

Strategies for Improving Education Accreditation in Junior High Schools: Challenges and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

An education is recognized for its quality or quality of education after carrying out an accreditation process carried out by an independent institution. In today's world of education, there needs to be progress in order to keep up with the times, so that education remains relevant to the changes that occur in society. The challenges faced by education units are not easy because some things are not owned by education units. Everything in the education unit is the shared responsibility of all stakeholders within the education unit. Of course, the challenges faced have solutions to solve of course by continuing to collaborate with every stakeholder in the education unit. One of the challenges faced by secondary education units in improving accreditation in education units is the lack of human resources who have competencies in the field of education that have been certified by higher education institutions. The solution that can be given here is that every teacher is required to continue to improve themselves by participating in self-development and professional development activities to improve teacher professionalism. Then with the increase in teacher education, the accreditation of education units will increase. The Quality Imperative, being one of the key principles guiding organizational success to date, emphasizes the importance of prioritizing quality.

Keywords: *Accreditation Improvement Strategy, Challenges, Solutions*

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INTRODUCTION

The External Quality Assurance System for Primary and Secondary Education (SPME Dikdasmen), as outlined in Permendikbud No. 28 of 2016, plays a crucial role in improving the quality of education in Indonesia. This system is a cohesive framework that includes various organizations, policies, and processes designed to evaluate and assess educational institutions through accreditation. The aim of this system is to determine the feasibility and the level of quality achievement in primary and secondary education units. Accreditation, as an integral part of this system, helps to ensure that schools meet national standards, ultimately leading to improved education outcomes for students (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2016).

Improving education accreditation requires multifaceted strategies, involving several key aspects such as management, curriculum, teaching quality, and the development of facilities and infrastructure. Strengthening educational management is essential to ensure that schools are well-organized, efficiently managed, and effectively implement their educational programs. This involves improving leadership skills at the school level, developing transparent and effective management systems, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. Additionally, curriculum development must align with the

national education standards while also being flexible enough to respond to changing educational needs and challenges (Ban-PT, 2020).

The National Accreditation Board for Schools/Madrassas (BAN-S/M) is an independent evaluation body responsible for assessing the feasibility and quality of primary and secondary education programs. This body plays a significant role in improving education accreditation by evaluating schools against the National Education Standards (SNP). By conducting rigorous assessments, BAN-S/M provides schools with the necessary feedback to improve their educational practices and policies. Their evaluations help ensure that schools maintain a high standard of education, which is critical for the continuous development of the education system in Indonesia (Ban-PT, 2020).

One of the significant challenges in improving education accreditation in Indonesia is the rapid growth of educational institutions across the country. As more schools are established with varying objectives and orientations, competition for resources, qualified teachers, and students intensifies. This competition can lead to disparities in educational quality between institutions. Furthermore, the government faces challenges in evaluating and addressing the unique problems that arise in the diverse educational settings throughout the country. These challenges highlight the need for a more structured and effective system for evaluating and improving education at the school level (Samsuri, 2019).

Recently, the Ministry of Education has made efforts to reform the national curriculum, which has been criticized for being ineffective and burdensome for students. The current curriculum is seen as inadequate because it lacks relevance to students' lives and focuses too much on content delivery rather than competency development. These issues are exacerbated by the overload of subject matter that does not align with students' learning needs. To ensure that education units maintain a high standard of accreditation, schools must adapt to these changes by implementing a curriculum that is more relevant, student-centered, and aligned with the competencies students need for the future (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

In response to these challenges, educational units need to prepare for policy changes by focusing on strengthening their management systems, curriculum, and teaching quality. School leadership should be proactive in addressing the gaps identified during accreditation assessments, ensuring that the educational programs align with updated national standards. Moreover, teachers must be provided with continuous professional development opportunities to enhance their pedagogical skills and adapt to changes in the curriculum. Improvements in teaching quality, along with the development of a more relevant and flexible curriculum, will ensure that schools are better prepared for accreditation assessments and able to meet the evolving demands of the education system (Sutrisno, 2020).

Finally, the quality of facilities and infrastructure is another critical factor in improving education accreditation. Schools need to invest in upgrading their physical infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and sports facilities, to support an optimal learning environment. In addition, providing access to modern educational technologies is essential for enhancing teaching and learning experiences. By improving the infrastructure, schools not only meet the standards set by accreditation bodies but also create a conducive environment for students to learn and grow. This investment in facilities helps ensure that schools are competitive, meet accreditation requirements, and can offer quality education (Wibowo, 2019).

