# Pedagogical Praxis: Muslim-Filipino Madrasah Teachers' Conceptuality of Instructional Process

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore and analyze the conceptuality of Muslim-Filipino Madrasah teachers or the *Asatidz* on instructional processes anchored in their pedagogical praxis. This study employed a qualitative research design using a transcendental phenomenological approach. In-depth interviews were initiated to understand the essence of the participants' lived experiences. The author used purposive sampling with five research participants who implement the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education program in selected schools in the Philippines. There were four major themes identified in the study: pedagogical amalgamation of traditional and non-traditional teaching practices; collaborative learning practices; effective classroom management; and reflective practice in teaching. The results of the study provide a clear description of Madrasah teachers' conceptualization of instructional processes especially in teaching and learning. However, the study is limited to five selected *Asatidz*. These results may be useful in guiding education stakeholders in evidence-based policymaking particularly, in the field of teacher development, which seeks to create comprehensive and well-thought pedagogical programs for the *Asatidz*. These programs should better suit and complement Madrasah teachers' pedagogical needs anchored to their pedagogical praxis. The results provide baseline data for instructional and educational enrichment among Filipino Madrasah teachers.

*Keywords*: ALIVE program, Filipino-Muslim, Madrasah education, Madrasah teacher, Philippines

Teacher's pedagogical practice is one of the most important factors to consider in the teaching and learning process. Teachers with a good grasp of instructional processes are able to improve and enrich educational experiences of their learners (Darling-Hammond, 2006). In this study, instructional process refers to the interplay of the instructional model, strategies, methods, techniques, and tactics as reflected in the pedagogical practices of the Madrasah teachers. Praxis pedagogy provides the opportunities for educational issues to be shared and explored deeply (Arnold & Mundy, 2020) and through this approach teachers are able to reflect on the practice of schools and the curriculum. In the Philippines, the Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education (ALIVE) program of the Department of Education (DepEd) requires well-trained and competent Madrasah teachers or *Asatidz* to be the main implementers of the ALIVE program (Sali & Marasigan, 2020).

The *Asatidz* are responsible for teaching an additional two subjects on top of the regular basic education curriculum. However, most *Asatidz* implementing the ALIVE program are not regular teachers and are not necessarily graduates of a professional education course in higher education. Conversely, the *Asatidz* are expected to be curriculum planners, designers, implementers, and evaluators with awareness of pedagogical practices and content knowledge (Sali & Marasigan, 2020). In general, educators are products of completed educational experiences who went through practical pedagogical training in their formative years. These experiences helped shape pedagogical practices, especially their teaching styles and instructional strategies. The purpose of this paper is to explore and analyze the conceptuality of Muslim-Filipino Madrasah teachers on instructional processes anchored in their pedagogical praxis. The concept of self-reflection among teachers provides realization in conceptualizing effective pedagogical practices in teaching and learning.

Despite the extensive studies conducted on pedagogical practices of Madrasah teachers as evident in the professional literature, there are few studies on Madrasah teachers' conceptualization of instructional processes in the Philippines (Sali & Marasigan, 2020). The results of this study will therefore benefit major educational stakeholders in understanding the pedagogical praxis underlying the various practices of Filipino-Muslim Madrasah teachers in implementing the ALIVE program. This study provides evidence-based research that will enrich the existing dearth of literature on pedagogical practices of Madrasah teachers in the Philippines. In addition, Fang (1994) discussed the significance in understanding the "missing paradigm" (p. 50) in line with teacher's conceptualization that focuses on teacher's perspective in teaching and learning. Hence, this study sought to explore and analyze the conceptuality of *Asatidz'* instructional process in selected ALIVE schools in Metro Manila. More specifically, it will answer the following question:

> How do Filipino-Madrasah Teachers [*Asatidz*] conceptualize their pedagogical practices in the teaching and learning process?

## Literature Review

According to Kemmis (2012), praxis is part of the self-formation of a person, as it gives valuable benefit to one's self at the same time that it purports good in the human community – "creating the good society by acting for the good of society" (p. 87). In the context of education, Freire's (1978) adoption of praxis as imperative to transforming the world as reflected in pedagogical practices became unprecedented (Mayo, 2016). In addition, the dialectical relationship between consciousness and the world is inevitable in terms of understanding various experiences, relationships, and complexities, including teachers' conceptuality of

instructional processes. The word praxis has been defined and interpreted in many ways in professional literature. However, in this study, praxis is employed as the synthesis of theories exploring the conceptuality of instructional processes through the relevant reflections of Madrasah teachers in the teaching and learning process, particularly "on their material surroundings and reflect upon them with a view to transforming them" (Mayo, 2016, p. 2). Furthermore, teachers are "acting within an educational paradigm formed and differentiated by knowledge and dispositions which give rise to different kinds of actions and ethics" (Edwards-Groves et al., 2018, p. 141).

