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Needs Analysis in Madrasah Curriculum Planning across Sociocultural Contexts: A Scoping Review

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Abstract: This study examines how needs analysis informs madrasah curriculum planning across sociocultural contexts, focusing on stakeholder representation, educational priorities, and institutional conditions. A scoping review approach organizes the literature through descriptive mapping and qualitative content analysis, distinguishing conceptual arguments, documented practices, and program evaluations. The literature discussed indicates that identifying needs alone does not ensure responsive curricula. Their contribution depends on how information is interpreted, priorities are justified, and decisions are translated into objectives, content, learning experiences, and assessment. Sociocultural expectations, Islamic educational aims, leadership, teacher capacity, and resources shape these processes. The study's originality lies in connecting credible information, representative interpretation, justified prioritization, and feasible curriculum action within a context-sensitive account of madrasah planning. This conceptual relationship challenges automatic associations between needs identification and improved learning while remaining open to empirical validation. The study contributes analytical guidance for examining curriculum decisions and recommends transparent stakeholder participation, documented follow-up, and periodic evaluation. Predominantly Indonesian and heterogeneous evidence limits transferability, supporting further comparative and longitudinal research across diverse madrasah settings, with explicit attention to contextual differences.

***Abstrak**: Penelitian ini mengkaji peran analisis kebutuhan dalam perencanaan kurikulum madrasah lintas konteks sosial budaya, dengan perhatian pada keterwakilan pemangku kepentingan, prioritas pendidikan, dan kondisi kelembagaan. Pendekatan tinjauan cakupan digunakan untuk mengorganisasikan literatur melalui pemetaan deskriptif dan analisis isi kualitatif, dengan membedakan argumentasi konseptual, praktik terdokumentasi, dan evaluasi program. Literatur yang dibahas menunjukkan bahwa identifikasi kebutuhan saja belum menjamin kurikulum responsif. Kontribusinya bergantung pada penafsiran informasi, penetapan prioritas yang beralasan, serta penerjemahan keputusan menjadi tujuan, materi, pengalaman belajar, dan penilaian. Harapan sosial budaya, tujuan pendidikan Islam, kepemimpinan, kapasitas guru, dan sumber daya membentuk proses tersebut. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada pengaitan informasi kredibel, penafsiran representatif, prioritas beralasan, dan tindakan kurikulum yang layak dalam pemahaman perencanaan madrasah yang peka konteks. Hubungan konseptual ini mempertanyakan anggapan bahwa identifikasi kebutuhan otomatis meningkatkan pembelajaran dan tetap memerlukan validasi empiris. Penelitian berkontribusi memberikan arahan analitis untuk menelaah keputusan kurikulum serta merekomendasikan partisipasi transparan, dokumentasi tindak lanjut, dan evaluasi berkala. Dominasi konteks Indonesia dan keragaman bukti membatasi keteralihan temuan, sehingga diperlukan penelitian komparatif dan longitudinal pada beragam lingkungan madrasah dengan memperhatikan perbedaan kontekstual.*

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INTRODUCTION

Curriculum planning in madrasahs involves decisions about how Islamic educational aims, learners' needs, and societal expectations are translated into meaningful learning experiences. These decisions extend beyond selecting subjects and allocating instructional time. They also concern the knowledge, values, and capabilities that learners need to participate in their communities while responding to wider educational and social change. Recent research on Madrasah Aliyah in multicultural Indonesia illustrates how institutional transformation requires engagement with religious traditions, contemporary academic expectations, technological developments, and stakeholder perspectives (Romlah et al., 2025). Curriculum planning therefore requires attention to the contexts in which educational priorities are identified and interpreted, rather than assuming that the same priorities apply uniformly across madrasahs.

Needs analysis offers a systematic basis for examining these priorities. In curriculum development, it connects information about existing conditions with decisions about desired learning outcomes and how to achieve them. Brown's conceptualization, as discussed by Khasinah and Elviana (2022), emphasizes systematically collecting and analyzing information for educational program development. In the madrasah context, Nurjannah (2018) similarly presents needs analysis as a means of identifying discrepancies between existing and expected conditions, establishing priorities, and informing curriculum improvement. This understanding positions needs analysis as part of educational decision-making: identifying a need is valuable when the resulting information can inform choices about curriculum objectives, content, learning experiences, and assessment.