METHOD

This research employs a library research method, which involves gathering and analyzing relevant literature to explore strategies for improving education accreditation in schools. The sources reviewed include scientific journals, books, research reports, and other credible publications that discuss various aspects of education accreditation. By relying on these materials, the study aims to develop a comprehensive understanding of the factors

influencing accreditation processes and identify effective strategies that can be applied to enhance the quality of education.

The data collected from these sources are analyzed qualitatively, focusing on identifying key themes, trends, and best practices related to improving education accreditation, particularly in junior secondary schools. This qualitative approach allows for a deeper understanding of the context, challenges, and successful approaches used by different schools and educational systems. The goal is to draw insights that can guide future efforts to strengthen the accreditation process and improve the overall quality of education in these institutions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Issues in Improving Education Accreditation

Accreditation is a constitutional mandate to ensure quality education service delivery. As stipulated in Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System, accreditation is an assessment of the feasibility of education programs and units in formal and non-formal education at every level and type of education. Accreditation is carried out with the aim of ensuring that the implementation of education is in accordance with the standards set by the government, which leads to certainty about the quality of education units.

School/madrasah accreditation has been implemented since 2006, when the National Accreditation Board for School/Madrasah (BAN-S/M) was formed. Through Regulation of the Minister of National Education (Permendiknas) No. 29/2005, the government established BAN-S/M, which has the task of formulating operational policies, socializing policies, and implementing school/madrasah accreditation (Article 7 paragraph (1)). The quality of education as an implication of the utilization of accreditation has also not been seen. Over the past 15 years, accreditation has only been implemented to the extent of finding labels or ratings for schools/madrasahs.

Accreditation has not yet become an institutionalized belief system and institution to support education quality improvement. The implementation of the accreditation program as part of sustainable education quality assurance is still not fully realized. This is because there are still problems related to the implementation of increased accreditation. Schools as institutions that produce human resources with high competence and quality must operate efficiently and effectively, which is the main indicator in assessing the productivity of an organization.

School productivity has a very important role and cannot be underestimated. Quality education certainly does not just appear at every level of education, therefore, to ensure the quality of education in a school, it is necessary to have internal and external quality assurance. Internal quality assurance can be carried out by educational institutions through the process of self-evaluation and various other methods. Meanwhile, external quality assurance in schools or madrasah is carried out through a system known as accreditation. Accreditation is the process of assessing the feasibility of educational programs based on predetermined criteria.

Challenges in Improving Education Unit Accreditation

Improving education unit accreditation in Indonesia faces a number of challenges that need to be overcome in order for educational institutions to achieve the desired quality standards. Some of the main challenges in improving education accreditation include:

Limited Human Resources (HR)

Quality of Lecturers/Teachers: There is still an imbalance in the quality of lecturers and teachers in various educational institutions, both in terms of educational qualifications, teaching experience, and competence in certain fields. Limited training and professional development for educators is also a challenge.

Difficulties in Recruiting Qualified Lecturers

Certain educational institutions find it difficult to recruit lecturers who meet accreditation qualifications, especially in remote areas or educational institutions with limited resources.

Limited Facilities and Infrastructure

Many educational institutions, particularly in remote areas, face significant challenges due to inadequate facilities, including a lack of comfortable classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and access to information technology. These limitations hinder the learning process and the overall educational experience for students. Additionally, the unequal distribution of infrastructure between institutions in urban and remote areas exacerbates these challenges, as schools and colleges in less developed regions often struggle to meet the accreditation standards set by relevant bodies. This disparity affects the quality and equity of education across different regions.

Curriculum that Doesn't Fit the Needs

Some educational institutions still implement a curriculum that is irrelevant to the needs of the modern workforce and advancements in science and technology, resulting in a less effective teaching and learning process. A curriculum that is outdated and not adaptive to current developments fails to equip students with the necessary skills and competencies. Additionally, a curriculum that is overly dense and heavily focused on theoretical knowledge can overwhelm students, limiting opportunities for practical application and the development of essential skills. This imbalance hinders the preparation of students to meet real-world demands effectively.

Budget Limitations

Budget limitations significantly hinder the efforts of many educational institutions to enhance the quality of education. Insufficient funding affects various critical areas, including upgrading facilities, developing relevant curricula, and improving the competencies of teaching staff. Institutions that rely heavily on government funds often encounter delays or shortages, further complicating their ability to implement programs aimed at meeting accreditation standards. This financial dependency creates challenges in maintaining consistent progress and achieving long-term educational goals.