Edwards-Groves et al. (2018) note that educators should be concerned with pedagogical praxis in their contemporary times. In understanding the pedagogical praxis of teaching and learning, it is imperative for educators to examine actual instructional practices (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2017; Memon, 2011; Sali & Marasigan, 2020; Sirotová, 2016;) as well as the interplay of pedagogical theories (Edwards-Groves et al., 2018; Freire, 1987; Kemmis, 2012). In practice, teachers are guided by their choices, knowledge, and dispositions "acting within an educational paradigm" (Edwards-Groves et al., 2018, p. 141). With regard to this, several researchers have investigated the effects of teachers' beliefs in teaching and learning. Nespor (1987) highlighted that beliefs are entrenched in one's personal history, and thus unlearning is arduous. Moreover, beliefs influence the teacher's thinking in creating sound pedagogical choices and guides their behavior in actual practice. Within this praxis, Edwards-Groves et al. (2018) discussed four disposition-action couplings (adapted from Kemmis, 2012) of praxis-oriented educators. Primarily, these dispositions "directs us to the interplay, reciprocity, and delineation" (p. 142) between the following classes of actions: theoretical perspective; technical perspective; practical perspective; and critical perspective.

According to Miranda and Damico (2013), the relationship between belief and behavior makes the study of teacher beliefs consequently critical. In addition, Schachter (2017) conducted phenomenological research aimed at understanding early childhood teachers' pedagogical reasoning or beliefs in language and literacy instruction. Their findings suggested the need for teachers to better understand how to prioritize their knowledge for use in practice. Furthermore, Chikasanda et al. (2012) conducted a qualitative analysis of the teachers' journey through the phases of professional development. They argued that teacher's conceptualization of learning in technology is still fragile at this point. Several researchers have also acknowledged the importance of teacher beliefs in the realization of education reform (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Fang, 1996; Miranda & Damico, 2013). Lastly, Fang (1994) discussed the significance of understanding the "missing paradigm" (p. 50) in line with a teacher's conceptualization that focuses on the teacher's perspective in teaching and learning. Overall, it thus appears that pedagogical reasoning from various sources of knowledge is pivotal for teachers in making choices about their actions and practices in teaching (Schachter, 2017).

**On the Pedagogical Praxis of Madrasah Teachers**
Van Sledright (2010) proposes that there are two important factors which unify the course of teaching and learning. The first one is the teacher's cognitive understanding or simply the content knowledge, and the other is the pedagogical knowledge or the art of presenting information through pedagogical skills. Moreover, by uniting these two vital factors, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is initiated. In 1986, Shulman and a group of researchers introduced the concept of PCK which focuses on the broader perspective to further understand teaching and learning. According to Shulman (1987), PCK included an "understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, presented, and adapted to diverse interests and abilities of the learners and presented for instruction" (p.8).

Teachers are expected to create meaningful and relevant experiences in the classroom. As instructional leaders, the teacher should exemplify pedagogical competence (Pekkarinen & Hirtso, 2017). In practice, teachers execute different methods and strategies anchored to different instructional models to perform efficient academic tasks (Trigwell & Prosser, 2004): for instance, how to effectively and efficiently translate competencies embedded in the curriculum during actual teaching, execute classroom management, and incorporate student-centered approach to learning among others. In general, pedagogical practices of Madrasah teachers can be best understood when based on the different factors that influence their overall practices to include the following: self-efficacy (Abdullah, 2018; Alotaibi, 2014; Amri et al., 2017; Barni et al., 2019; Faizuddin, 2016; Hussin et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2018); educational background including Islamic education (Halstead, 2004; Hasyim, 2016; Memon, 2011; Sabki & Hardaker, 2013; 2015; 2018; Tengku Kasim & Abdurajak, 2018); trainings and seminars attended during their pre-service or in-service (Alwadai, 2014; Sali & Marasigan, 2020); and even peer mentoring (Solaiman, 2017). Pedagogical praxis as a form of experience-based professional learning allows the teacher to improve their professional as well as personal competencies (Sirotová, 2016).

