



The Role of Accreditation in Improving Educational Quality in Private Schools

Aljuprianus Susar¹, Imron Arifin², Ali Imron³, Yohanes Laga Payong⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Universitas Negeri Malang

¹<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8886-4019>, ²<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1325-4988>

³<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0440-1050>, ⁴<https://orcid.org/0009-00009-0001-4894>

ABSTRACT: Accreditation is a pivotal instrument in educational quality assurance, serving to evaluate the eligibility and performance of educational institutions based on established. This study aims to analyze the role of accreditation in enhancing the quality of education in private schools. A qualitative descriptive approach with library research was employed, reviewing relevant national and international literature from 2020-2025. Findings indicate that accreditation strategically improves educational quality by evaluating school management, curriculum, teaching processes, teacher competence, and facilities. Moreover, accreditation enhances public accountability, providing assurance regarding the quality of services offered. Beyond administrative evaluation, accreditation functions as a continuous improvement mechanism, fostering sustainable development of educational quality. These findings provide theoretical insights and practical guidance for school leaders and policymakers in leveraging accreditation as a strategic tool for institutional development and competition.

Corresponding Author:

Aljuprianus Susar

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in national development by enhancing the intellectual, moral, and practical competencies of the human resource base (OECD, 2025); (Hallinger, 2021); (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020). High-quality education fosters individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also ethical, creative, autonomous, and responsible citizens (Madani, 2019).

In Indonesia, education is provided not only by public schools but also by private institutions, which are critical in ensuring equitable access to quality education, especially in regions with limited public facilities (Yirdaw, 2016); (Chapman, 2021). However, private schools often face challenges such as limited human resources, inadequate infrastructure, and financial constraints, which may affect educational quality (Yirdaw, 2016); (Ulfah, 2024).

To ensure educational quality, the government implements a quality assurance system, with accreditation serving as a key mechanism (Shah et al., 2013); (Ulfah, 2024); (Khojah & Shousha, 2020); (Romanowski, 2021).

Accreditation provides a comprehensive evaluation of institutional performance, including curriculum, teaching-learning processes, management, facilities, and teacher competence (Akdemir, 2020); (Manuel et al., 2025).

For private schools, accreditation is particularly strategic, as it acts as a public trust indicator and enhances competitiveness by signaling institutional quality to the community (Chapman & Armstrong, 2021); (Shah et al., 2013); (Shah et al., 2024); (Ehren et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding the role of accreditation in improving private school education is essential for both policymakers and school administrators.

1.1 Research Gap

Despite the growing body of literature on educational accreditation and quality assurance, several critical gaps remain evident (Shah et al., 2013); (Dede & Mizikaci, 2025); (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018); (Akdemir et al., 2020); (Chapman & Armstrong, 2021).

First, existing studies predominantly examine accreditation as an administrative and evaluative mechanism, focusing on compliance with standards rather than its role as a driver of continuous quality improvement and organizational transformation (Romanowski, 2021); (Hallinger, 2021); (Ehren et al., 2022). This indicates a limited conceptualization; of accreditation as a dynamic and strategic instrument.

Second, prior research tends to analyze educational quality components such as school management, teaching processes, and teacher competence in isolation. There is a lack of integrative frameworks that explain how accreditation simultaneously influences multiple dimensions of school quality in a systemic manner (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018); (Hallinger, 2021a); (Prabowo et al., 2024).

Third, much of the global literature is centered on higher education or developed country contexts, resulting in limited empirical and conceptual insights into the role of accreditation in private schools within developing countries, particularly Indonesia. These institutions face unique challenges, including resource constraints, fluctuating enrollment, and varying levels of institutional capacity (Yirdaw, 2016); (Ehren et al., 2022).