However, educational needs cannot be understood exclusively as deficiencies in learners' academic performance. They may also concern developmental characteristics, opportunities for participation, religious and moral formation, and the conditions that enable learning. Al Aluf and Sutiah (2024), in their literature-based discussion of learning needs in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, connect learner characteristics with curriculum, expected learning outcomes, and instructional media. Their discussion highlights cognitive, emotional, social, motivational, moral, and motor dimensions of learner development. For curriculum planning, this breadth raises an important question: how are different dimensions of need considered together, and how are priorities established when they point toward different curricular responses?

Sociocultural context adds a further dimension to this question. In this review, sociocultural contexts refer to the community practices, linguistic backgrounds, religious traditions, social relationships, and expectations through which educational priorities acquire meaning. These contextual features need to be distinguished from, while examined alongside, institutional conditions such as governance arrangements, teacher capacity, and available resources. Needs analysis therefore raises questions about whose perspectives are represented and whose

interpretations shape curriculum decisions. Parker and Raihani (2011) found that parental and community participation in Indonesian madrasah governance was often limited, although some institutions demonstrated more collaborative practices. Their findings caution against assuming that a madrasah's connection with its community automatically ensures meaningful participation in educational decision-making. For needs analysis, this implies that stakeholder involvement should be examined as a documented process rather than treated as an institutional characteristic to be taken for granted.

Recent curriculum research also demonstrates why contextual interpretation matters for Islamic educational aims. Kosim et al. (2024) developed a religious moderation-based curriculum module for a laboratory Madrasah Tsanawiyah, incorporating classroom activities, extracurricular provision, co-curricular activities, and madrasah culture. Their study identified practices consistent with religious moderation that were already present, although not explicitly organized under that designation. This finding suggests that curriculum planning can benefit from identifying existing institutional practices alongside areas requiring development. It also shows why the relationship between religious values and educational needs should be investigated through an institution's specific practices. Curricular attention may involve making existing values more explicit, addressing an identified gap, or improving coherence across different learning settings.

The literature discussed above addresses related but distinct aspects of this problem. Nurjannah (2018) examines needs analysis in Arabic curriculum development, while Al Aluf and Sutiah (2024) discuss learning needs at the primary madrasah level. Parker and Raihani (2011) investigate community participation in governance, Kosim et al. (2024) address religious moderation in curriculum development, and Romlah et al. (2025) examine institutional transformation. Together, these studies provide a rationale for mapping how needs are conceptualized, whose perspectives are included, and how contextual information informs curriculum planning. The unresolved issue is not simply whether needs analysis is important. It is how the literature connects needs identification with curricular decisions across different sociocultural and institutional settings.

A scoping review is appropriate for addressing this mapping problem because the relevant literature may encompass conceptual discussions, empirical studies, curriculum development research, and policy-related documents. Scoping reviews can clarify concepts, describe the characteristics of available evidence, and identify areas requiring further investigation (Peters et al., 2020). In the present study, the comparative purpose is to examine how needs analysis is represented across the contexts documented in eligible sources. It does not presume that those contexts have equivalent educational structures or that findings from one setting can be transferred directly to another. Moreover, literature describing madrasah development more broadly is distinguished from evidence that explicitly addresses needs analysis and its contribution to curriculum planning.

Accordingly, this scoping review maps how needs analysis informs madrasah curriculum planning across sociocultural contexts. It addresses three questions: (1) How is needs analysis conceptualized and operationalized in the literature on madrasah curriculum planning? (2) Whose needs and perspectives are represented, and how are the identified needs connected to curriculum decisions? (3) What

sociocultural and institutional conditions are reported as enabling or constraining these processes? By examining these questions together, the review seeks to contribute a context-sensitive account of the relationship between needs identification and curriculum planning. It aims to provide a comparative mapping of concepts, practices, and evidence gaps to inform further research on locally grounded Islamic education and support more transparent curriculum decision-making.