Through the interplay of different factors during their formative years, and the progress of their PCK through time, an amalgam is created for the development of teaching styles and the ability to discern one's pedagogical choices. This praxis enables the check and balance of the Madrasah teacher's awareness of self-knowledge and self-evaluation in understanding pedagogical practices in a deeper sense. In addition, teachers' self-reflection of instructional processes is vital to assess themselves: it articulates their own inquiry based on the real issues from teaching and learning experiences (Arnold & Mundy, 2020). The different factors mentioned influence the conceptualization of the Madrasah teacher's pedagogical orientation and foundation in actual practice. This translation of the teacher's knowledge into practice and self-preparedness is crucial to the outcomes of classroom teaching. According to Faizuddin (2016), Islamic teachers who showed creative instructional strategies during the teaching and learning process enabled students to experience a wider variety of classroom activities. In this respect a teacher's creativity appears to serve as a crucial factor in translating competencies through instruction.

Furthermore, a study by Amri et al. (2017) showed how the educational background of Islamic teachers can also affect the learning interests of students. In their study, Islamic teachers who possessed intercultural competence showed greater awareness of their students' diverse needs in the classroom. Thus, Islamic teachers are able to use intercultural competence to enrich the classroom interaction, activities, and management of the class. Tengku Kasim and Abdurajak (2018), also explored, in a qualitative research study, the pedagogical practices of novice Islamic education teachers, where the results showed diversity on their teaching methodologies. The Islamic teachers employed 21st century teaching methods as opposed to the traditional method of purely lecture. However, in a qualitative study conducted by Ishomuddin and Bin Mokhtar (2017) that studied the teaching methods of Islamic teachers who graduated from Middle Eastern countries, the results showed that the traditional method of teaching such as lectures is a way to provide more knowledge than using other teaching methods.

Lastly, Hussin et al. (2014) have shown that diversification of pedagogical approaches identifies three significant themes regarding the teaching practices of Islamic teachers: a material-resource centered theme; a teacher-centered theme; and a student-centered teaching method of religious subject. Significantly, Islamic teachers' well-organized pedagogical

practices spell difference in guiding the students' learning. As such, mastery of the subject and well-initiated classroom activities and teaching methodologies are sought. Therefore, Madrasah teachers who aim to maximize their pedagogical practices will prepare themselves efficiently through enriched classroom interaction and over-all management of the class.

**The ALIVE Program: Madrasah teachers' Pedagogical Practices**
The DepEd Order (DO) No. 41, series of 2017 or "Policy Guidelines on Madrasah Education in the K to 12 Basic Education Program" provides the latest implementation guidelines. The program gives appropriate and relevant educational opportunities to the Muslim learners in the Philippines. The DepEd order mentioned is enacted across accredited public schools in the country. It adds two subjects to the regular basic education curriculum: Arabic Language, and Islamic Values. Significantly, the *Asatidz* play an important role in the over-all success of the program (Sali & Marasigan, 2020). However, most *Asatidz* or Madrasah teachers are not regular teachers and are not necessarily graduates of an education course in higher education and some *Asatidz* didn't have significant teaching experiences before applying to the program.

However, the DepEd offers several programs before *Asatidz* are deployed as part of its professionalization measures. The aspiring *Asatidz* must pass the Qualifying Exam in Arabic Language and Islamic Studies (QEALIS) and undergo Language Enhancement and Pedagogy (LEaP). It is a training prototype provided to build English proficiency and the beginning of mastery of lesson planning, teaching, and assessment for Madrasah teachers. LEaP becomes one of the major first-hand pedagogical trainings of the accepted *Asatidz,* learning fundamental concepts in teaching pedagogy before actual deployment (Sali & Marasigan, 2020). Albeit, results of some related studies to *Asatidz'* pedagogical practices indicated recurring challenges: existing structures and support systems for effective pedagogy; further relevant training on teaching strategies; and translation of competencies into actual practice and assessment (Final Report of Muslim Education Initiatives, 2014; Marasigan, 2019a; Review Report on the Three Years Implementation of ALIVE Program, 2018; ). Also, Solaiman (2017) in his descriptive research on the implementation of ALIVE in Marawi City, showed infrequent monitoring of the program including classroom observation of the *Asatidz* were also noted.