Fourth, there is insufficient attention to the relationship between accreditation and public trust as a dimension of school competitiveness. While accreditation outcomes are often linked to quality assurance, their broader implications for institutional legitimacy and stakeholder perception remain underexplored (Ehren et al., 2022); (Yirdaw, 2016); (Nasikhah, 2024). Therefore, the key research gaps can be summarized as follows:

- (1) the limited conceptualization of accreditation as a strategic and transformative instrument;
- (2) the absence of integrative models linking accreditation with multiple dimensions of educational quality;
- (3) the lack of contextual studies focusing on private schools in developing countries; and
- (4) the underexplored relationship between accreditation and public trust in shaping school competitiveness.

1.2 Novelty Statement

This study offers both theoretical and practical contributions by addressing the identified gaps through a more integrative and contextualized approach.

Theoretically, this study reconceptualizes accreditation not merely as an evaluative mechanism, but as a strategic driver of quality improvement and institutional transformation. It extends existing literature by positioning accreditation as a catalyst that simultaneously influences school management, instructional quality, teacher competence, and institutional credibility.

Conceptually, this study proposes an integrative framework of accreditation-driven quality enhancement, which connects internal school processes with external accountability outcomes. Unlike previous studies that adopt fragmented perspectives, this framework provides a holistic understanding of how accreditation operates across multiple dimensions of educational quality.

Contextually, this study contributes to the limited body of research on private schools in developing countries, particularly Indonesia, by incorporating local challenges such as resource limitations, competition, and public trust dynamics into the analysis. Practically, the study provides strategic insights for school leaders and policymakers on leveraging accreditation not only as a compliance tool but also as a mechanism for continuous improvement, institutional strengthening, and competitive positioning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Accreditation in Education

Accreditation is defined as a formal evaluation process conducted by authorized agencies to determine the quality and eligibility of educational institutions based on established standards (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018); (Shal et al., 2024); (Siedlaczek, 2022). It serves as a crucial component of the educational quality assurance system, enabling institutions to continuously monitor and improve their performance (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018); (Dede & Mizikaci, 2025); (Lagrosen, 2020). Accreditation is not merely an administrative process; it functions as a strategic tool for continuous development, allowing institutions to identify strengths and areas for improvement (Akdemir et al., 2020); (Temponi et al., 2005).

2.2 Educational Quality

Educational quality refers to the extent to which an institution successfully achieves its educational objectives (Madani, 2019). Quality is influenced by multiple factors, including teaching-learning processes, teacher competence, school management, and the availability of facilities (Hallinger, 2021a); (Stoll, 2022). Improving educational quality requires a holistic approach that integrates these components into a cohesive system (Hallinger, 2021a); (J. F. Sallis et al., 2020); (Stoll, 2022).

2.3 Accreditation and School Quality Improvement

Accreditation plays a pivotal role in enhancing school quality. Through accreditation, institutions undergo comprehensive evaluation across various dimensions such as curriculum design, teaching effectiveness, management practices, teacher competencies, and learning facilities. (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018); (Prabowo et al., 2024). The outcomes of accreditation provide actionable recommendations for institutional development, serving both as a tool for internal improvement and public accountability (Akdemir et al., 2020); (Dede & Mizikaci, 2025).

In the context of private schools, accreditation functions as a signal of institutional credibility, influencing public trust and institutional competitiveness (Shal et al., 2024); (Ehren et al., 2022). Moreover, accreditation aligns schools with national and international quality standards, facilitating continuous improvement and strategic planning for long-term sustainability (Seto & Wells, 2007); (Vlasceanu & Barrows, 2004).

2.4 Research Gap and Novelty

Despite the extensive research on accreditation and educational quality, most studies focus on specific dimensions either leadership, curriculum, or management—without integrating them into a holistic framework. There is a lack of systematic studies that examine how accreditation simultaneously enhances school management, teaching quality, teacher competence, and public trust in private schools (Hallinger, 2021a); (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020); (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018).