METHOD

Review Design and Research Questions

This study adopts a scoping review design to map how needs analysis informs madrasah curriculum planning across sociocultural contexts. The review examines how educational needs are conceptualized, how stakeholder perspectives are represented, how needs-related information informs curriculum decisions, and the contextual conditions shaping these processes. A scoping review is appropriate because it describes the breadth and characteristics of available evidence rather than estimating the effectiveness of a particular intervention. The methodological framework draws on Arksey and O'Malley (2005), Snyder (2019), and subsequent guidance on conducting scoping reviews (Peters et al., 2020; Pollock et al., 2024). Reporting will follow the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews, or PRISMA-ScR (Tricco et al., 2018).

The review addresses three questions: (1) How is needs analysis conceptualized and operationalized in the literature on madrasah curriculum planning? (2) Whose needs and perspectives are represented, and how are identified needs connected to curriculum decisions? (3) What sociocultural and institutional conditions are reported as enabling or constraining these processes?

The scope is defined through the Population, Concept, and Context framework. The population comprises madrasah learners and stakeholders involved in curriculum planning, including teachers, institutional leaders, parents, community representatives, and educational authorities. The concept is needs analysis and its relationship to curriculum planning, development, or revision. The context comprises formal Islamic schooling identified as madrasah, madrasa, or an equivalent institution within its national educational system. Studies of Islamic boarding schools are eligible only when findings concerning their formal madrasah provision can be distinguished from other educational activities.

Sociocultural context refers to reported community practices, linguistic backgrounds, religious traditions, social relationships, and educational expectations. These characteristics are examined alongside institutional conditions, including governance arrangements, teacher capacity, and resources. Comparisons are limited to contextual information documented in the included sources. Institutional or national differences will not be inferred when relevant information is absent.

Information Sources and Search Strategy

The original information sources comprise Scopus, ScienceDirect, PubMed, and Google Scholar. The revised search strategy will distinguish their functions. Scopus provides multidisciplinary indexing, ScienceDirect provides access to

publisher-hosted literature, PubMed offers supplementary coverage of potentially relevant interdisciplinary research, and Google Scholar supports identifying additional scholarly and institutional materials. Records retrieved through PubMed will remain subject to the same madrasah-specific eligibility criteria as records identified elsewhere.

The search will combine three concept groups: needs analysis, curriculum planning, and madrasah education. English search terms include "needs analysis," "need analysis," "needs assessment," "curriculum planning," "curriculum development," "curriculum design," "curriculum revision," "madrasah," "madrasa," and "Islamic school." Searches of Indonesian-language sources will additionally use corresponding local-language terms for needs analysis, needs assessment, curriculum planning, and curriculum development. The broader term "Islamic school" supports retrieval, but institutional eligibility will be established through full-text examination.

The proposed core search expression is: ("needs analysis" OR "need analysis" OR "needs assessment") AND ("curriculum planning" OR "curriculum development" OR "curriculum design" OR "curriculum revision") AND (madrasah OR madrasa OR "Islamic school")

This expression will be adapted to the search fields and syntax available on each platform. Sociocultural terms will support supplementary searches rather than operate as mandatory restrictions, because relevant sources may describe contextual characteristics without explicitly using a sociocultural label.

Reference-list checking will supplement database searches. Official policy documents and institutional reports may be identified through government, university, and madrasah websites. For each search, the search log will record the platform, execution date, complete search expression, filters, and number of records retrieved. Google Scholar searches will additionally record the sorting approach and extent of results screened. These records will form the supplementary search documentation.

Eligibility Criteria

The analytical corpus will cover publications from 2020 through the final search date in 2026. This period spans seven calendar years, with coverage of 2026 limited by the actual search date. Earlier publications may inform the conceptual background or methodological justification but will remain separate from the analytical corpus.

Sources are eligible when they: (a) address formal madrasah education or a clearly identifiable equivalent; (b) explicitly examine needs analysis, needs assessment, or a documented process of identifying educational needs; © connect those needs to curriculum planning, development, revision, or evaluation informing curriculum decisions; (d) are available in Indonesian or English; and (e) provide sufficient accessible text to assess eligibility and extract relevant information.

Eligible source types include empirical studies, conceptual articles, scholarly books or chapters, theses, dissertations, and identifiable official reports or policy documents. Their contributions will be classified separately. Empirical findings,

conceptual recommendations, and policy requirements will not be treated as equivalent forms of evidence.