Conversely, in an exploratory study of Sali and Marasigan (2020), the seminars and enrichment activities attended by the *Asatidz* in ALIVE selected schools in Quezon City, "showed diversity on their teaching strategies and understanding of the concepts in pedagogy" (p. 209) as observed in their actual classroom teaching. This study serves as a clear indication of the interplay of pedagogical theories and actual practices among Madrasah teachers. The *Asatidz* narrated the importance of the training in teaching and learning process, specifically how to use strategies and methods of teaching, how to create lesson plans and correct objectives, and how to fill out promotional reports and forms among others.

Remarkably, the pedagogical practices of the *Asatidz* in the Philippines are both influenced by secular and non-secular orientations. As part of the professional development of the *Asatidz,* the Madrasah teachers are regularly invited to join different seminars and trainings conducted by DepEd and their respective schools. These different pedagogical trainings are congruent to Philippine secular education orientation – a mix of philosophical tenets from realism (essentialism), progressivism (pragmatism), existentialist humanism and social reconstructionism (Muslim Education Initiatives Final Report, 2014).

**Conceptual Framework**
Primarily, the framework for the current investigation is anchored to Freire's (1978) adoption of praxis as reflected in the *Asatidz'* conceptuality of instructional process being manifested in their pedagogical practices, as seen in the teaching and learning process. This social lens purports that self-reflection towards pedagogical practices is imperative to the teacher's understanding towards transformational education. This allows teachers to grasp theory into practice in developing teaching styles that brings change in the school environment to include learner's relevant experiences in the educative process.

In this study, the conceptual flow as represented in Figure 1 will be analyzed to examine the important relationships among the different factors that affect and influence the conceptuality of a Madrasah teacher's instructional process anchored to their pedagogical praxis. This is intended to identify a pedagogical praxis designed to create space for verifying the theoretical knowledge, methods, and procedures in real conditions of an educational process (Sirotová, 2016). The three-way interaction that occurs in this space is viewed as influencing the practices of the *Asatidz* that will be explored through their relevant pedagogical reflections, and will be used to identify the relevant "essence" of the phenomenon.
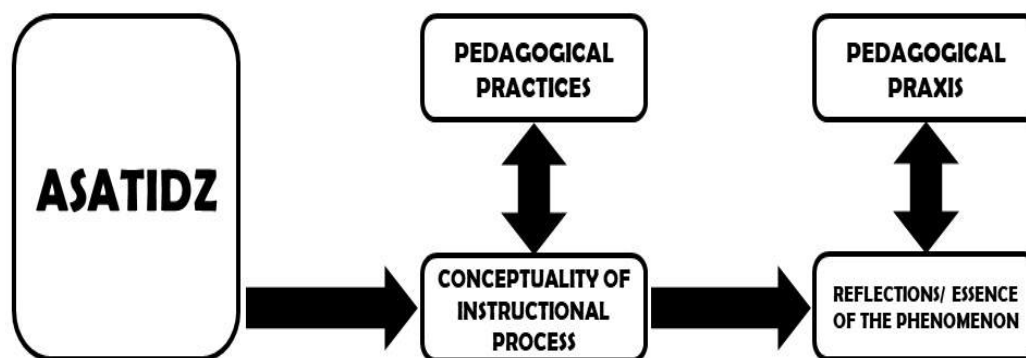


Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

**Methodology**

A qualitative transcendental phenomenological approach (Moustakas, 1994, as adapted from Husserl, 1931), was employed in this study. The qualitative design gathered an in-depth understanding of the participants' description of their lived experiences to generate an "essence" (Merriam, 2009). In this study, the essence of the *Asatidz'* conceptuality of instructional processes, as manifested in their pedagogical practices during teaching and learning, was explored based on their reflections. The study described the commonalities of the participants' experience and explored relevant themes. In the Philippines, the study of the Madrasah Education Program, especially in the implementation of the ALIVE program in public schools, is unprecedented, thus highlighting the ability of this research to address a relevant gap in our understanding of teaching praxis. From this perspective Sali and Marasigan (2020) point out the current dearth of research outputs in the professional literature, especially on describing the lived experiences and understanding the nature of reality and knowledge of the grassroots implementers.

Therefore, a qualitative research design allowed the researcher to understand the meaning of a certain phenomenon of the participant's perspective or *emic* (Merriam, 2009) in a naturalistic

setting without any manipulation in the environment. This description suits the researcher's intention as it sought to explore and analyze the conceptuality of instructional process of the *Asatidz* anchored in their pedagogical praxis. The participants were five Madrasah teachers or *Asatidz* from selected ALIVE public schools in Metro Manila in National Capital Region. A minimum size for phenomenological study is 5 to 25 individuals, as suggested by Creswell (1998).