Novelty: This study bridges this gap by proposing an integrative model highlighting the strategic role of accreditation in private schools, combining institutional evaluation, quality improvement, and accountability into a coherent framework. The model emphasizes accreditation not only as an evaluative instrument but also as a driver of sustainable educational development (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018); (Hallinger, 2021a).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to analyze the role of accreditation in enhancing educational quality in private schools (Doyle & Wang, 2019); (Taherdoost, 2022). SLR was chosen for its ability to provide a comprehensive and transparent synthesis of recent studies (2020–2025) from high-quality sources (Scopus-indexed and national SINTA journals). The review follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure validity, replicability, and methodological rigor (Moher et al., 2009).

3.2 Data Sources and Search Strategy

Data were obtained from reputable scientific databases, including:

- Scopus
- Web of Science
- ERIC
- Google Scholar (supplementary)

Search keywords included combinations of:

- “accreditation” AND “school”
- “educational quality” AND “private school”
- “quality assurance” AND “school improvement”
- “school competitiveness” OR “school performance”

Search limits:

- Publication years: 2020-2025
- Document types: peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, policy reports
- Languages: English and Indonesian

3.3 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion criteria:

1. Articles indexed in Scopus or nationally accredited journals (SINTA)
2. Relevance to accreditation, educational quality, or school management
3. Theoretical or empirical contribution
4. Published between 2020–2025

Exclusion criteria:

1. Non-academic content (blogs, opinion pieces)
2. Duplicate publications
3. Full-text unavailable
4. Studies irrelevant to educational context

3.4 Study Selection Process (PRISMA Flow)

The selection process followed four stages:

1. Identification
 - Approximately 350 articles were initially retrieved from databases.
2. Screening
 - After removing duplicates, 270 articles remained.

- Title and abstract screening reduced this to 120 articles.
- 3. Eligibility
 - Full-text review based on inclusion criteria left 60 articles.
- 4. Included
 - 35 articles were analyzed in-depth and synthesized.

3.5 Data Extraction

Data from selected studies were extracted into a structured matrix including:

- Author(s) and year
- Research objectives
- Methodology
- Key findings
- Contribution to accreditation and educational quality

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using three main steps:

1. Data Reduction – Selecting information relevant to the research focus
2. Thematic Categorization – Grouping findings into core themes:
 - School management
 - Teaching and learning processes
 - Teacher competence
 - Public trust and accountability
3. Conceptual Synthesis Integrating findings into an Accreditation Driven Quality Improvement Model

3.7 Validity and Reliability

To ensure rigor:

- Only high-quality sources (Scopus & SINTA) were used
- PRISMA standards were strictly followed
- Triangulation of sources was conducted
- Analysis was systematic and documented

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Role of Accreditation in School Management

The findings indicate that accreditation significantly enhances school management quality. Accredited schools demonstrate well-structured management systems, clear vision and mission statements, and strategic planning aligned with educational objectives (Hallinger, 2021); (Prabowo et al., 2024); (Dede & Mizikaci, 2025). Accreditation promotes systematic resource allocation, effective administration, and evidence-based decision-making, which collectively improve institutional performance (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018); (Dede & Mizikaci, 2025).

4.2 Role of Accreditation in Teaching and Learning Processes

Accreditation improves teaching and learning by ensuring curriculum alignment, effective lesson planning, and systematic evaluation of student (Sallis, 2014); (Darling-hammond & Darling-hammond, 2017). Schools are required to adopt pedagogical best practices and demonstrate measurable learning gains, fostering a culture of continuous improvement (Madani, 2019); (Prabowo et al., 2024). This aligns with Total Quality Management principles in education, where learning quality is a shared organizational responsibility (Sallis, 2014).

4.3 Role of Accreditation in Teacher Competence

Teachers are central to the educational process, and accreditation evaluates their professional competence (Darling-hammond & Darling-hammond, 2017); (Akdemir, 2020). Schools implement professional development programs, workshops, and training to enhance teaching effectiveness (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2020); (Temponi et al., 2005); (Casile & Davis-blake, 2002). Accreditation thus serves as a driver for ongoing teacher improvement, which translates into higher learning outcomes.