Sources will be excluded when they discuss curriculum change without an identifiable needs-analysis component, address institutions outside the defined context without separable madrasah findings, or lack verifiable authorship or institutional provenance. Sources without retrievable full texts will be recorded as unavailable rather than excluded on substantive grounds. Relevant literature reviews may support conceptual mapping and reference checking, but their summaries of primary studies will not be counted as additional independent findings.

Source Selection

Selection will proceed through record identification, duplicate removal, title and abstract screening, and full-text eligibility assessment. Duplicate records will be identified using available bibliographic information, including title, author, publication year, and digital object identifier. Records with uncertain relevance during initial screening will proceed to full-text assessment.

Full-text decisions will apply the eligibility criteria consistently, with particular attention to institutional context and the explicit connection between needs identification and curriculum decisions. Each excluded full-text source will receive a documented reason. Multiple publications drawing on the same underlying study will be linked to reduce the risk of counting the same evidence more than once.

The review record will identify who performs screening, how decisions are checked, and how uncertainties are resolved. The completed report will describe the actual arrangement without assuming independent duplicate screening. A PRISMA flow diagram will present the documented numbers of records identified, duplicates removed, records screened, reports assessed, and sources included. Numerical totals will be derived from the screening record rather than estimated retrospectively.

Data Charting and Evidence Classification

A structured charting form will organize information from eligible sources. It will include bibliographic details, country or locality, madrasah level and institutional type, study design, stakeholder groups, definitions of need, methods of needs identification, priority-setting procedures, curriculum decisions, sociocultural characteristics, institutional conditions, reported outcomes, and acknowledged limitations.

Charting will distinguish what a source recommends from what it documents empirically. For example, recommending parental participation will be coded separately from reporting how parents contributed to needs identification or curriculum decisions. Contextual information absent from a source will be recorded as not reported and will not be inferred from the institution's location or religious affiliation.

The charting form will be piloted on a small selection of eligible sources and refined before application to the remaining corpus. Substantive changes will be documented, and previously charted sources will be revisited where necessary.

These procedures support consistency between the review questions, extracted information, and presentation of results (Pollock et al., 2023).

Data Analysis and Cross-Context Synthesis

Analysis will combine descriptive mapping with qualitative content analysis. Descriptive mapping will summarize the distribution of sources by publication year, location, educational level, institutional type, research design, and stakeholder involvement. Counts will describe the composition of the evidence base and will not be interpreted as measures of effectiveness or contextual importance.

Qualitative analysis will use the three research questions as initial organizing categories while allowing additional subcategories to emerge from the extracted material. Coding will examine how needs are defined, whose perspectives are represented, how priorities are established, and whether identified needs are connected to specific curriculum decisions. These decisions may concern objectives, content, learning experiences, instructional provision, or assessment, depending on what each source reports.

Cross-context synthesis will compare documented similarities and differences across madrasah settings. It will examine how sociocultural characteristics interact with institutional conditions rather than treating country, institutional affiliation, or educational level as sufficient explanations. Contradictory findings and exceptions will be retained and discussed.

The synthesis will distinguish documented practice, conceptual interpretation, and proposed implications. It will identify evidence gaps concerning stakeholder representation, contextual reporting, and the use of needs-analysis findings. Such mapping can inform research priorities, provided that an absence of published evidence is distinguished from evidence that a practice does not occur (Khalil et al., 2025).

Methodological Transparency and Interpretive Limits

The revised design prioritizes transparent searching, consistent selection, traceable charting, and explicit links between sources and synthesis. Formal risk-of-bias scoring is not proposed as an eligibility requirement because the review seeks to map heterogeneous evidence rather than establish intervention effectiveness. Source design, evidential basis, and limitations will nevertheless inform interpretation.

No pooled effect estimate will be calculated. Claims about improved learning, curriculum effectiveness, or causal relationships will be restricted to what the underlying studies can support. The final report will distinguish procedures actually completed from those not undertaken. It will also discuss how language restrictions, inaccessible sources, incomplete contextual reporting, and the screening arrangement affect the scope and interpretation of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptualizing Needs Analysis in Madrasah Curriculum Planning

Needs analysis provides a basis for examining the relationship between existing educational conditions and the learning opportunities that a curriculum should provide. In madrasah curriculum planning, this relationship encompasses academic learning, religious understanding, moral development, and participation in social life. Brown's definition, as discussed by Khasinah and Elviana (2022), emphasizes systematically collecting and analyzing information to develop educational programs. Kaufman and English (1979) and Witkin and Altschuld (1995) offer a complementary perspective by locating need in the discrepancy between existing and desired conditions. Together, these perspectives establish an analytical distinction between collecting information about learners and determining which discrepancies warrant curricular action.

