fortunate... many are stuck... ends up unemployed. (Author's interview with T1, Buluan, March 22)

This situation reflects limited social mobility due to the low transferability of religious capital into the broader economic system. Madrasah's concentration on providing religious knowledge that rejects essential learning and skills required by developing society creates a gap of socioeconomic disadvantages for graduates (Guleng et al., 2017; Magdalena, 2017). This situation underscores what Bourdieu (1986) refers to as the unequal conversion of cultural capital into economic capital. Moreover, this is compounded by weak bridging capital—graduates lack the institutional networks that connect them to formal labor markets (Bhandari & Yasunobu, 2009). The madrasah's non-participation in the government-recognized education system marginalizes students from utilizing public resources to support education and access to vast job opportunities (Morales & Morales, 2020).

Moreover, some students pursue dual education systems—attending public schools and madrasahs—to secure a recognized diploma and broaden their career prospects. This dual-track approach adds pressure and workload on students, which is a barrier (as discussed under the theme "Dual System Burden") and further exposes the institutional marginalization of traditional madrasah pathways. A former student shared a particularly illustrative reflection stating that:

The madrasah I was taking my undergraduate degree in before I came here is not recognized by the government, and graduates have limited job opportunities. (Author's interview with A2, Buluan, March 25)

Graduates are not qualified to have jobs outside of religious activities... that is why many of us are taking two education systems. (Author's FGD with A4, Buluan, March 20)

This testimonial reinforces the institutional theory perspective (Scott, 2014), highlighting how educational institutions' legitimacy is tied to their alignment with state-defined norms and structures. Without state recognition, madrasahs fall outside the legitimate framework of employment qualifications and can thus not provide upward mobility for their students. The limited acquired knowledge focuses on religious knowledge, making students unprepared for outside religious responsibilities and capabilities (Guleng et al., 2017; Putra, 2023; Tomas & Bagolong, 2024). This reveals

how a lack of recognition from the government leads to marginalization in local academic and employment pathways.

In essence, limited career mobility reflects the cumulative effect of systemic exclusion—where lack of credentialing, non-alignment with national education systems, and societal undervaluing of religious knowledge coalesce to hinder the futures of madrasah graduates. This theme is critical in understanding individual life outcomes and evaluating the broader societal implications of non-inclusive educational policy. As a result of the refusal of government recognition, Qawmi graduates are restricted to religious roles and teaching in religious institutions (Al-Hasani, 2020). Similarly, for graduates of traditional Islamic schools in Singapore, the lack of formal secular education further results in limited career prospects (Steiner, 2011).

The career ceiling experienced by madrasah graduates results from an institutional hierarchy that devalues informal or religious-based qualifications. Without state recognition, career mobility is significantly restricted. This reflects a hegemonic system where informal or religious credentials are delegitimized, regardless of knowledge or skills. This reflects hegemonic control over economic access, where dominant structures dictate who gets to participate and succeed (Gramsci, 1971).

c. Forced Dual Learning Trajectories

A salient theme emerging from student and alumni testimonies is the phenomenon of forced dual learning trajectories, wherein learners are compelled to enroll simultaneously in traditional madrasah and secular public schools. This form of education is not new to the author, as the author himself is the product of a dual education system. This is not out of personal preference but as a pragmatic response to systemic exclusion and the non-recognition of madrasah credentials. Engaging both education systems is usually defined by the Muslim community in the region as balancing education. In response to these constraints, many students pursue dual education: attending public school while continuing their madrasah studies. Madrasah often operates on weekends for three days, while public secular schools operate on weekdays or 5 days (McKenna & Abdula, 2008). However, while this strategy enhances future options, it creates significant stress and cognitive dissonance. This claim is supported by the statement of respondents during interview and focus group discussion, as quoted:

I also took another field of education... secular... to ensure that I have secured my life. (Author's FGD with A4, Buluan, March 20)
We have a three-day class... then continue with public school. It is a pressure. (Author's interview with S2, Buluan, March 21)

The statements of students and alumni express that this necessity creates a burdensome situation, particularly for students who must navigate between two distinct educational philosophies, timeframes, and pedagogical expectations. Here, the burden is not merely logistical but existential—students internalize that traditional religious education alone is insufficient for "securing life," i.e., for achieving sustainable livelihoods or meaningful societal participation. This structure places immense cognitive, emotional, and temporal strain on young learners, who must excel in two parallel systems and reconcile the differing epistemologies of religious and secular instruction. As other students stress: "One of the challenges is my very competitive environment... time management also contradicts my education in secular schools". (Author's interview with S1, Buluan, March 20)

The Institutional Theory perspective (Scott, 2014) also provides insight into this phenomenon. Because traditional madrasahs lack institutional legitimacy under the national education framework, their outputs (graduates, certifications) are considered invalid in formal higher education and employment systems. Consequently, students are pushed to pursue dual credentials, not out of choice but out of institutional compulsion. Students are forced to navigate two distinct epistemologies—the Islamic and the secular—each with its values, structures, and expectations. The burden borne by students engaging in these systems results in emotional and academic fatigue and a fragmented learning experience as concentration and focus are diverted. The concern of madrasah graduates in pursuing a degree in a recognized state university or college is apparent, as quoted: "Secular universities do not recognize our certificates... so students cannot be admitted without dual education". (Author's FGD with T4, Buluan, March 26)

This theme again echoes Cultural Capital Theory (Bourdieu, 1986), where students must acquire multiple competing forms of capital, often without adequate institutional or familial support. The net effect is a deeply inequitable learning environment that punishes students for their cultural and religious educational paths. This undermines the supposed inclusivity of the national education system. The state's refusal to acknowledge religious education as equivalent creates a forced dual learning trajectory, compelling students to navigate two systems with unequal value in the eyes of society. Students are often required to pursue two tracks simultaneously — secular and religious, which compromises, placing an added burden on students from traditional madrasahs.

d. Pathways Abroad as Alternatives

Amid structural exclusion and limited domestic opportunities for traditional madrasah graduates, several participants identified overseas education and employment

as viable alternatives. These options are often posted by students concentrating on acquiring strong Islamic knowledge. While often engaging in dual education, pursue secular education in domestic universities or colleges. These transnational pathways are often perceived as a more attainable and culturally consistent route to personal advancement and professional legitimacy, particularly in Islamic countries where traditional Islamic credentials are recognized. For some, studying abroad, particularly in Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia or Jordan, offers an alternative route to recognition and opportunity. These international pathways validate their religious training and offer structured academic progression. This theme highlights how the lack of domestic institutional recognition for traditional madrasah education compels stakeholders to look abroad for educational and professional validation. Supporting this claim, respondents emphasize that:

After you finish your studies here, you can use your diploma (*Shahada*) to apply to universities... especially abroad, like Saudi Arabia. (Author's interview with S1, Buluan, March 20)

Our graduates can apply to Islamic universities in Saudi Arabia, our shahada (certificate) is accepted... our madras has *muadala* (recognized) there. (Author's interview with K3, Buluan, March 05)

For many madrasah stakeholders, foreign recognition of the Shahada (Islamic diploma) is a compensatory mechanism. Graduates from these institutions are more capable and equipped with Arabic proficiency and Islamic studies knowledge required to access higher education abroad (Kulidtod, 2017). Several respondents pointed out that madrasah graduates can apply to Islamic universities in countries like Saudi Arabia, where their religious credentials are accepted. Sometimes, their madrasah has achieved *muadala* (formal recognition or equivalency).