The participants must have at least five years or beyond in service and teaching experience who had attended various professional development of DepEd for at least three years. The validated semi-structured interview method was employed and the interview questions had undergone a pilot study for appropriateness prior to the actual data gathering. The participants' consent was secured and the participants were not coerced to participate in the study. The study employed non-probability purposive sampling (Creswell, 1998), through a qualitative method of analysis. The generalizability of these findings to the population is thus limited, because the sample size may not be the representative of the *Asatidz* in the entire Metro Manila or elsewhere. The sample is described more fully on Table 1.

Table 1: Basic Profile of the Sample

| Characteristics | Indicators | No. of Participants |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 4 |
|  | Male | 1 |
| Age | 21-30 | 1 |
|  | 31-40 | 0 |
|  | 41-50 | 1 |
|  | >51 | 3 |
| Length of Service | 5 years | 2 |
|  | 6-10 years | 0 |
|  | 11-15 years | 3 |
| Professional Development | Attended DepEd in-service teacher workshops and seminars | 5 |

Furthermore, qualitative data gathered from the participants was initiated through their long interviews ranged from one to two hours until data saturation (Creswell, 1998) were recorded and were transcribed in verbatim. Horizontalization was then instigated to give equal consideration to each statement of the participants, especially concerning how they experienced the phenomenon. Thematic analysis was also conducted, employing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of the data, to search for common themes of the interview responses.

The transcriptions, after being coded, were run through *Nvivo 12*, considering the rich data generated from the interviews. The most frequent words were considered in initial coding. A validity assumption was made that each participant provided truthful answers to the questions presented. To verify the accuracy of the participant's responses, respondent validation was made. The researcher's role in the study was the observer.

The *Asatidz'* average years of service in the implementation of ALIVE program are ten years. The participants underwent professional development including the DepEd pre-service and in-service workshop and training on pedagogy enrichment before and during deployment to schools as soon as they were employed. Furthermore, four out of five had attended formal schooling for an education course and graduated with a degree and the remaining participant didn't. Also, all of the participants are proficient in Arabic language.

## Results and Discussion

The findings of this study were used to explore and analyze the conceptuality of instructional process of the *Asatidz*, as anchored in teachers' pedagogical praxis. The study was limited, with five ALIVE schools and the sample size of five participants during the course of the study. The study was conducted in three school divisions in major cities in the National Capital Region. Thematic analysis was initiated employing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of the data. During the data analysis, four major themes emerged: pedagogical amalgamation of traditional and non-traditional teaching practices; collaborative learning practices; effective classroom management; and reflective practice in teaching. Each of the themes is discussed below.

### Pedagogical Amalgamation of Traditional and Non-Traditional Practices

Most of the participants understood the concept of teaching as a two-way process between learners and a teacher in an actual classroom instruction. Remarkably, some *Asatidz* reflected on the differences of the instruction employed by their former Islamic teachers or mentors which were traditionalist in orientation as opposed to the current teaching strategies performed in a contemporary classroom. The experiences based on their exposure to traditional teaching methodologies such as rote learning and direct instruction support the study of Sabki and Hardaker (2003) that a teacher's pedagogical strategy "facilitates the interplay between orality, memorisation and the sacred text in spiritually forming the human person" (p.77) *with respect* to Islamic pedagogy. The conceptualization of the traditional teaching methodologies and practices of their previous teachers provided them with clear distinctions between traditional and contemporary pedagogical approaches. The findings suggested interplay in pedagogical theories and actual instructional practice which guides the *Asatidz* to choose what pedagogical practices to employ and how to better execute these practices in the classroom. In relation to praxis-oriented educators as discussed in the four disposition-action couplings of Edwards-Groves et al. (2018, as adapted from Kemmis, 2012), these dispositions were evident in *Asatidz'* pedagogical amalgamation which directs them "to the interplay, reciprocity, and delineation" (p. 142) of their pedagogical practices.

The participants adapt contemporary teaching as part of their pedagogical practices in enriching relevant learning experiences in the classroom (Amri et al., 2017; Faizuddin, 2016; Tengku Kasim & Abdurajak, 2018) with respect to the findings of Ishomuddin and Bin Mokhtar (2017), demonstrating that the traditional method of teaching can provide more knowledge than using other teaching methods. In the case of the selected Filipino-Muslim Madrasah teachers, their conceptuality concerning instructional process indicated similar results with the 2014 Muslim Education Initiatives Final Report. Most of the *Asatidz'* pedagogical practices reflected different philosophical tenets anchored from realism, progressivism, existentialist humanism and social reconstructionism.