This distinction matters because a curriculum cannot respond equally to every expressed preference or institutional concern. Identifying a need requires a defensible account of the desired condition, evidence concerning the existing condition, and a justification for prioritizing the discrepancy. In a madrasah, the desired condition may be informed by curriculum requirements, Islamic educational aims, learners' developmental needs, and community expectations. These sources of educational purpose may overlap, but their alignment should be examined, not assumed. Needs analysis therefore includes both an informational task, establishing what is happening, and an interpretive task, explaining why a particular condition requires educational attention.

The original literature also supports a broader understanding of learner needs. Marhamah and Zikriati (2024) emphasize learner characteristics and prior competence in planning learner-centered instruction. Harahap and Albina (2025) similarly discuss needs analysis as a way of understanding learners' capabilities and educational requirements. These contributions support attention to variation among learners, although their general arguments should not be treated as evidence that a specific needs-analysis procedure improves achievement in every madrasah setting.

At the primary madrasah level, Al Aluf and Sutiah (2024) connect learner characteristics with curriculum, expected learning outcomes, and instructional media. Their literature-based discussion encompasses cognitive, emotional, social, motivational, moral, and motor development. This implies that needs analysis should consider the conditions enabling participation alongside the knowledge or skills learners have yet to acquire. However, this conceptual contribution does not establish the effectiveness of a particular assessment instrument or curriculum intervention.

Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) distinction between target needs and learning needs further clarifies this relationship. Target needs concern the demands of a desired situation, whereas learning needs concern the processes and conditions through which learners can reach that situation. Indrasari's distinction between target-oriented and learning-related needs, cited in Adiwijaya and Wedayanthi (2022), has a related orientation. These concepts originated in language education and should be transferred to broader madrasah planning with attention to their

limits. Religious understanding, ethical judgment, and communal responsibility cannot always be reduced to discrete performance requirements. Nevertheless, the distinction remains useful for separating educational aspirations from the support required to pursue them.

Accordingly, needs analysis in madrasah curriculum planning can be understood as identifying, interpreting, and prioritizing educational requirements within a particular institutional and sociocultural setting. This understanding extends the original discussion beyond a general affirmation of its importance. It highlights how needs are established, whose judgments shape their interpretation, and how priorities become curriculum decisions.

Translating Identified Needs into Curriculum Decisions

The practical contribution of needs analysis depends on whether information is connected to curriculum decisions. Tyler (1949) and Taba (1962) provide conceptual foundations for linking information about learners and society to educational objectives and learning experiences. Nation and Macalister (2010) likewise connect needs analysis with decisions about curriculum content, sequencing, presentation, and assessment. These frameworks support examining the relationship between identified needs and planned responses, but they do not establish that this relationship is consistently realized in practice.

A useful distinction is between three forms of contribution: a conceptual recommendation to use needs analysis, a documented account of how it informed curriculum development, and an evaluation of the resulting curriculum. These forms provide different levels and types of information. A source stating that curricula should reflect learner needs contributes to conceptual understanding. A development study explaining how identified needs shaped a module provides evidence of implementation. An evaluation of that module may provide information about feasibility or outcomes, but its findings do not necessarily isolate the contribution of needs analysis from other components.

Mariani et al. (2026) provide a recent example of a development-oriented approach in state Madrasah Aliyah in Aceh. Their study reports discrepancies between intended curriculum design and classroom practices involving instructional innovation, technology integration, and character development. The subsequent ADDIE-based module connects the analysis stage with curriculum design and development. This illustrates a documented progression from identifying discrepancies to proposing curricular responses. However, reported benefits of the overall model should not be attributed exclusively to the needs-analysis stage.