Challenges in Education Management

Challenges in education management often stem from ineffective and poorly structured managerial practices, which hinder the implementation of programs aimed at improving education quality and achieving accreditation. Inefficient management can lead to a lack of clear direction and coordination, ultimately affecting institutional performance. Additionally, many educational institutions lack adequate internal quality assurance systems (SPMI), making it difficult to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives. This absence of a robust evaluation framework further exacerbates the challenges in achieving and maintaining high standards in education management.

Challenges in Accreditation Paperwork

Accreditation preparation often requires comprehensive documentation that aligns with established standards. Many educational institutions struggle to compile complete and accurate accreditation documents, particularly those without an integrated information system to manage data effectively. This challenge is further compounded by a lack of expertise and systematic procedures in document preparation, delaying the accreditation process.

Another challenge is limited understanding of accreditation standards. A significant barrier to successful accreditation is the insufficient understanding of standards and

procedures set by the National Accreditation Board (BAN) or similar agencies. This knowledge gap often results in errors and inefficiencies in the preparation of accreditation reports, which can jeopardize the institution's ability to meet the required benchmarks.

Rapid policy change: frequent and rapid changes in education policies, such as curriculum revisions, evaluation guidelines, and accreditation requirements, pose significant challenges for educational institutions. Adapting to these changes can disrupt the implementation of quality improvement initiatives. Additionally, unclear or inconsistent regulatory shifts create further uncertainty, hindering the ability of institutions to plan and execute long-term improvements.

Lack of support from stakeholders also becomes the challenge. The absence of strong collaboration with industry and other educational institutions limits opportunities for curriculum enhancement, research, and internships, which are essential for improving education quality. Similarly, the minimal involvement of parents and local communities reduces the effectiveness of education programs, weakening the overall education ecosystem.

Limited technology and access to information is the challenge too. Many educational institutions, particularly in remote areas, face challenges due to limited access to modern technology. Tools such as online learning platforms, education management software, and digital resources remain inaccessible, hindering the quality of learning and administration. Additionally, the struggle to implement effective online learning systems further exacerbates the digital divide.

Different standards in different educational institutions and limitations of soft skills development are the challenges too. Variations in the quality of education between institutions, especially between urban and rural areas, make it challenging to establish and achieve equitable accreditation standards. This disparity highlights the need for policies and resources that promote uniformity and inclusivity in educational outcomes. Many educational institutions prioritize academic achievement while neglecting the development of non-academic skills such as leadership, communication, and teamwork. These soft skills are increasingly important in accreditation processes, as they contribute to producing well-rounded graduates who are prepared to meet the demands of the workforce and society.

Challenges in the Era of Globalization

The era of globalization presents significant challenges for educational institutions in Indonesia, as they must compete with foreign institutions that often have higher standards and more advanced facilities. This competition pressures local institutions to continually improve their quality to meet international standards and achieve global recognition. Ensuring international accreditation is essential not only to enhance the reputation of Indonesian education but also to equip students with skills and knowledge that meet global demands. To address this, institutions must focus on curriculum development, faculty competence, and modernized facilities that align with international benchmarks.

Despite the need for continuous improvement, many educational institutions face obstacles in fostering innovation due to bureaucratic restrictions, rigid regulations, and a general fear of failure. These barriers discourage creative approaches to teaching, curriculum design, and technological integration, which are critical in adapting to globalization. Overcoming these challenges requires a supportive environment that values experimentation and risk-taking, along with streamlined policies that encourage innovation. Collaborative efforts between the government, institutions, and stakeholders are crucial to building a dynamic and sustainable education system that embraces innovation and meets global standards.

Strategies for improving education accreditation

Quality assurance in formal, non-formal and informal education has been regulated in the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 63 of 2009 concerning the Education

Quality Assurance System. The national education development policy is focused on achieving competitiveness, improving public image, and accountability in the implementation of education. The successful implementation of this policy can be measured through the achievement of education quality indicators that have been set by BNSP in eight national education standards (SNP). The education quality assurance system is a structured and integrated process in the implementation of education to improve the nation's intelligence. Long-term strategic efforts to achieve this goal require a system that focuses on developing and improving the quality of education, which can encourage cooperation and collaboration among various interested parties (stakeholders) in an integrated network, both at the national, regional and local levels.