In contemporary education, a more socio-constructivist thinking anchored to differentiated practices are being employed in the classroom, and the traditional methodologies in teaching

provides support for the foundational concepts needed to understand complex concepts. Significantly, the combination of these two practices is being implemented by the *Asatidz*. Based on their reflections, the pedagogical practices they generally used are mostly a combination of traditional and contemporary approaches to teaching and learning. With these qualities and practices, an understanding of the essential interplay of these two pedagogical approaches (traditional and contemporary teaching strategies) is combined to suggest a pedagogical amalgamation. This interplay shows distinction as shared pedagogic qualities and practices of the *Asatidz* in the Philippines as part of the diverse sites of Islamic education around the world (Alkouatli, 2018).

According to the participants, these pedagogical practices and employing various instructional methods anchored to contemporary teaching (e.g. games, role playing, demonstration, using technological devices for learning, and cooperative learning groups) are essential; especially on the actual implementation of learning competencies embedded in the Refined Elementary Madrasah Curriculum (REMC). In addition, according to the participants, these different practices are very much highlighted in the classroom, as evident in the following statements:

> "*I usually group [for collaborative activity] my pupils. Grouping the pupils is very important so that they can learn from each other. Also, they can mentor one another*" – P1.

> "*I employ visual aids [during classroom instruction]. I also let my pupils perform demonstration by group. For example, how to perform prayer…*" – P2.

> "*There were times I used my laptop. Unfortunately, we don't have projector. I show some pictures and videos. […] I usually play videos from YouTube such as the story of the Prophets*" – P3.

> "*For example you also use show cards! Especially when you utilize laptop it will be very effective for them [learners]*" – P4.

> "*The learners should develop 21st century [skills]. They [learners] love games, group competition [as part of the pedagogical practices], and [movement] using their psychomotor skills*" – P5.

**Collaborative Learning Practices**

The *Asatidz,* agreed about the importance of collaborative learning practices being initiated during classroom instruction. There are two main reasons why interaction between learners and teacher is imperative for the over-all learning of the pupils as explained by some of the participants: (development of learners' social skills, and emotional support for shy learners during classroom interaction. In support, according to Akdeniz (2016), interactive instruction relies heavily on discussion and sharing among participants. This will develop social skills and abilities, to organize thoughts, and to develop rational arguments (p. 70). The *Asatidz* knew that learners must be exposed to a variety of classroom interventions and opportunities to learn from each other. Among the instructional methods the *Asatidz* mentioned that they used for learners to interact during class discussion were small group conversation, and learner pairs. Some of the *Asatidz* shared why they incorporate different collaborative activities in their classroom instruction:

> "*I always practice doing group activity. There are some learners who are too shy [to interact]. During the activity, they will join especially when there is a leader assigned*" – P5.

> "*By doing the group activity, the learners are encouraged to develop their [social] skills*" – P3.

> "*The learners have different ideas. They may have better ideas to share. That is what grouping all about. Aside from that they have to perform [such as role play] in the class*" – P1.

According to Hussin et al. (2014), there were three significant themes identified on teaching practices of Islamic teachers: material-resource centered; teacher-centered; and student-centered teaching method of religious subject. Similar to the results of Hussin et al. (2014), the *Asatidz* understood the importance of well-organized pedagogical practices in guiding the students to learn. Most of these participants preferred well-initiated collaborative classroom activities and teaching methodologies. The selected Filipino-Muslim Madrasah teachers anchored their teaching practices on a student-centered approach to enrich classroom interaction and relevant experiences. The *Asatidz'* pedagogical reasoning is guided with their understanding on the importance of seeking various sources of knowledge in making choices about their actions and practices in teaching.

In relation to Schachter's (2017) findings, the knowledge that teachers hold about children's learning is imperative to teacher practices. Consistent with the findings of this study, *Asatidz'* pedagogical practices are influenced by their pedagogical praxis in making sure the learners are able to maximize relevant classroom experiences through collaborative learning practices. In addition, according to Sirotová (2016), "the acquirement of professional competencies begins during the pre-gradual preparation and they are further developed in a real educational praxis" (p. 530). In the case of the participants, the influence of their formative years in teaching and learning especially the involvements of their previous mentors was evident.