Needs analysis can also identify existing educational resources, not only deficiencies. Kosim et al. (2024), in developing a religious moderation-based curriculum module for a laboratory Madrasah Tsanawiyah, identified practices consistent with religious moderation that were already present without being explicitly organized under that designation. Their curriculum development addressed classroom provision, extracurricular activities, co-curricular activities, and institutional culture. This example suggests that planning may involve strengthening coherence across existing practices as well as introducing new content.

The connection between analysis and decision-making should therefore be traceable. An identified difficulty should be linked to an educational priority, the priority to a curriculum response, and the response to a suitable form of monitoring. Without this connection, an assessment may generate extensive information while contributing little to curriculum planning. Conversely, a curriculum change that follows an assessment should not automatically be considered an appropriate response unless the source explains how the decision addresses the identified need.

Needs analysis also plays an ongoing role after initial curriculum design. Stufflebeam and Shinkfield's (2007) evaluation framework provides a theoretical basis for revisiting needs and contextual conditions during program development. Santika et al. (2022) contribute a broader discussion of curriculum change, while Novianto and Abidin (2023) provide a madrasah-specific account of periodic evaluation involving stakeholders and the use of evaluation findings for curriculum improvement. The latter supports an iterative interpretation of planning, rather than the stronger claim that needs analysis independently caused improved participation or achievement.

Stakeholder Representation and the Prioritization of Needs

Needs analysis involves decisions about whose experiences count as evidence. Learners, teachers, leaders, parents, community representatives, and educational authorities may identify different priorities because they encounter different aspects of madrasah life. Learners may emphasize participation and support, teachers may identify instructional difficulties, and institutional leaders may focus on curriculum requirements or organizational capacity. These perspectives can complement one another, but agreement cannot be assumed.

Long (2005) supports using multiple information sources and methods in needs analysis. Applied to madrasah planning, this principle suggests considering questionnaire responses alongside interviews, classroom observations, learner work, and relevant documents when these sources address the review question. Agreement across sources can strengthen an interpretation, while disagreement may reveal differences in experience or authority that require further examination. Disagreement should therefore be analyzed rather than removed through a premature search for consensus.

Parker and Raihani (2011), used here as contextual background rather than evidence from the proposed 2020–2026 corpus, found limited parental and community participation in many Indonesian madrasah governance arrangements. They also identified examples of more collaborative leadership. Their findings demonstrate why institutional proximity to a community should not be equated with meaningful participation in educational decisions. For needs analysis, the relevant question is whether stakeholders can influence the interpretation and prioritization of needs, not simply whether they attend meetings.

Efriyanti and Albina's (2025) discussion of inclusive education reinforces the importance of recognizing different learning requirements when developing instructional responses. Its relevance to madrasah planning is conceptual: needs analysis should avoid treating the most visible or easily measured learner experiences as representative of everyone. It does not establish that every

madrasah already provides adequate opportunities for less represented learners to contribute.

Priority-setting consequently requires explicit criteria. Educational urgency, the consequences of inaction, relevance to Islamic educational aims, implications for equitable participation, and implementation feasibility offer possible criteria. These are analytical recommendations arising from the discussion, rather than a universally validated prioritization model. Their application should be explained in relation to the needs and circumstances of each institution.

Sociocultural Contexts and the Interpretation of Curriculum Priorities

Sociocultural context influences how educational purposes are interpreted and which curriculum responses are considered appropriate. Community practices, religious traditions, language use, and expectations of learners' future roles may shape both the identification of needs and the acceptance of proposed changes. These influences should not be treated as a uniform external background. They are part of the setting in which curriculum priorities are negotiated.

Romlah et al. (2025) examine Madrasah Aliyah transformation in multicultural Indonesia and report variation in institutional responses to educational reform and technological change. Their findings highlight stakeholder involvement in balancing religious values with contemporary educational expectations. As contextual evidence, the study supports attention to institutional variation. It does not establish that one adaptation pattern applies across all madrasahs or that modernization necessarily requires displacing religious traditions.

Religious orientation can also shape curriculum practices through the relationship between formal provision and institutional culture. In their case study of Madrasah Amanatul Ummah, Ma'arif et al. (2024) describe integrating moderate Islamic values through planning, teacher recruitment aligned with the institution's religious orientation, the formal curriculum, and institutional culture. The case illustrates how educational priorities can be enacted across several organizational practices. It should not be generalized as evidence that the same arrangements apply to institutions with different histories, affiliations, or communities.