This trend reflects a form of transnational educational mobility—a strategy of navigating around state-imposed barriers. It also underscores the role of social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) in accessing alternative pathways. These students possess cultural capital through Qur'anic memorization, Arabic fluency, and religious training, which may not be valued in local secular contexts but are actively sought abroad. Interestingly, respondents also noted increasing local demand for Islamic educators, especially in universities that now offer Islamic Studies programs. The new sitting government program, the ISAL, significantly hires at least 5,959 ISAL teachers in all public schools. This program opens a gateway for Madrasha graduates to be seen and valued. These teachers receive significantly higher incentives than the previous program, although the employment status is still under contract of service. This is evident in the

claim of respondents appreciating the changes, as quoted: “Islamic educators now are in demand... universities offer Islamic Studies even in graduate school (Author’s interview with S2, Buluan, March 21).

While studying abroad may mitigate local exclusion, it often distances students from local employment networks and reinforces institutional gaps between traditional madrasahs and the national education system. From the lens of Institutional Theory (Scott, 2014), this preference for foreign pathways also illustrates how external institutional logics—such as Islamic epistemologies abroad—are more legitimizing for traditional madrasahs than the domestic state apparatus. When the local system excludes or devalues madrasah credentials, students and institutions rationally gravitate toward systems where their religious education is credible and valuable.

Many students and alumni express aspirations to study or work abroad, where their religious education is more highly valued. Hegemony theory frames this disparity as a product of ideological control (Gramsci, 1971). The state promotes educational standards as the only legitimate path to success, marginalizing alternative pathways. It interprets this as a displacement caused by national systems that fail to accommodate local diversity. The resulting lack of opportunity drives some students to consider pathways abroad as alternatives, where religious education is more respected or integrated. This demonstrates the relativism of hegemonic influence: what is marginalized locally may be honored globally, and students resist hegemonic narratives by pursuing alternate futures.

e. Resilience and Religious Commitment

Despite the multifaceted challenges surrounding traditional madrasah education—including lack of recognition, financial hardship, and limited employment pathways—many participants articulated a strong sense of resilience rooted in their religious identity and moral purpose. These systemic disadvantages did not hinder students and alumni from demonstrating strong spiritual motivation, moral clarity, and a sense of religious mission. For many, success was defined by employment, their relationship to God, and service to the community. This theme reflects how spiritual conviction and community service are enduring motivations for students, alumni, and teachers, offering meaning beyond material success. Even for stakeholders, the core measure of achievement is not economic attainment but spiritual fulfillment. Madrasah education is significantly appreciated by the respondents, as according to them:

Even if they do not get jobs, they have the Qur'an in their hearts — that is success. (Author’s interview with T2, Buluan, March 27)

I really wanted an environment where I could strengthen my faith... connect with women knowledgeable in Islam. (Author's interview with A1, Buluan, March 24)

I learned how to live in an Islamic way... and be humble with others. (Author's interview with A2, Buluan, March 25)

These narratives reflect Social Capital Theory, where bonding capital—close-knit ties among teachers, students, and families—cultivates moral resilience and commitment. The resilience and strong religious commitment of traditional madrasah students and communities can be understood as a product of tightly knit social networks and shared religious values that foster mutual support and collective identity. Social capital, particularly in its bonding form, emphasizes the strength of relationships within a group that shares common beliefs, trust, and norms (Salim et al., 2021). This is evident in the strong ties between students, teachers, administrators, and the wider Muslim community. This further provides emotional, moral, and sometimes material support amid systemic challenges such as lack of government recognition or funding (Bhandari & Yasunobo, 2009; Fukuyama, 2000; Mujin, 2017). These social bonds sustain the institutions despite external pressures and deepen students' religious dedication and sense of purpose (Kulidtod, 2017; Marwazi & Abid, 2021). The commitment to Qur'anic memorization, Islamic ethics, and communal service persists because the supportive network and spiritual solidarity continually reinforce it within the madrasah environment. In this way, social capital becomes a source of resilience, enabling these communities to maintain their educational mission and religious identity even in the face of institutional marginalization (Kulidtod, 2017; Marwazi & Abid, 2021).

Reflecting on their purpose and aim for pursuing madrasah education despite its exclusion, students are highly motivated to contribute back to their community, as quoted:

I want to contribute to my community... so people can remember me. (Author's interview with S2, Buluan, March 21)

Every night in our mosque, I teach young children to read basics in Arabic to read the Quran. (Author's interview with S1, Buluan, March 20)

Such narratives illustrate religious capital (Verter, 2003) as a form of resilience. Even when formal credentials are lacking, madrasah education provides enduring moral authority, community esteem, and spiritual discipline—intangibles reinforcing students' dignity and purpose. While traditional madrasahs may not offer formal pathways to economic advancement, they provide meaning, identity, and belonging—qualities often absent in mainstream institutions.

Students from traditional madrasahs face systemic exclusion from universities and employment due to educational structures that devalue indigenous knowledge. This is part of the coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000), where Eurocentric models dominate access to mobility. The lack of state recognition for madrasah credentials reflects a deeper postcolonial exclusion, where native learners are filtered out of opportunity pathways through epistemic injustice (Spivak, 1988). Despite systemic exclusion, students and graduates showcase strong religious identities and social purpose. These challenges do not stop the commitment; the theme of resilience and religious commitment shows how students and alumni continue to place value on their madrasah experiences. This is an intentional counter-hegemonic stance—a form of cultural resistance—where madrasah students and teachers redefine success outside formal metrics, asserting their own constructed values (Gramsci, 1971).

Several studies have concluded the significant impact of traditional madrasah education on students' access to secular universities and employment opportunities. Though the new system and governance were implemented, the lack of recognition for madrasahs still significantly impacted students and graduates—the non-recognition results in the absence of formal credentials relevant to accessing the university level in the country. The lack of skills and general knowledge students acquire results in limited career mobilities involving only religion and teaching in madrasah. Students must pursue dual learning trajectories to secure future education, employment, and religious knowledge. Furthermore, students find alternative ways to pursue education pathways abroad as alternatives where education knowledge is recognized. Meanwhile, implementing the ISAL program in public schools allows madrasah graduates to secure employment and recognize educational value. This further leads to students' resilience and religious commitment to madrasah education.

4.3 Summary of Key Findings

The data analysis presented in this chapter unveils a multidimensional picture of the struggles and strengths of traditional madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur. The findings suggest that non-participation in government programs such as the Madrasah Education Program (MEP) is not merely a result of neglect or indifference but is shaped by historical distrust, leading to strong resistance, strong desire to preserve religious identity and see the program as a threat to autonomy and loss of cultural identity; structural constraints inhibit compliance with state requirements as traditional madrasah exhibits institutional and structural weaknesses, curriculum deficiencies, and staffing constraints; students face existing dual system burdens, while state policy does not recognize dual

entry systems. Moreover, the new government program, ISAL, impacts the traditional madrasah's role in society, which causes societal shifts to the value of madrasah education. These also serve current challenges and barriers for traditional madrasahs in securing government recognition and permits to operate.

From an Institutional Theory perspective (Throsby, 2001), traditional madrasahs operate within a distinct institutional logic rooted in religious norms and community-based governance. This logic often conflicts with the expectations of state education systems, which impose standardized bureaucratic procedures (e.g., land titles, certified facilities, formalized curricula) that are difficult for informal, under-resourced institutions to meet. The rigidity of the government's Permit to Operate (PTO) requirements reflects a case of regulatory isomorphism, where madrasahs are pressured to conform to state norms that are misaligned with their historical and cultural roles.

Cultural Capital theory helps explain the value system within traditional madrasahs. The knowledge transmitted—Qur'anic memorization, Arabic literacy, Islamic jurisprudence—is highly esteemed within their communities but lacks exchange value in formal education and employment systems. This mismatch results in symbolic exclusion, where dominant institutions devalue students' competencies. Consequently, madrasah graduates struggle to access higher education and formal job markets, especially in state-recognized sectors.