The participants shared that choosing instructional methods and materials suited for the learners is a demanding task, yet an essential one nonetheless. Most of the *Asatidz* were aware of the concept of different learning styles, and some of them ascribed to do more interactive and collaborative activities rather than to be complaisant in following traditional teaching practices in their instruction. The *Asatidz* shared their beliefs in creating a conducive environment for their learners by focusing on student-oriented practices such as establishing instructional tactics in the classroom. Instructional tactic refers to a way on how to enhance learning which has a narrower scope than instructional strategies (Akdeniz, 2016). Most of the participants were aware of their learners' own learning styles and strategies to cope with different subjects in the ALIVE program implementation. According to Bishop and Berryman (2009), "relationships and interactions between teachers and students in the classroom are keys to effective teaching of students" (p. 27).

**Effective Classroom Management**

Most of the participants discussed the importance of establishing classroom management especially with diverse learners enrolled in the ALIVE program. According to Akdeniz (2016), "effective teaching and learning cannot take place if classroom management is not applied sufficiently" (p. 249). The classroom management according to the *Asatidz* helps provide structure in order to create a non-threatening and a democratic learning environment where

learners can freely share their ideas, beliefs, and opinions which are validated with respect (Marasigan, 2019b). The *Asatidz s*hared their different classroom management in order to facilitate meaningful learning. For the participants, gaining the attention of the learners through classroom management is crucial to the teaching and learning process. These pedagogical reflections of the *Asatidz* emphasized the significance of pedagogical competence (Pekkarinen & Hirtso, 2017) in performing efficient academic tasks (Trigwell & Prosser, 2004). In these findings, the *Asatidz* create a space for verifying the theoretical knowledge, methods, and procedures in real conditions of an educational process (Sirotová, 2016) based on their conception that relevant learning with the learners emanates in a well-established classroom.

Some of the *Asatidz* established rules in the classroom by performing the following instructional tactics: use of meta-cards to answer questions; assigning a student leader during collaborative learning activities; teacher cues such as prayers, greetings and songs before formally starting the class; positive reinforcement; raising of hands; and class segregation of male and female learners. Interestingly, for higher levels, *Asatidz* follows sex-based segregation for male and female learners. This practice is mostly attributed to the religious belief that males and females should maintain distance from members of the opposite sex who are not immediate family members. According to the participants, these different classroom management tactics are essential during the teaching and learning process, as evident in the following statements:

> "*First, we have to attend training and seminar on pedagogy […] especially on the different [teaching] strategies and techniques and how to implement classroom management.*" – P1.

> "*In my part, my [teaching] style first the classroom management. If you don't have classroom management inside your classroom you will not be able to concentrate [during classroom teaching]*" – P4.

Most of the *Asatidz* teachers also discussed the particular importance of classroom management in relation to diverse learners enrolled in the ALIVE program. According to Akdeniz (2016), "effective teaching and learning cannot take place if classroom management is not applied sufficiently" (p. 249). The classroom management of the *Asatidz* helps provide structure to the class in order to create a non-threatening democratic learning environment where learners can feel that their ideas, beliefs, and opinions are validated with respect to each other.

**Reflective Practice in Teaching**
Motivation acts as a reflection of teachers' condition and level for growth and improvement. Most of the participants practice self-evaluation, especially on self-development in improving their pedagogical practices in general. The *Asatidz* awareness for growth and development in terms of enriching pedagogical practices is unprecedented. All of the participants agreed that training and development during their formative years and in-service seminars conducted by DepEd and their respective schools helped them to improve their over-all performance as a Madrasah teacher. These results confirmed the study conducted by Sali and Marasigan (2020) on selected *Asatidz* in Quezon City where diversity on their teaching strategies and general grasp of pedagogical concepts were evident. According to Liu et al. (2018), teachers' motivation for self-development plays an important role in the formation process of their professional autonomy.

According to Kemmis (2012), praxis is part of self-formation of a person as it gives valuable benefit to one's self at the same time good in human community. The reflective practices of the *Asatidz* as mirrored through their pedagogical practices Edwards-Groves et al., 2018 ; (Freire, 1978; Mayo, 2016) were bulwark in their pursuit for self-development to provide relevant experiences to their learners, particularly "on their material surroundings and reflect upon them with a view to transforming them" (Mayo, 2016, p. 2). However, self-development is more than the result of teaching as what teachers are expected to perform.