4.4 Role of Accreditation in Public Trust and Accountability

Accreditation acts as a credibility signal, increasing public trust in private schools (Ehren et al., 2022); (Payong et al., 2024). Accredited schools are perceived as offering reliable and quality education, which influences enrollment decisions and strengthens competitiveness (Duc, 2025); (Prabowo et al., 2024). Accreditation also serves as a mechanism for accountability, ensuring transparency and adherence to national and international standards (Vlasceanu & Barrows, 2004); (Seto & Wells, 2007).

4.5 Integrative Insights and Model Development

The review shows that accreditation impacts private schools across multiple dimensions: management, teaching-learning, teacher competence, and public accountability. However, prior research often treats these dimensions separately, lacking an integrative perspective (Ülker, n.d.); (Hallinger, 2021a); (Prabowo et al., 2024); (Ehren et al., 2022).

Proposed Model-Accreditation-Driven Quality Improvement Model:

This study synthesizes the literature to develop a conceptual model that integrates the core functions of accreditation:

1. Institutional Management – strategic planning, resource allocation, governance
2. Educational Processes – curriculum alignment, instructional effectiveness, evaluation
3. Human Resource Development – teacher competence and professional growth
4. Public Trust & Accountability – transparency, stakeholder confidence, competitive positioning

The model emphasizes accreditation as a central driver of sustainable educational quality, connecting structural, human, and societal components into a coherent framework. It highlights the dynamic, multi-dimensional nature of school improvement, where changes in one domain reinforce outcomes in others (E. Sallis, 2014); (Ulker & Bakioglu, 2018); (Susar et al., 2022).

4.6 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretical Implications:

This study contributes to the literature by offering a holistic, integrative perspective on accreditation in private schools. It extends prior research by linking management, teaching, teacher competence, and accountability into a single conceptual framework, which can guide empirical testing in future studies (Demidov et al., 2021); (Prabowo et al., 2024).

Practical Implications:

For school administrators and policymakers, the model provides actionable guidance:

- Implement structured management systems and strategic planning aligned with accreditation standards
- Enhance teaching and learning through curriculum optimization and outcome monitoring
- Strengthen teacher professional development programs
- Use accreditation results to improve transparency and public trust

By integrating these components, private schools can leverage accreditation not only as an evaluative tool but also as a strategic driver of competitive and sustainable quality improvement (Dede & Mizikaci, 2025) (Susar et al., 2023).

5. CONCLUSION

Accreditation is a pivotal instrument in the educational quality assurance system, serving not only as an evaluative mechanism but also as a strategic driver of sustainable improvement in private schools. This study demonstrates that accreditation enhances educational quality across four key dimensions: school management, teaching and learning processes, teacher competence, and public trust and accountability. Schools that systematically implement accreditation standards are better positioned to achieve continuous improvement and strengthen their competitive advantage.

The main contribution of this study is the development of the Accreditation-Driven Quality Improvement Model, which integrates structural, pedagogical, human resource, and societal dimensions into a coherent framework. This model addresses research gaps in prior studies by providing a holistic, multi-dimensional perspective, moving beyond the fragmented analyses commonly found in the literature (Prabowo et al., 2024).

Practical Recommendations:

1. Private school administrators should embed accreditation standards into strategic planning and operational practices.
2. Teaching and learning processes must be continuously monitored and optimized based on accreditation feedback.
3. Professional development programs for teachers should be aligned with accreditation criteria to enhance instructional effectiveness.
4. Accreditation outcomes should be leveraged to strengthen transparency and public trust, reinforcing institutional competitiveness.

By adopting an integrative approach, private schools can transition from surviving in a competitive educational landscape to thriving, achieving sustainable quality enhancement that benefits students, teachers, and the broader community.

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