Meanwhile, Social Capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986) reveals the dual nature of support and limitation. Traditional madrasahs benefit from bonding capital—strong ties within the community that provide moral support, shared identity, and spiritual continuity. However, they often lack bridging capital—institutional links and networks with government bodies, professional associations, or NGOs—that could facilitate access to resources, information, or formal recognition. This isolation inhibits their ability to navigate PTO processes or leverage policy reforms.

Madrasah communities' meanings attached to education are shaped by religious and cultural contexts that clash with the state's bureaucratic and secular definitions. It shows that historically and culturally rooted social meanings shape traditional madrasahs' values, goals, and practices. As a result, traditional madrasahs resist integration because it threatens their identity, autonomy, and values. These institutions resist state integration because they construct legitimacy based on religious, not secular, norms.

The findings of this study, when viewed through the lens of postcolonial theory, reveal how traditional madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur continue to operate on the margins of the state education system due to lingering colonial legacies. The imposed

Permit to Operate (PTO) requirements reflect bureaucratic standards rooted in Western, secular frameworks that fail to recognize indigenous Islamic knowledge systems as legitimate. This institutional dominance reproduces educational exclusion, where madrasah students—despite spiritual and intellectual achievement—remain systematically denied access to higher education and employment opportunities. The resistance of madrasah leaders to state-mandated curricular reforms further illustrates a postcolonial assertion of epistemic autonomy, defending the integrity of religious identity against hegemonic schooling models. Reflecting on how recognized madrasahs changed their system and curriculum, where continuous resistance is rooted. Thus, the non-recognition of madrasahs is not merely a technical issue but a postcolonial struggle over whose knowledge counts and whose education is valued.

Simultaneously, hegemony theory (Gramsci, 1971) exposes how the state enforces these dominant definitions through subtle mechanisms of ideological control rather than outright coercion. State educational policies maintain ideological dominance by promoting a standard model of education that marginalizes alternative knowledge systems, as indicated. The PTO process, standardized curriculum, and credential requirements normalize one education model while marginalizing others. Central government control over curriculum, credentialing, and recognition reinforces systemic exclusion and limits madrasah graduates' access to formal opportunities. This leads to disadvantaged students navigating a system that delegitimizes their educational background and limits their life chances, which contributes to patterns of exclusion, dual education burdens, and migration abroad.

Students' and Alumni's experiences further demonstrate the tension between two educational paradigms—secular and religious. From the respondents' insights, many of them are forced to pursue dual education paths. It's an attempt to acquire cultural capital recognized by the state and the spiritual capital revered by their communities. This ensures they have both the knowledge needed for Islamic education and Western knowledge for vast opportunities. However, to balance, it creates a burden that strains their time and energy, and reflects the broader structural exclusion of traditional madrasah education from the national education framework.

The lack of formal credentials to qualify for state university level, non-recognition for madrasah education, and lack of skills and general knowledge limit students and alumni from pursuing careers. Despite these limitations, madrasahs serve as vital spaces for moral formation, religious identity, and community resilience. Graduates are dedicated to serving as future Islamic educators, even with limited career prospects.

Their narratives reflect a broader desire for reconciliation between Islamic education and national development, not a replacement. Moreover, they see broader hope through international recognition and studying abroad as trajectories. Furthermore, madrasah graduates received gradual value and recognition as the new government was established. The ISAL program allows madrasah graduates to be part of the government through teaching in public schools.

Theoretical synthesis reveals that these findings are not simply institutional shortcomings but expressions of deeper struggles between religious-cultural systems and state-imposed norms. Traditional madrasahs are not resistant to being resistant; instead, they are safeguarding a way of knowing, teaching, and living that stands outside the dominant framework of state education. The challenge is not just about meeting standards but redefining what education, success, and legitimacy mean in the Bangsamoro context. This emphasizes a clear message on the urgent need for a more contextually responsive and culturally inclusive policy framework that enables the genuine participation of traditional madrasahs in the educational landscape, not forced assimilation. As such, this chapter not only surfaces the practical obstacles faced by traditional madrasahs but also foregrounds the ideological and cultural resistance to hegemonic constructions of formal education. The next chapter will offer conclusions and recommendations that address these theoretical and practical insights.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the concluding insights and practical recommendations from the study's findings. The research explored the motivation for the non-participation and non-recognition of traditional madrasahs and the barriers and challenges traditional madrasahs face in Maguindanao del Sur in obtaining government recognition. It also examined how non-recognition impacts their students' access to higher education and employment. Through qualitative interviews with administrators, teachers, students, alumni, and government stakeholders, the research revealed multiple intersecting factors—ranging from institutional incapacity to deep-seated distrust and cultural divergence—that shape madrasahs' reluctance or inability to engage with the Madrasah Education Program (MEP). Guided by three key research questions, this study applied Cultural Capital, Social Capital, Institutional, and Hegemony Theory to analyze the motivations, institutional obstacles, and educational implications surrounding the participation of traditional Islamic institutions in the government recognition and Madrasah Education Program (MEP).

The conclusions summarize the significant findings of the research and synthesize them into clear takeaways. These are followed by targeted recommendations for policymakers, educational institutions, madrasah leaders, and other stakeholders aiming to foster inclusive and equitable educational development in the Bangsamoro region.

5.1 Conclusion

The guide of research questions, which was addressed in the previous chapter, will discuss and summarize the research results based on the research objectives. This study aims to identify: (1) the factors influencing traditional madrasahs for government recognition, (2) barriers and challenges that prevent recognition, and (3) the impacts of non-recognition on students' academic progress and career opportunities. This study concludes that:

First, traditional madrasahs resist participation in government programs not out of ignorance or indifference but due to historical and ideological distrust. This study has shown that traditional madrasahs in Maguindanao del Sur operate in a complex socio-political environment marked by historical marginalization, institutional exclusion, and cultural misalignment with the national education system. These institutions perceive

state recognition as threatening religious autonomy, fearing curriculum dilution and external control. Despite government initiatives such as the MEP and Permits to Operate (PTO) issuance, many traditional madrasahs remain unrecognized. Institutional theory helps explain their resistance as a protective response to external pressure that conflicts with internal religious norms. Historical distrust and preservation of religious autonomy are the main factors that motivate non-participation in government recognition and MEP. Rooted in colonial experiences and martial law-era suppression, traditional madrasahs harbor deep-seated skepticism toward state involvement in religious education. Many view PTO as a potential threat to their religious identity and pedagogical independence.

Second, many madrasahs lack the institutional and administrative capacity to meet the Permit to Operate (PTO) requirements, including land ownership, formal registration, and infrastructure. The PTO process is bureaucratically demanding; such requirements include standardized curricula and certified staff—resources largely inaccessible to community-funded madrasahs. The lack of technical guidance, leadership continuity, and government funding exacerbate their structural vulnerability. Administrative fragmentation and leadership weaknesses further hinder their ability to engage with formal recognition procedures. These challenges highlight gaps in social capital, especially the lack of bridging ties between madrasahs and external institutional actors. Moreover, it is affected by the ISAL program, which reduced the number of enrollees as religious knowledge is accessible in public schools.

Third, the absence of formal credentialing severely limits students' access to higher education in secular state universities and employment. Non-recognition significantly limits student pathways. Graduates are often confined to informal religious roles, have limited access to formal jobs, or, worse. In addition, the acquired unrecognized diplomas from traditional madrasahs lead students to face barriers in accessing higher education, scholarships, and formal employment. As a result, many are forced into dual education systems—juggling public and religious schooling—while others seek education abroad. Despite these limitations, students exhibit strong spiritual resilience and a commitment to community service. Yet, these limitations keep students and alumni displaying strong religious resilience and a sense of mission, viewing madrasah education as central to their moral and spiritual identity. However, the new government program, ISAL, provides recognition for madrasah graduates but with limited opportunities, such as teaching in public schools, which cannot accommodate diverse careers.