Improving education accreditation is an important effort to improve the quality of education in an educational institution. Strategies that can be applied to improve education accreditation can involve several aspects, ranging from strengthening management, curriculum, teaching quality, to improving facilities and infrastructure. Here are some strategies that can be applied:

Preparation of The Quality Improvement Plan

Education units develop long-term and medium-term work plans. In preparing the work plan, the unit considers the progress of the education unit so that the education unit can improve the quality of the education unit. According to Philip Crosby, quality is compliance with predetermined criteria, so that a service is said to have quality if it complies with these standards. While the meaning of quality in the context of education leads to the input, process and output of education. Education units must conduct an in-depth evaluation of the condition of educational institutions, both in terms of the quality of teaching, facilities, and the quality of human resources. The education unit develops a quality improvement plan that is measurable and directed, with clear targets for each area that requires improvement.

According to Abdul Mu'ti, accreditation must be able to provide assurance that the education services received by the community are in accordance with established quality standards. This, the Minister continued, is part of the effort to fulfill the constitutional rights of citizens to obtain quality education. The Minister explained that the vision of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is to create quality education for all. This vision, taken from Law No. 20/2003, contains two important meanings. First, all citizens without exception must have access to education, whether they are in remote areas or have physical and economic limitations. This effort is realized by developing a learning paradigm that allows anyone to learn, even outside formal education institutions.

Improving Curriculum Quality

To ensure the quality of education, the education unit must align its curriculum with current scientific developments, technological advancements, and industry needs. Regular updates and revisions are crucial to maintain the relevance of the curriculum, making it adaptable to both national and international standards. By evaluating the curriculum through objective assessments or examinations, educational institutions can ensure that students are meeting competencies that are globally recognized, thus preparing them for the future workforce.

Enhancing Teaching and Learning Quality

Improving the quality of teaching and learning begins with investing in the professional development of lecturers. Regular training sessions focused on enhancing pedagogical skills and content expertise are essential to ensure that educators are equipped with the latest teaching methodologies. Moreover, the implementation of innovative learning methods, such as online and blended learning, can provide diverse learning experiences for students and improve overall engagement and learning outcomes.

Enhancing Lecturer-Student Interaction

Fostering an engaging and collaborative learning environment requires enhancing the interaction between lecturers and students. A strong relationship based on mutual respect and open communication promotes a dynamic classroom atmosphere where students feel encouraged to actively participate in discussions and activities. By encouraging such interactions, educational institutions can create a more inclusive and supportive learning community, which helps enhance students' academic performance and personal growth.

Improving Facilities and Infrastructure

Quality education is not only about the curriculum and teaching methods; it also depends on the physical and technological resources available to support learning. Educational institutions must continuously improve their infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and digital technologies, to meet the growing demands of students and faculty. A conducive campus environment that is safe, comfortable, and equipped with the necessary resources can significantly enhance both academic and extracurricular experiences for students.

Strengthening Internal Quality Assurance and Professional Human Resources

An effective internal quality assurance system (SPMI) is critical for monitoring the ongoing quality of education. Regular evaluations, feedback from students, alumni, and industry stakeholders, and periodic satisfaction surveys can help identify areas for improvement. Additionally, recruitment of highly qualified lecturers and providing opportunities for continuous career development ensures that the teaching staff remains competent and up-to-date with the latest trends in their fields.

Strengthening Education Management and External Collaboration

A strong leadership team is essential for managing the changes necessary to improve education quality. By developing clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all educational operations, institutions can ensure consistency and transparency in their processes. Moreover, establishing partnerships with industries and international institutions can enhance the curriculum's relevance and provide students with practical experiences and global exposure, ensuring that they are well-prepared for both local and international career opportunities.

Study Program Accreditation Improvement

Improving study program accreditation starts with thorough preparation for meeting the standards set by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT) or other relevant accreditation bodies. Institutions must ensure that all required criteria, such as curriculum quality, qualified human resources, adequate facilities, and tangible learning outcomes, are met. Comprehensive and well-organized documentation is essential to demonstrate that the program adheres to these standards, showcasing the institution's commitment to quality education and continuous improvement.

The adoption of technology plays a crucial role in enhancing the management and delivery of education. Implementing an integrated education management system streamlines administrative tasks, such as reporting, data management for students and lecturers, and maintaining academic records. Additionally, optimizing online and hybrid learning methods, including the use of e-learning platforms, not only expands access to education but also accommodates various learning styles, providing a more flexible and inclusive learning environment for students.