These examples support a distinction between a shared educational concern and a context-specific response. Several madrasahs may prioritize respectful interaction, for instance, while requiring different curricular approaches because of differences in learners' experiences, community relationships, or existing institutional practices. Contextual responsiveness therefore involves more than adding local examples to standard materials. It requires examining whether the proposed objectives, learning experiences, and assessment practices address the conditions documented in the institution.

At the same time, community expectations should remain open to educational examination. Local relevance does not by itself establish that a practice supports every learner's participation or development. A context-sensitive approach should consider both the educational resources provided by local traditions and potential exclusions that may remain unrecognized. This is an interpretive implication of the discussion, rather than a claim that the cited studies evaluated every dimension of inclusion.

Comparing the Contributions of Different Madrasah Settings

The sources discussed here address different educational levels and institutional priorities. Their differences are informative, but they do not provide a basis for ranking settings or attributing outcomes to sociocultural conditions alone. Table 1 summarizes their distinct contributions while retaining the limits of each source.

Table 1. Selected source contributions to the discussion

Source and setting	Main contribution	Interpretive limit
Al Aluf and Sutiah (2024), primary madrasah education	Connects learner characteristics, curriculum, outcomes, and media	Literature-based discussion rather than an intervention evaluation
Kosim et al. (2024), laboratory Madrasah Tsanawiyah	Connects existing moderation-related practices with curriculum development	A specific development setting
Ma'arif et al. (2024), Madrasah Amanatul Ummah	Examines formal curriculum and institutional culture in character formation	A contextual case study, not a test of needs-analysis effectiveness
Romlah et al. (2025), Madrasah Aliyah transformation	Examines adaptation, stakeholders, and institutional variation	Broader institutional transformation research
Mariani et al. (2026), state Madrasah Aliyah in Aceh	Links identified instructional discrepancies with ADDIE-based development	Evaluates a development model rather than the isolated contribution of needs analysis

Comparison across these sources suggests that educational level and institutional purpose affect what requires investigation. Primary-level discussions emphasize developmental characteristics and participation. Curriculum development studies may focus on particular instructional or value-related priorities. Institutional transformation research addresses wider relationships among stakeholders, organizational capacity, and educational change. These differences indicate that a single needs-analysis instrument is unlikely to capture every relevant concern without contextual adaptation.

However, variation in reported priorities may also reflect differences in research design. A case study examining character formation and a module development study investigating instructional innovation are designed to produce different kinds of findings. Do not interpret their differences immediately as cultural differences. A defensible cross-context synthesis must distinguish the effects of research focus and method from characteristics explicitly attributed to the educational setting.

Institutional and External Conditions Shaping Implementation

The original distinction between internal and external factors remains useful, but it requires a more precise explanation of how factors influence the process. Conditions may affect how needs are identified, information is interpreted, responses are prioritized, or curriculum decisions are implemented. These stages

should be distinguished because the same institution may collect information effectively but lack the capacity to act on it.

Teacher capacity matters for selecting information sources, interpreting learners' experiences, and translating findings into instruction. This discussion does not retain the original claim that teacher competence has a statistically significant effect on curriculum development, because the cited evidence was not shown to support that specific relationship. Instead, teacher capacity is treated as an implementation consideration whose contribution requires documentation in the relevant setting.

Leadership and collaborative arrangements influence whether findings become institutional priorities. A needs-analysis report cannot itself allocate instructional time, revise assessment practices, or secure resources. Such changes depend on decision-making arrangements and who is responsible for follow-up. Nurjannah's (2018) discussion, used as a conceptual background source outside the proposed analytical period, connects curriculum needs with school-community collaboration. The broader implication is that information quality and organizational capacity should be examined together.

Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998) treatment of means analysis offers a theoretical basis for considering implementation conditions. Time, staffing, materials, and institutional arrangements affect whether a proposed curriculum response can be enacted. Resource constraints should not erase an identified need, but they may require a phased response, alternative provision, or additional support. Distinguishing the importance of a need from the immediate feasibility of addressing it makes planning decisions more transparent.