Framing these findings through Cultural Capital Theory shows that the knowledge and credentials valued in traditional madrasahs are largely invisible or illegitimate within the dominant educational system. Furthermore, through the lens of this theory, the study found that the form of knowledge produced by traditional madrasahs holds high moral and social value within the Muslim community but is undervalued in mainstream institutional systems. Consequently, students' cultural and religious capital fails to convert into institutional recognition or economic mobility. On the other hand, traditional madrasahs rely heavily on bonding capital—support from parents, religious leaders, and the local community—but lack bridging capital, linking them to formal institutions, funding, or technical assistance. This limits both their internal development and external engagement. The concept of "recognized" education is not neutral but is shaped by dominant institutions that define success through secular, credentialed, and state-aligned models. These dominant models are upheld by hegemonic educational structures that marginalize traditional and community-based religious education.

Thus, the struggle of traditional madrasahs is not just about policy compliance—it is about preserving cultural and religious integrity within an unequal system of recognition. The findings suggest that while the state aims to integrate Islamic education into the national framework, the current approach remains too rigid, secular-centric, and bureaucratically exclusive to accommodate traditional religious institutions. For meaningful reform to occur, a shift is needed from assimilationist models toward inclusive, flexible, and community-sensitive approaches that recognize the unique position of traditional madrasahs within the educational and cultural fabric of the Bangsamoro region.

5.2 Recommendations

Reflecting on the study's findings, the researcher offers the following recommendations to guide future actions in addressing the barriers to recognition and improving the academic and career pathways for students of traditional madrasahs:

For BARMM Policymakers and the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education (MBHTE), it is recommended to: *(a)* Develop a graduate recognition framework is essential. Design a phased Permit to Operate (PTO) process tailored to the unique capacities of traditional madrasahs. This should include tiered levels of compliance (e.g., provisional recognition, partial curriculum integration), Flexibility for institutions prioritizing Qur'anic education, and Recognition pathways that allow for the gradual inclusion of secular subjects without compromising Islamic values. *(b)* create a madrasah support fund streams to assist madrasahs in meeting basic recognition

requirements such as infrastructure development, teacher training, and curriculum enhancement. The allocation should prioritize community-based and under-resourced institutions. *(c)* Provide technical and legal assistance for PTO Applications. Deploy trained field officers who can guide madrasah leaders through the application process, offer assistance in documentation, and facilitate registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), DepEd, or relevant accrediting bodies. *(d)* Institutionalize community consultations. Promote regular consultations with traditional madrasah leaders, parents, and local religious scholars to align policy implementation with grassroots realities and build mutual trust. *(e)* Protect religious autonomy in policy language. Explicitly include provisions in the Bangsamoro Education Code and related policies affirming the right of madrasahs to maintain religious identity and curricular focus. This addresses cultural resistance while enabling formal cooperation.

For Traditional Madrasah Administrators and Leaders, it is recommended to: *(a)* strengthen internal administrative capacity through investing in training programs for administrators and staff on leadership, record-keeping, and institutional planning, *(b)* establish clear leadership structures and succession plans to minimize fragmentation and internal disunity. *(c)* form madrasah consortia or networks. Encourage collaboration among madrasahs to share resources, conduct joint training, and advocate for policy reforms. A unified voice enhances bargaining power and mutual learning. *(d)* Integrate foundational secular skills through incorporating basic literacy, numeracy, and life skills (e.g., English, computer literacy) into the curriculum to prepare students for wider opportunities while upholding the primacy of Islamic instruction. *(e)* Initiate community dialogues on PTO and reform by holding forums with parents and teachers to discuss government recognition's potential benefits and limitations. Transparent communication can mitigate fear and misunderstanding.

For MBHTE/DepEd Teachers and ISAL/ALIVE Program Coordinators, it is suggested to: *(a)* build culturally relevant curricula and assessment tools by involving local Asatidz and religious educators in co-development curricula integrating Islamic and secular content meaningfully and contextually. *(b)* improve professional development for Asatidz through offering ongoing training and pathways for certification that do not disqualify those without college degrees but value experience and religious education. Use a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) framework to validate informal teaching expertise. Since it is dominantly taking the role of traditional madrasah, *(c)* improve ALIVE/ISAL delivery in public schools. Ensure consistent teacher compensation, timely

material delivery, and more substantial support from school principals to improve the quality and credibility of Islamic education in mainstream settings.

For Parents and Local Communities, it is recommended to: *(a)* reaffirm support for madrasah education. While pursuing formal opportunities, parental encouragement to recognize madrasah education's spiritual and moral value should be prior. Community financial aid and volunteerism remain significant to the sustainability of traditional madrasahs. *(b)* engage in school governance where parents and elders should participate in Parent-Teacher Associations or Madrasah Development Committees to support infrastructure planning, monitoring of academic performance, and PTO readiness..

For NGOs, Development Partners, and Donor Agencies, it is recommended to: *(a)* support hybrid education models by investing in pilot madrasah models integrating Islamic and secular subjects through culturally sensitive approaches. These models can serve as best practices for replication across the region. *(b)* fund infrastructure and learning materials. Channel support for basic classroom facilities, libraries, hygiene amenities, and learning materials—especially in Tahfidz and rural madrasahs facing severe resource gaps. *(c)* conduct further research and monitoring. Support data collection, impact studies, and monitoring systems to track the progress of madrasah recognition and student outcomes across BARMM.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Research Instruments

A. Interview Guide with key Informants

1.1 Government official (Director of DGME)

1. What is the government's goal for traditional madrasahs in BARMM?
2. What are the requirements for madrasahs to obtain a Permit to Operate (PTO)?
3. How does the government support traditional madrasahs in meeting these requirements?
4. From your perspective, what are the major challenges faced by traditional madrasahs in obtaining recognition?
5. How does the government address the challenges faced by students from non-recognized madrasahs?
6. What recommendations do you have for traditional madrasahs to achieve government recognition?

1.2 Interview Guide with Madrasah Administrators

1. Can you tell me about the history and mission of your madrasah?
2. What are the main challenges your institution faces in operating independently?
3. What are your thoughts on the government's Madrasah Education Program, especially the new Bangsamoro government?
4. Why has your madrasah not applied for the Permit to Operate (PTO)?
5. What are the major challenges your madrasah faces in meeting PTO requirements?
6. How has the lack of government recognition affected your madrasah?
7. What challenges do your students face in accessing public education or employment opportunities?

1.3 Interview Guide with Madrasah Teachers

1. What subjects do you teach, and what resources are available to you?
2. How would you describe the curriculum offered in your madrasah?
3. What are the biggest challenges you face as a teacher here?
4. Are there any specific challenges related to aligning your teaching with government standards?

5. In your experience, how do students from this madrasah perform when they pursue further education or employment?

1.4 Interview Guide with Madrasah Students

1. Why did you choose to study in this madrasah?
2. What are your goals after completing your education here?
3. Do you think studying in a recognized madrasah would impact your opportunities?
4. What challenges do you face as a student in this madrasah?

1.5 Interview Guide with Madrasah Alumni

1. What motivated you to study in this madrasah, and how was your experience?
2. Were you able to pursue higher education after graduating?
3. What challenges did you encounter in accessing universities or finding employment?
4. Do you think government recognition of the madrasah would have impacted your academic or career opportunities?