The teacher's conscientiousness and reflective practices allow the *Asatidz* to be aware of their roles and obligations as expected of them being part of the school community and to their learners. As evident in these findings, pedagogical praxis enables *Asatidz* to constantly practice self-evaluation for self-development particularly in the enrichment of their pedagogical practices. Thereby, reflective practice in teaching enables the *Asatidz* to develop and implement new concepts relevant to teaching and learning. As supported by Kemmis (2012), educators are guided by their praxis anchored to different dispositions to include theoretical, technical, practical, and critical perspectives which were evident in this study.

More than the expectation, the participants explained the essence of understanding oneself to be effective and efficient in teaching and learning process. Also, the reflective practice allows teachers to understand the interplay of "what" (theories learned) and "how" (practice applied) in the teaching and learning process. Barni et al. (2019) argued that values under certain motivational conditions are "precious resources to improve the quality of teaching experience for teachers and indirectly for their students" (p. 5). Therefore, motivated teachers seem to make teaching more meaningful, which can facilitate and create meaningful and transformational educational experiences for their learners. The *Asatidz* explained their reflective practices on self-development:

> "*At first, I find it hard to teach. I thought to myself, this is how teaching work? However, when I joined the in-service training, especially when we had attended the LEaP training for 23 days [learned how to improve pedagogical practices]*" – P4.

> "*The most important thing in teaching is sincerity. That should also be part of our commitment as a teacher. If you do things [self-improvement] seriously, the learners will feel it [commitment to teaching*]" – P1.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to five ALIVE schools and the sample size of five participants during the course of the study conducted in three school divisions, including the cities of Manila, Quezon, and Pasay in the National Capital Region. Other limitations are enumerated in the succeeding discussion. First, the emergent themes may be applied only to selected ALIVE schools in Metro Manila and not to any private or traditional *madaris* since the respondent schools were all accredited as DepEd-affiliated schools. Second, ALIVE schools in the country may have different program implementation and practices depending on the region, province, and district. In addition, *Asatidz* from different places in the country may have different educational backgrounds, self-efficacy, professional development, and mentoring that affect their pedagogical practices compared to the selected participants. Third, the researcher used purely qualitative design and methods in data collection through in-depth interviews because he believed that these methods are the best way to explore and analyze the conceptuality of instructional process anchored in the participants' pedagogical praxis.

## Conclusion, Implications, and Further Research

The results of the study identified salient themes of the *Asatidz'* conceptuality of instructional process as anchored to their pedagogical praxis. The generalizability of these findings to the population was limited because the sample size is unlikely to be representative of the *Asatidz* in the entire Metro Manila. Thematic analysis was initiated employing interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) of the data. There were four major themes identified in the study: pedagogical amalgamation of traditional and non-traditional teaching practices; collaborative learning practices; effective classroom management; and reflective practice in teaching. The pedagogical reflections of selected Madrasah teachers implementing the ALIVE program in the Philippines are multifaceted and dynamic. The awareness of the participants on the different aspects of instructional process including instructional models, methods, strategies, techniques, and tactics are unprecedented. Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to identify the interplay of theories and practice in their teaching and learning. As evident in the results of the study, pedagogical praxis enables *Asatidz* to constantly practice self-evaluation for self-development, particularly in the enrichment of their pedagogical practices. This, in turn, creates a space for verifying the theoretical knowledge, methods, and procedures within the real conditions of a particular educational process (Sirotová, 2016).

Further studies are encouraged in exploring actual practices of the *Asatidz* in the classroom, in relation to their pedagogical praxis and identify essential factors that influence their teaching performance. However, the results of the current study are useful in guiding education stakeholders in relation to evidence-based policymaking, to further improve the implementation of the ALIVE program, particularly in terms of teacher development for Madrasah teachers seeking to create comprehensive and well-thought pedagogical programs that better suit and complement their pedagogical praxis – as a baseline for further instructional and educational enrichment. In addition, the results could help ALIVE schools to provide more enhancement programs toward quality education through teacher development, to ensure the continuity and relevance of Madrasah Education Program implementation. As mentioned, it is imperative to consider the significance of *Asatidz* as the prime implementers of Madrasah education in ALIVE schools within their respective communities. Lastly, this study provides additional knowledge and its enrichment to the existing literature on pedagogical practices, as well as a general conceptualization of the instructional processes of selected Madrasah teachers as grassroots implementers of the ALIVE program in the Philippines.

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