External influences include policy expectations, technological change, and anticipated pathways beyond schooling. Nurholis et al. (2022) provide a broader policy perspective on curriculum change, while Suparyati and Habsya (2024) discuss graduate competencies in vocational education. The latter is relevant to workforce-oriented pathways but should not be generalized across all madrasah levels. At the primary level, developmental and participation needs require different treatment from occupational preparation. Policy and labor-market literature therefore serves as contextual discussion unless it meets the review's madrasah-specific eligibility criteria.

Integrative Synthesis and Implications

The discussion supports an analytical proposition: the contribution of needs analysis depends on the connection among credible information, representative interpretation, justified priorities, and feasible curriculum action. This proposition organizes the relationship between the original themes of concepts, roles, and implementation factors. It is a conceptual interpretation, not a model validated through the present review.

Credible information concerns whether educational conditions are documented adequately. Representative interpretation concerns whether relevant experiences and competing perspectives are considered. Justified prioritization concerns why particular needs receive attention. Feasible curriculum action concerns how priorities are translated into objectives, content, learning

experiences, assessment, and subsequent evaluation. Weakness at any point can limit the process's usefulness, even when the other components are present.

For madrasah leaders, this means establishing responsibility for responding to identified needs and reviewing the resulting decisions. For teachers, it means connecting assessment information with specific instructional choices. For researchers, it means reporting how needs were identified and how they influenced development, rather than describing an intervention as needs-based without documenting that relationship.

The discussion also clarifies the contribution to Islamic education. Needs analysis can provide a structured way to examine the relationship between shared religious educational aims and locally differentiated learning conditions. Its value lies in making that relationship explicit and open to examination. A curriculum can thereby be assessed in terms of both its educational purposes and the appropriateness of its responses to the learners and communities it serves.

Evidence Boundaries and Further Research

The evidence discussed here remains heterogeneous in purpose, design, and proximity to needs analysis. Conceptual discussions clarify ideas, development studies document proposed responses, and contextual studies explain institutional practices. The final synthesis should keep these contributions distinct. The selected examples are predominantly Indonesian and do not support claims about international patterns or the prevalence of particular practices across madrasahs.

The completed scoping review must establish the composition of its eligible corpus before reporting distributions, dominant themes, or gaps across the field. Older theoretical and contextual sources should remain separate from the proposed 2020–2026 analytical corpus. Similarly, general curriculum and inclusion studies should support interpretation without being presented as direct evidence from madrasah settings when they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

Further research could examine how stakeholders negotiate conflicting priorities, how institutions document the use of needs-analysis findings, and how curriculum responses are sustained over time. Comparative studies should investigate explicitly reported sociocultural characteristics alongside governance, resources, and educational level. Longitudinal studies would be particularly useful for examining whether identified needs continue to inform curriculum decisions after the initial development stage.

CONCLUSION

The literature examined suggests that the contribution of needs analysis to madrasah curriculum planning depends on how identified needs are interpreted, prioritized, and translated into curriculum decisions. Stakeholder representation and institutional capacity emerge as important considerations alongside collecting information about learners. This interpretation challenges the assumption that identifying educational needs is sufficient to produce a responsive curriculum. Instead, it highlights how sociocultural conditions, Islamic educational aims, and institutional arrangements shape decisions about objectives, content, learning experiences, and assessment.

This study reinforces earlier perspectives that position needs analysis as a foundation for curriculum development while questioning the assumption that its use automatically improves educational outcomes. It distinguishes conceptual recommendations, documented curriculum practices, and evaluations of developed programs, clarifying what each source can substantiate. Its conceptual contribution connects credible information, representative interpretation, justified prioritization, and feasible curriculum action within a context-sensitive account of madrasah planning. This relationship provides a basis for further investigation rather than an empirically validated model or evidence of causal effects.

The discussion is limited by the heterogeneous evidence examined, its predominantly Indonesian settings, and the contextual specificity of the examples available. These limitations restrict transferability across madrasah systems and prevent conclusions about the prevalence or effectiveness of particular practices. Further research should incorporate a broader, transparently selected body of literature and comparative empirical studies across diverse sociocultural settings. Longitudinal research could examine how identified needs influence curriculum decisions over time. Madrasah leaders and curriculum developers should document stakeholder participation, explain priority-setting decisions, strengthen teachers' analytical capacity, and periodically review whether curricular responses address the needs originally identified.

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