Appendix B. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) GUIDE

2.1 FGD Guide for Teachers

1. Can you introduce yourself and share how long you have been teaching at this madrasah?
2. What inspired you to teach in a madrasah rather than in other educational institutions?
3. How would you describe the curriculum in your madrasah?
4. How do you feel about the relevance of the madrasah's curriculum to students' needs in modern society?
5. What do you think about the idea of this madrasah obtaining government recognition (PTO)?
6. In your view, how would obtaining a Permit to Operate (PTO) affect the madrasah?
7. In your experience, how do students from your madrasah transition to higher education or employment?

2.2 FGD Guide for Students

1. Can you share your name and what year or level you're currently studying?
2. Why did you choose to study in this madrasah over other schools?
3. What are your plans after completing your education here?
4. Do you think this madrasah prepares you well for your goals, such as entering a university or finding a job?
5. What challenges do you face as students in this madrasah? (e.g., resources, facilities, or curriculum, extracurricular opportunities).
6. What do you know about government recognition (PTO) for madrasahs?

2.3 FGD Guide for Alumni

1. Can you introduce yourself and share when you graduated from this madrasah?, what motivated you to study here?
2. How would you describe your experience studying in this madrasah?
3. Were you able to pursue higher education after graduating? If yes, what challenges did you face?
4. If employed, how has your madrasah education influenced your career?
5. Did you encounter difficulties due to your madrasah not being recognized by the government?
6. What is your opinion on the government's role in supporting traditional madrasahs?

Appendix C. Observation Guide

3.1 Physical Environment:

- 3.1.1 Condition of classrooms and facilities.
- 3.1.2 Availability of teaching materials and resources.

3.2 Teaching Practices:

- 3.2.1 Interaction between teachers and students.

3.3 Student Engagement:

- 3.3.1 Level of participation in classroom activities.

3.4 Cultural and Community Context:

- 3.4.1 Community involvement in the madrasah.

3.5 Administrative Operations:

- 3.5.1 Processes for managing records and documents.

Appendix D. Document Analysis Guide

4.1 Documents to Analyze:

- 4.1.1 Madrasah curriculum documents and records
- 4.1.2 PTO application guidelines and policies.
- 4.1.3 Records of communication between madrasahs and government bodies.

4.2 Key Areas to Focus On:

- 4.2.1 Alignment of the madrasah curriculum with government standards.
- 4.2.2 Evidence of compliance or challenges with PTO requirements.
- 4.2.3 Discrepancies between government expectations and madrasah practices.

Appendix E. Research Permit



Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia
Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia
Jalan Raya Bogor KM. 33.5
Cisalak, Sukmajaya, Depok, Jawa Barat 16416
secretariat@uiii.ac.id
www.uiii.ac.id

Ref. No : 040/Dek.FIP/UIII/UM.02/2/2025
Attachment : -
Subject : Request for Research Permit

Depok, February 12, 2025

Dear Sir/Madam,

Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

We hereby certify the following student:

Name : Rakim L. Sammy
Student ID Number : 04212320010
Faculty : Faculty of Education
Study Program : MA in Education

is conducting research for his thesis with the following details:

Thesis Title : Traditional Madrasah Barriers and Challenges for Government Recognition and the Impact of Non-Recognition on Their Students' Access to Higher Education and Employment
Research Location : Ma'ahad Tahfidz and Ma'ahad Khairie Al-Arabie Al-Islamie, Poblacion Buluan Maguidanao del Sur
Research Duration : February-March 2025 (one month)

We respectfully request your assistance in granting research permission to the student. Thank you for your kind attention and cooperation.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.,

Kind Regards,
Dean of the Faculty of Education

Prof. Nina Nurmila, PhD



Dokumen ini telah ditandatangani secara elektronik menggunakan sertifikat elektronik yang telah diterbitkan oleh Balai Sertifikasi Elektronik (BSrE), Badan Sandi dan Siber Negara.



Appendix F. Research Consent Letter



Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia
Indonesian International Islamic University
Jalan Raya Bogor, KM 33.5
Cisalak, Sukmajaya, Depok, west java 16416
secretariat@uiii.ac.id
www.uiii.ac.id

Rakim L. Sammy
Lower D'lag
Pandag, Maguindanao del sur, 9636
rakim.sammy@uiii.ac.id/rakimsammy60@gmail.com
March 17, 2025

Name of Respondent
Affiliation
Address

Subject: Request for Permission to Conduct an Interview and Audio Recording for Thesis Data Collection

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Rakim L. Sammy and I am a graduate student at Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia, currently conducting research for my thesis titled "*Traditional Madrasahs Challenges and Barriers for Government Recognition and Impact of Non-Recognition on Students Education and Career Opportunities in the Philippines.*" This study aims to explore the challenges faced by traditional madrasahs in obtaining government recognition and how this affects their graduates' future academic and employment opportunities.

As part of my data collection, I would like to invite you to participate in an interview, which will focus on your experiences and insights regarding this topic. With your permission, I also intend to audio-record the interview to ensure accuracy in data analysis. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential, and all collected data will be used solely for academic purposes. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without any consequences.

If you agree to participate, I will coordinate with you to schedule the interview at a time and place that is convenient for you. Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please feel free to contact me at +639366782422.

I kindly request you to sign the attached consent form to indicate your willingness to participate. Your cooperation and valuable insights will greatly contribute to this study.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to your positive response.

Sincerely,

Rakim L. Sammy
Indonesia International Islamic University
MA Education Student

Appendix G. Documentation

- A. Google drive link to access documentation. Pictures include respondents during interview and Madrasah premises during field visit observation.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VKHVMGDHqhVhYJtLgSMECE1LoWTxDNg3?usp=sharing>

- B. Google drive link to access documents requested as copies from Madrasah A administrators.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1CPIpgx6121gXIAB8MNXQf7bJQL5EXdi7?usp=drive_link

- C. Google drive link to access documents requested as copies from Madrasah B administrators.

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1_XF3KN2LmMd5sswlyCmbYtk1rW8lzFmI?usp=drive_link

Appendix H. Sample of Codes and Themes

Interview K1			
RQ	Themes	Code	Quoted
RQ1	Historical and Cultural Resistance	Fear of colonization and distortion of Islam	<i>Before there was... in the back of our mind before, that any program of the government is part of their plan to colonize the Bangsamoro... even distort the teaching of Islam.</i> This quote reflects the long-standing distrust traditional madrasahs have toward state programs, viewing them as attempts at religious dilution. <i>"...once they see that this is really for them, they will open up... even if they are conservative."</i>
		Historical distrust	
		Conservative mindset	
		Dual system of education	
		Mindset shaped by past conflicts	
		Conservatism, Traditionalism, Fear of being left behind	
RQ2	Structural and Institutional Barriers	Technical requirements too difficult	<i>They know how to have this registration... but the paper requirements are difficult to provide... financially they are not capable.</i>
		No financial capability	
		Constitutional limitation on funding religious institutions	
		Lack of awareness	
		Poor infrastructure and staffing	
	Administrative and Legal Limitations	Need for legal identity	<i>"The Philippine Constitution says public funds cannot be used for religious institutions. That's why it's difficult to assist them officially."</i>
		Requirement to register with SEC	
		Inadequate administrative structure	
		Madrasah improvement plan lacking	
RQ3	Academic and Career Exclusion	No recognition means no eligibility for exams	<i>Most of traditional madrasah that offers Kulliyah are not recognized by the ministry... How could they take exams if their schools are not recognized?</i>
		Limited job opportunities	
		No access to higher education	<i>"That's the main problem: graduates of traditional madrasah are not recognized by the system."</i>
		Perceived as unproductive or extremist risk	
		Lack of standard credentials	