To further improve accreditation outcomes, institutions must focus on developing students' soft skills, such as leadership, communication, and teamwork, through extracurricular activities and self-development programs. Moreover, providing internship opportunities in industries or partner institutions gives students real-world experiences that enhance their practical skills and better prepare them for their careers. By consistently implementing these strategies, educational institutions can improve student outcomes, meet accreditation standards, and ultimately elevate the overall quality of education.

Solutions for Improving Education Unit Accreditation

Improving education unit accreditation is an important effort to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. Accreditation is an evaluation process conducted by accreditation agencies to assess the feasibility and quality of an education unit, whether at the primary, secondary or tertiary levels. Here are some solutions that can be taken to improve education unit accreditation:

Improving the quality of human resources (HR) is essential for enhancing the accreditation of education units. For teachers, continuous professional development through training, workshops, and seminars is crucial for updating their knowledge and pedagogical skills. Additionally, developing the managerial competence of school principals through leadership training ensures that educational institutions are managed effectively. Providing career development opportunities, such as certification programs or advanced education, for teachers and educators enhances their qualifications and ability to contribute to the learning process, ultimately boosting the institution's educational quality.

The quality of the learning process can be significantly improved by incorporating technology and innovative teaching methods. Encouraging the use of technology, such as online learning platforms, digital teaching aids, and learning management systems, makes the learning environment more engaging and accessible. Moreover, adopting creative learning methods like project-based learning, active learning, and competency-based approaches helps engage students in meaningful learning experiences. Improved evaluation and assessment practices, supported by technology, ensure that student progress is monitored effectively and objectively, helping to improve both teaching and learning outcomes.

The provision of adequate facilities is a key factor in improving educational quality and accreditation. Schools must ensure that they have well-maintained classrooms, laboratories, libraries, computer rooms, and sports facilities to support a well-rounded education. Regular maintenance and upgrades to these facilities are necessary to create an optimal learning environment. Additionally, improving access to technology, including providing sufficient hardware, software, and internet access, supports digital learning and helps both students and teachers fully engage with modern educational tools.

Effective school management is fundamental for achieving high accreditation standards. Schools should implement structured planning and transparent administration systems to ensure that all resources are utilized efficiently. Establishing a monitoring and evaluation system helps track the progress of educational outcomes and student development, providing insights into areas needing improvement. Collaborating with parents and the wider community further strengthens educational efforts. Encouraging parent participation in school activities and creating partnerships with businesses and other educational institutions ensures that the curriculum remains relevant to the needs of students and the labor market.

Strengthening accountability and transparency is vital for maintaining high-quality education standards. Periodic monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the education process, including curriculum, HR, infrastructure, and finances, ensures that educational units are consistently improving. Transparent management of the education budget fosters trust and ensures that resources are spent effectively. Furthermore, promoting a positive school culture by building an inclusive and supportive environment for students is key. Initiatives like character-building programs and extracurricular activities help foster students' personal development

and prepare them for life beyond school, while community service and relevant research strengthen the institution's role in societal development.

In conclusion, improving education unit accreditation requires a comprehensive approach that focuses on enhancing human resources, refining the learning process, upgrading facilities, strengthening management, and fostering a positive school culture. By investing in teacher and leadership development, integrating technology into teaching, ensuring adequate infrastructure, and promoting transparent management, educational institutions can create a supportive environment for both students and educators. Additionally, fostering collaboration with parents and the community, alongside implementing relevant and flexible curricula, will ensure that the education provided meets both current standards and future needs. Consistent monitoring and evaluation, along with an emphasis on accountability and character development, are key to sustaining long-term improvements in educational quality.

CONCLUSIONS

Improving education unit accreditation requires a collective and coordinated effort from all stakeholders, including the government, school administrators, and the community. At the junior secondary school (SMP) level, accreditation is not merely about meeting administrative requirements; it reflects a strong commitment to providing quality education for the next generation. Despite challenges like limited resources, the need for teacher training, and infrastructure management, these obstacles can be overcome through collaboration among schools, government bodies, parents, and the wider community. Achieving good accreditation marks the beginning of an ongoing process aimed at continuously improving education. It serves as a foundation for nurturing students who excel academically, possess strong character, and are prepared to tackle future challenges. Ultimately, every effort to enhance education is a shared responsibility that contributes to the nation's growth and progress.

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