Interview with Madrasah A Administrator K2			
RQ1	Changing Community Perceptions and Devaluation of Madrasah	ISAL made some parents think madrasah is no longer needed	<i>Some parents will say, they also learn that to public schools, so why I have to send them to madrasah?</i> Traditional madrasahs face declining enrollments as families believe public schools offer adequate Islamic education through ISAL programs.
		Loss of interest in Quran education	
		Madrasah labeled as possible terrorist supporters if unregistered	
		Parents see Ustadz teaching same in both schools	
RQ2	Bureaucratic and Financial Burdens/Administrative and Logistical Barriers to Government Integration	Documentation is long and costly	<i>It is a long process so really have to work for it... time consuming, effort, and money.</i>
		Need for administrators' perseverance	
		Infrastructure requirements like CR, clinic, library	
	Unsustainable Funding Structures	Limited teacher compensation (300 pesos/quarter)	<i>"Sometimes we can receive 300 pesos each [as salary]... imagine that, in every 3 months."</i> The madrasah's reliance on fluctuating donations limits its ability to maintain facilities, pay teachers adequately, and plan long-term development.
		Dependence on parents and community	
		Lost orphanage program due to COVID funding cuts	
	Decline in Enrollment & Societal Shifts	High school students becoming too busy	Madrasah enrollment is threatened by public school programs like ISAL and changing parental priorities, leading to declining student commitment.
		Decreasing interest in madrasah education	
		Observation of general decline in madrasah student numbers	

RQ3	Limited Academic and Employment Mobility	Madrasah certificates not accepted in secular institutions	<i>Our students are not accredited to those institutions... they will really need certificates.</i>
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Interview with Madrasah B Administrator K3			
RQ1	Religious Autonomy and Historical Distrust	Fear of manipulation of curriculum	<i>They tried to manipulate and control what has to be taught in madrasah... they do not include prophets' history of jihad and other Islamic teachings.</i> His past distrust toward government efforts stemmed from perceived attempts to secularize or distort Islamic curriculum, which discouraged PTO applications in the past.
		Preservation of Islamic identity	
		Distrust from past experiences with government	
		Waiting for government sincerity	
		Perception that secular influence will dominate	
	Challenges of Sustainability and Leadership Transitions	Leadership vacuum after founder's death	<i>"...no other next presidents come after him who has a strong leadership..."</i>
	Tension Between Cultural Identity and State Curriculum		<i>"We don't want to be like other madrasah... where they tried to manipulate and control what has to be taught in madrasah."</i>
RQ2	Administrative Inexperience and Financial Burdens	Lack of funds for SEC, papers, travel	<i>SEC registration will cost 12,000 pesos and above... the previous administration could not afford it"</i> <i>"Actually, if not only because of some minor conflicts and misunderstandings, we see this madrasah as like gold..."</i>
		Teachers are unpaid; administrators use own money	
		Lack of administrative experience in past leadership	
		Need for facilities like library, clinic, office	
		Conflict or weak leadership	
	Structural and Logistical Limitations	No one is willing to work voluntarily PTO process is costly and long Past leaders lacked knowledge about PTO benefits	<i>Every move and step needs money, and no one is willing to work voluntarily."</i>
RQ3	Limited Opportunities and Educational Gaps	Graduates struggle to find employment	<i>We are not similar to secular public school that offers skills for senior high... our graduates struggle.</i>
		Only option is to study abroad	
		Students without PTO-backed credentials are left behind	
		No job skills taught (no computer or English)	
		Quality of education affects job prospects	

Interview with Ma'ahad Tahfidz Teacher T1			
RQ1	Misinformation and Desire for Independence	We used to reject it to maintain independence and Islamic identity	<i>Just like previous years, we tend also to reject it as we want to be independent and maintain our identity.</i> This reflects a commonly held sentiment among traditional educators who initially resisted government involvement, fearing compromise of religious autonomy.
		Misinformation and misunderstanding about the program	
		Belief that madrasahs are for pure Islamic knowledge	
RQ2	Documentation and Structural Constraints/ Bureaucratic and Technical Barriers	100+ pages of documents	<i>There are lots of requirements... I think it's almost 100+ pages... if not properly addressed or missed few requirement the effort will be useless."</i>
		Need for step-by-step process	
		If not properly addressed, efforts wasted	
		Difficulty in curriculum alignment	
	Resource Constraints and Infrastructure Deficits	Overcrowded classrooms (60-80 students) Lack of buildings and proper facilities	<i>"Sometimes, we are reaching 80+... shortage of classroom buildings and school facilities..."</i>
	Lack of Curriculum Clarity and Parental Support	Parents not fully supportive Dropout when parents are not involved	<i>"Students who are not fully supported by their parents easily drop and end their</i>

		No proper curriculum leads to undefined learning outcomes	<i>madrasah education."</i>
RQ3	Unclear Trajectories and Limited Opportunities	Without curriculum, no clear path for students	<i>Without curriculum, you can say that although he/she had madrasah education... you cannot identify what he/she finished.</i>
		Ends up unemployed even after undergraduate in traditional madrasah	
		Few are lucky to study in Medina or Jordan	<i>"Although some are fortunate... many are stuck.... ends up unemployed."</i>
		Most stay here without opportunities	
Interview with Ma'ahad Khairie Teacher T2			
RQ1	Perception of Madrasah Purpose and Identity	Madrasah as spiritual and moral development center	<i>"The purpose of the madrasah is to strengthen the students' aqeedah and akhlaq."</i>
			<i>"We want to continue what our forefathers established in this madrasah."</i>
		Community-based religious education	<i>"The madrasah is funded by the community... we do not receive any support from the government."</i>
	Curriculum Content and Instructional Focus	Qur'an memorization as central focus	<i>"Students are required to memorize the Qur'an completely before they can graduate."</i>
		Minimal integration of secular subjects	<i>"We have Arabic grammar and basic Preservation of Islamic knowledge and tradition mathematics, but our main focus is really on Islamic studies."</i>
		Traditional teacher-centered instruction	<i>"The ustadh dictates, and the students follow... that's how we were taught."</i>
RQ2	Challenges in Obtaining PTO (Permit to Operate)	Lack of understanding of PTO requirements	<i>We are not fully aware of all the documents needed or the process itself."</i>
		Resource limitations	<i>"We don't have permanent classrooms or a formal administrative structure."</i>
		Perceived irrelevance of government standards	<i>"Why should we follow a system that does not recognize our way of teaching?"</i>
	Concerns on Government Intervention and Autonomy	Fear of curriculum alteration	<i>"If we apply for PTO, we fear we will be forced to teach things that contradict our beliefs."</i>
		Mistrust of government programs	<i>"We've seen others change their ways after joining the DepEd program."</i>
		Desire for independence	<i>"We want to keep our madrasah the way it is — pure and according to Islam."</i>
RQ3	Limited Access to Secular Higher Education	Lack of formal credentials, Graduates not eligible for public university	<i>"Our students have no diploma, so they can't enter college easily."</i>
		Limited employment pathways	<i>"They mostly become imams or teach in other madrasahs."</i>
	Impact on Students' Future Opportunities	Spiritual benefit over worldly success	<i>"Even if they don't get jobs, they have the Qur'an in their hearts — that is success."</i>
	Pathways through Foreign Islamic Institutions	Graduates rely on foreign Islamic universities	

FGD with Teachers R1=T3, R2=T4, R3=T5			
RQ1	Internal Disunity and Administrative Weakness	Disunity among faculty and leadership	<i>We really want to apply [for PTO], but because of disunity and no cooperation among teachers and admin, we can’t move forward. R1</i>
		Lack of awareness and cooperation	
		Delays in document processing	
		No proper consultation	
		Misunderstanding about PTO purpose	
	Lingering Mistrust and Historical Stigma	Fear of being misunderstood by the government	Teachers acknowledged their shared desire to apply for PTO, but progress was delayed due to poor leadership and lack of unity.
		Mistrust due to historical mislabeling as extremists	
RQ2	Structural and Resource-Based Challenges	Lack of basic facilities (clinic, library, comfort rooms)	<i>They checked if comfort room, library, clinic, faculty office... we can’t afford to provide all of it. R3</i> The physical and administrative requirements for PTO have proven difficult
		Inability to write project proposals	
		Lack of technical skills and budget	
		Difficulty obtaining student data and	

		land documents Teacher absenteeism and unmotivated staff	to fulfill due to limited resources and lack of expertise.
RQ3	Restricted Academic and Employment Mobility	Certificates not recognized by secular universities Graduates can only study in other traditional madrasahs Only pathway is ISAL or studying abroad Lack of dual (secular + Islamic) education limits jobs	<i>Our certificates are not recognized by secular universities... so students can't be admitted without dual education. R2</i>
FGD with Students R1=S3, R2=S5, R3=S4			
RQ1	Limited Student Awareness on Government Recognition	We don't know much about PTO It has not yet been discussed to us Unclear how PTO affects education	<i>It has not yet been discussed to us about PTO... it's not yet clear for me how it will affect our education. R3</i>
RQ2	Inadequate Resources and Infrastructure	Lack of classrooms, library, chairs Financial issues limit learning Few teachers, large class sizes Time allocation for learning is affected Lack of learning materials	<i>Our madrasah lacks library, books, and even chairs. It makes it hard to enjoy learning. R2</i> <i>Poor infrastructure hinders students' academic performance and the madrasah's eligibility for government recognition.</i>
RQ3	Recognition as a Gateway to Future Opportunities	We wish to study abroad (Saudi, Madinah) Graduates from here can only teach or continue Islamic studies	<i>If the PTO could help so that our certificates... official and open more opportunities... another aspects or fields, I think it will be a positive effect for us. R3</i>
RQ1	Lack of Government Support and Community Misperceptions	No government support for traditional madrasahs	<i>"We encountered difficulties in obtaining funding and resources to support our madrasah." (R1)</i>
	Credibility and Enrollment Issues	Non-recognition affects student recruitment	<i>"The absence of recognition affected its credibility... some parents are not really supporting their children's madrasah education." (R1)</i>
	Dual System Burden	Conflict with secular system limits participation	<i>"I have to make an adjustment about my time and the system of approach in learning." (R2)</i>
	Weak Institutional Structure	Inconsistent or insufficient curriculum to meet standards	<i>Implied by need to improve curriculum (R3)</i>
RQ2	Financial Barriers and Systemic Isolation	Madrasahs lack funding and resources	<i>We faced challenges in promoting our madrasah and attracting students, as the absence of recognition affected its credibility. R1</i>
		Difficulty promoting the madrasah without recognition	
		Need to collect from parents for programs	<i>"We have to collect contributions to fund our programs." (R1)</i>
		Lack of curriculum balance	<i>"We still need more knowledge... science, mathematics, and language." (R3)</i>
	Curriculum Misalignment and Dual System Strain	Conflict between madrasah and secular schedules	<i>"The two education systems are different... particularly in academic aspects." (R3)</i>
		Students juggling madrasah and secular school struggle with alignment	
RQ3	Academic and Career Limitations	Different systems create challenges in adjustment	<i>One of the challenges I have is the difference in the two education systems. I have to adjust my time and learning approach. R2</i>
		Some universities don't accept madrasah diplomas	<i>Graduates are not qualified to have jobs outside of religious activities... that's why many of us are taking two education systems. (R3)</i>
	Forced Dual Learning Path	Graduates are not qualified for jobs outside religious roles	<i>"Some schools and universities are not accepting madrasah diplomas." (R3)</i>
		<i>"I also took another field of education... secular... to ensure that I have secured my life." (R3)</i>	
	Resilience Despite Challenges	<i>"I still chose to pursue it... I need to learn about my religion." (R2)</i>	

Appendix I. Recognition and PTO Requirements



Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education
Cotabato City



Office of the Minister

Annex F: Required Documents on Filing of Application for Government Recognition

Name of Madrasah:	Division:
Address:	Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) No.:
(Barangay) (Municipality) (Province)	School ID:
DOCUMENTARY REQUIREMENTS (3 Copies for DOME, DOBE and OMEN Planning Division)	VERIFICATION To be filed out by the Validation Composite Team
Madrasah Administrative and Management Concerns	REMARKS (Validate consistency of different documents presented)
1. Application of MBHTE - BARMM Government Recognition The application must be addressed to: HON. MOHAGHER M. IQBAL Minister Thru: TAHIR G. NALG, MAIS Director General	Status of Submission (Check if complied) Status of Submission (Check if complied) Supervise or if submit(s)
2. Endorsement from Madaris Education Division Heads while Madaris Division Superintendent is yet to be hired	
3. Duty Accomplished Madrasah Improvement Plan (3 Years)	
4. A certification signed by the principal/academic head and the president of the private madrasah stating that the old curriculum already phase-out after 6 years of operation. The madrasah is implementing Tahderyyah Curriculum and Standard Madrasah Curriculum (ISAL and DepEd Grade 1 to 12)	
5. Original/Certified true copy/authenticated copy of the Permit to Operate (PTO) (Government Permit/Recognition). The PTO must be updated.	
6. Proof of ownership such as original certificate of land title/transfer certificate of title/deed of donation/contract of leasehold of usufruct and the like with a minimum of 200 square meter land area.	
7. Certification signed by the academic head and the president of the Private Madrasah stating that the old curriculum of madrasah shall be gradually phased out/phase out.	
8. Board Resolution adopting the Tahderyyah Curriculum and Refine Standard Madrasah Curriculum (K to 12 and ISAL) signed by the members of the Board.	

28 | Page



Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education
Cotabato City



Office of the Minister

9. K to 12 Teachers Contract of Service Updated for current year) must be notarized attached Transcript of Record Preferably Bachelor of Elementary Education Graduate for Elementary level and Bachelor of Secondary Education for Secondary level			
10. ISAL Teachers' Asatiz Contract of Service Updated for current year) must be notarized attached Transcript of Record Preferably Tahderyyah Graduate			
11. Licensure Examination for Teachers Results if applicable/ constant monitoring, suitable training, and follow-up support to maintain a high-quality workforce. LET Passers: Male: Female:			
12. Parents Teachers and Community Association (PTCA) Structure and 3 Years Accomplishments (pictures)			
13. Madrasah Profile/Information Sheet			
14. SF 1 - School Register signed by the principal and duly received by the Madaris Education Division Head. Current year and last school year (for renewal only) certified true copy by the School Record Officer or School Principal) Note: Annexes or other branches should have a separate application.			Last School Year: Male: Female: Total: Current School Year: Male: Female: Total:
15. SF 2 - Learner's Daily Class Attendance (last school year)			
16. SF 5 - Report on Promotion (Last school year)			
17. SF 7 - Inventory of School Personnel (Teaching Load and Assignment last school year)			
18. SF 9 - Learner Progress Report Card (sample only)			
19. SF 10 - Learner's Permanent Academic Record (Form 137 with birth certificate form Kinder to Grade 6) (sample only)			
20. Test Questions and Table of Specification (sample only)			
Curriculum Implementation and Compliance / Learning Delivery Management			
ISAL SUBJECTS and Tahderyyah Curriculum			
21. Matrix of Teachers/Teacher Program			
22. Individual Copy of the Tahderyyah Curriculum for ISAL Teachers			
23. Individual Copy of the Refine Standard Madrasah Curriculum for ISAL Teachers (Pictures Only)			
24. Teachers' Guide/Lesson Plan/Log (sample only)			
25. Individual Instructional Materials in respective classrooms (Digital and Non-Digital, indigenized, contextualized, and customized needs-based learning resources to cater diverse group of learners)			
26. Supervisory Plan - Conduct of Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning Process			

29 | Page



Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education
Cotabato City



Office of the Minister

Programs and the ISAL teacher performance that include Clinical Supervision.			
27. Quarterly Test Paper			
Grade 1 TO 12 SUBJECTS			
28. Matrix of Teachers/Teacher Program			
29. Class Program			
30. Individual Copy of the Curriculum for T-12 Teachers Guide (Pictures only)			
31. Teachers' Guide/Lesson Plan/Log (sample only)			
32. Individual Instructional Materials in respective classrooms (Digital and Non-Digital, indigenized, contextualized, and customized needs-based learning resources to cater diverse group of learners)			
33. Supervisory Plan - Conduct of Monitoring and Evaluation of the Learners Development and the teacher performance that include Clinical Supervision. (sample only) Attached Teachers Classroom Observation Sheet)			
34. Manipulative Materials for Tahderyyah Learners to Grade 3.			
Financial Management			
35. Official Statement signed by the Academic Head or Registrar and the President of the Madrasah stating the amount of the tuition fee collected per student/school year.			
36. Schedule of tuition and other fees signed by the school registrar and approved by the school head.			
37. Work and Financial Plan (WFP), sources and details of proponents, and equity participation in the project pursuant to COA Circular No. 2007-001 (original copy)			
38. LBP Bank Account for Private Madrasah qualified to receive the financial grant (Photocopy of the Passbook)			
39. Proposed annual budget for the school year approved by the board of directors that includes salaries, maintenance expenses and capital expenditures (building, property, and equipment's)			
40. Certificate that the Madrasah financial capacity can sustain and maintain school resources besides tuition fees or assistance from the government. (State the Source)			
41. Payroll and Teachers' Asatiz Contract (3 consecutive years)			
Madrasah Infrastructure and Other Learning Support Materials (Pictures)			
42. Complete Classroom (Standard in the numbers of Learners and Grade level)			
43. Complete chairs depend on the number of pupils per grade level			
44. Teachers table and chairs			
45. Comfort Rooms (Separate Girls and Boys for common CR)			
46. Administrators/ Principal's Office			
47. Playground			
48. Water Facilities			

30 | Page



Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education
Cotabato City



Office of the Minister

49. Electric Facilities			
50. School Fence			
51. Canteen			
52. Home and Economics Room			
53. Science Laboratory			
54. Information Communication and Technology (ICT) Room			
55. Washing Facilities with ablution area			
56. Learners Output			
57. Masjid (Prayer Room)			
58. Clinic			
59. Classroom Aide for learners with special needs			
60. wheelchair ramps			
Grand Total			

COMMENT(S):

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Validator / Head of the Team

Monitoring and Evaluation Section Head /
SME - Private Madrasah Coordinator

Noted by:

ABDULKAHAR GUIAMBANGAN
Education Program Supervisor
OIC Chief - Quality Assurance Division

REMARKS:

☐ All requirements complied with
☐ With deficiencies (marked x)

Recommending Approval:

Date:

PROF. TAHIR G. NALG, MAIS
Director General for MADARIS

ACTION:
☐ Conduct on-site inspection/validation
☐ Notify Division EPS in-charge of Private Madrasah

Approved by:

MOHAGHER M. IQBAL
Minister

31 | Page



Name of Madrasah:	Division:
Address:	Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) No. :
(Barangay) (Municipality) (Province)	
Name of the President:	Contact No.
Documentary Requirements (3 Sets of the following documents with e-copy) For DGMG, Division and OMIN Planning Division)	Status of Submission To be filled out by the Division Madrasah Focal Person if submitted VERIFICATION To be filled out by the Validation Committee Team Status of REMARKS (Validate consistency of different documents presented)
1. Application for MBHTE -BARMM Permit to Operate for Non-Formal Education (Traditional/ Weekend Madrasah) The application must be address to: HON. MOHAGHAGER M. IQBAL Minister THRU: TAHIR G. NALG, MAIS Director General	
2. Original or Certified true copy of board resolution Applying for Permit to Operate duly signed by all members of the board.	
3. Local Government Unit (LGU) certificate stating that the madrasah is existing and recognized as learning institutions.	
4. Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) certification that the madrasah is existing and recognize as existing as learning institution for Traditional Madrasah.	
a. Number/List of Learners of prospective applicant madrasah	

N o.	Name (Family Name, First Name, Middle Name)	Sex	Age	Date of Birth	Add res			Total Area:	Lot Area:
6.	Proof of ownership such as original certificate of land title/ transfer certificate of title/deed of donation/ contract of lease/deed of usufruct.								
7.	Madrasah Site Development Plan (The madrasah must not be in a high-risk area, natural and man-made calamities).								
8.	Madrasah Information Profile (Annex) (include it in the MIS)								
Madrasah Infrastructure and Other Learning Support Materials (Pictures)									
9.	Classroom (Standard in the numbers of Learners.)								
10.	Chairs depend on the target number of pupils								
11.	Teachers table and chairs								
12.	Water and electric facilities or sources								
13.	Copy of the Curriculum Proposed / Currently Used								
14.	Teachers qualification (Copy of the Transcript of Record)								
Remarks (Qualified/Disqualified for Permit to Operate)									



Annex K:

Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
Ministry of Basic, Higher, Technical and Basic Education
DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR MATRIBAL EDUCATION
Name of Madrasah
Sito, Barangay, Municipality, Province

Vision	_____
_____	_____
Mission	_____
_____	_____
Guiding Principles	_____
_____	_____
A. GENERAL PROFILE	
1. S.E.C. Registration	CN202068191
2. Government Recognition No./PTO No.	20
3. School ID	_____
4. Division	Maguindanao I
5. Name of Madrasah/Markaz	_____
6. Address	_____
_____	_____
7. School e-mail address	_____
8. Facebook Page/Website	_____
9. Contact No.	_____
10. Account Number(Landbank)	_____
11. Administrator/Modker	_____
12. Year Established	1998 (Traditional Madrasah)
B. LEVEL OF OFFERING: PLEASE CHECK	
A. Kindergarten (Tahdirriyyah)	☐
B. Elementary (Ibtidaiyyah) 6 years	☐
C. Junior High School (Muallawwasatiah) 3 years	☐
D. Senior High School (Thanawi) 3 years	☐

113

Appendix K. Prescribed Madrasah Curriculum



Republic of the Philippines
Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education
Cotabato City



Office of the Minister

Annex A. Prescribe Time Allotment for Standard Madrasah Curriculum Implementers in BARMM only.

Learning Areas	Grade I	Grade II	Grade III	Grade IV	Grade V	Grade VI	Frequency
English	60	60	60	60	60	60	Daily
Filipino	60	60	60	50	50	50	Daily
Science and Health			40	50	50	50	Daily
Mathematics	60	60	60	60	60	60	Daily
Makabayan							
SK	50	50	50				
HKS				40	40	40	
EPP				40	40	40	Daily
MSEP				30	30	30	Daily
Character Education with Integration of Islamic Values	30	30	30	20	20	20	Daily
ISAL Subjects							
Arabic Language	60	60	60	50	50	50	Daily
Qur'an	40	40	40	40	40	40	Daily
Sirah and Hadith	40	40	40	40	40	40	Sirah 3x a week Hadith 2x a week
Aqidah and Fiqh	40	40	40	40	40	40	Aqidah 3x a week Fiqh 2x a week
Total	440	440	480	520	520	520	