

Supporting quality management in Indonesia's early childhood education through accreditation processes

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This study investigated the role of accreditation in early childhood education quality management in Jakarta Province, Indonesia. We used purposive sampling to secure four participants, two school principals from two early childhood schools (Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, referred to as "PAUD"), one assessor for early childhood education in Jakarta Province, and one member of Jakarta Province's accrediting body. Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method. In PAUD, the role of accreditation in improving school quality management encompasses teacher and staff empowerment through collaboration and a continuous growth plan among teachers, administrative staff, and principals. To attain quality use of technologies, each PAUD should develop a documentation system linked to cloud storage of data, that facilitates access and cooperative efforts concerning teaching resources. A school's self-evaluation is a way to be introspective in order to assure effective short-term and long-term plans for the school's quality management improvement.

Introduction

Early childhood education is a notable field in the early development of individual learning. It serves as a significant platform for government, economic, and social policy, and it plays an increasingly formative role in how the child and family are conceptualised in modern and future society (Oropilla & Ødegaard, 2021). Its pedagogy is associated with child-rearing approaches that are thought to create desirable results for all, by well-meaning adults who claim to know what constitutes valuable knowledge (Robinson et al., 2021). The early childhood education unit as the first educational implementer is included in the crucial education system for planning and implementing continuing education as is the case in other education systems (Hägglund & Samuelsson, 2009). High-quality early childhood education and care is an essential component of thriving communities. It is critical to the socio-emotional and intellectual development of young children, the ability of parents to work, and the ability of people in their surroundings (Prusinski et al., 2023). Early childhood education is not the obligation of parents or kindergarten schools, but it is the responsibility of all parties (Sutapa & Suharyana, 2019).

Accreditation processes provide a unique opportunity for self-examination, setting off new directions, developing new strategic plans, and integrating individuals with similar interests (Sağır et al., 2014). Accreditation is also a major concern in educational institutions since it requires them to anticipate rapid changes as well as increasingly massive and complex challenges (Fertig, 2007). An accredited organisation will attain the accreditation standards to at least at a minimum level (Sağır et al., 2014). Accreditation is one way to provide evidence of the rigor and quality of programs (Hasbun & Rudolph, 2016) and it assesses institutional commitments, evaluation, planning and improvement,

student learning outcomes, and governing including involving dialogues (WASC, 2014). The main purpose of institutional accreditation is to ensure quality in an educational institution using standards and rigorous evaluation criteria (Ibrahim, 2014). Accreditation processes and results have been used by many educational institutions to evidence their quality and achieve listing in global rankings (Simangunsong, 2019). It should be applicable to every level of educational institution including early childhood education.

Hillman & Baydoun (2019) explained that quality management in schools has evolved into a multifaceted concept encompassing various strategies and methodologies aimed at enhancing organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and overall quality of education. Initially rooted in the principles of total quality management (TQM) introduced by Deming and widely adopted in manufacturing and service industries, the application of TQM principles to educational institutions has gained significant traction (Sallis, 2002). This shift is driven by a multitude of factors, including a sense of professional responsibility among educators, the need to remain competitive in a dynamic educational landscape, and the growing emphasis on accountability and transparency in educational governance (Macheridis & Paulsson, 2021). Higher education institutions, in particular, have embraced TQM to demonstrate their commitment to quality education, improve organisational processes, and foster continuous improvement (Nguyen, 2022). Research efforts focusing on TQM in higher education, as evidenced by studies conducted by Primiani and Ariani (2005), Legowo et al. (2020) and Simangunsong (2019), have shown promising outcomes, highlighting the positive impact of quality management practices on various aspects of university operations, from curriculum development and teaching methodologies to administrative processes and student services. This paradigm shift underscores a global recognition of the imperative to uphold rigorous quality standards in education, driving institutions to adopt comprehensive quality management approaches to meet the evolving needs and expectations of stakeholders while striving for excellence in educational outcomes.

The flexibility of the total quality management theory has given room for educational organisations to apply the eight principles of TQM (Sallis, 2002). They are:

1. Customer focus: Schools with students, parents, educators/educational staff must be the focus of the organisation;
2. Leadership: The ability of leaders to build a school's vision and mission is an important key to success;
3. Policy stakeholder involvement: Planning requires staff cooperation to ensure that the right people are assigned the right responsibilities;
4. Process approach: This relates to the efficiency and effectiveness of school activities. The job description of each person and part systematically becomes an important issue in the process section;
5. Management system approach: Schools must pay attention to the relationship of all educational processes and how to get the best educational results;
6. Continuous development: This is the main goal of system quality. School development needs to be considered including training with the development of the professionalism of educators and education staff;

7. Factual approach to decisions: Decision-making in schools must be based on facts and available information; and
8. Good relations with constituents: Schools that have good and clear communication with stakeholders are invaluable (Sallis, 2002).

To achieve high quality in international education, schools should focus on offering a high-quality education to all students, parents, and communities. Total excellent management has been identified as the key to enhancing efficiency and effectiveness in schools (Krataytong & Laksana, 2015) and the quality of early education is important as it helps form a child's abilities for lifelong learning (Tan, 2007). Studies of TQM in early childhood education are still few, especially those conducted within the scope and view of accreditation. Several studies related to early childhood education generally mentioned and focused on total quality management that was implemented well through continuous improvement and by providing satisfactory services in business. Other than considering total quality management, any quality school should implement a self-evaluation. It is a process mainly initiated by the school to collect systematic information about the school's functioning, to analyse and judge this information regarding the quality of the school's education, and to make decisions that provide recommendations (Vanhoof et al., 2009). It is a fundamental component in a school's development for a school to assess principles and processes that are associated with it, including the implications for school self-evaluation assessment leading its improvement.

Early childhood education (PAUD) in Jakarta Province context

Based on Article 4a of Minister of Education Regulation Number 137 of 2014 (Kemdikbud RI, 2018) an early childhood education provider (a PAUD) must guarantee the quality of early childhood education to provide a foundation for early childhood that can (1) carry out educational stimulation in assisting physical and spiritual growth and child development; (2) optimise children's development holistically, and (3) prepare for the formation of attitudes, knowledge, and skills of children (Kemdikbud RI, 2018). These educational standards must be evaluated in a planned, directed, and sustainable manner under the demands of local, national, and global changes, by the accrediting body, which is the Early Childhood and Non-Formal National Accrediting Body (abbreviated BAN PAUD PNF). The BAN PAUD PNF has the right to inform the public on non-accredited PAUD schools, which may risk their continuation as a provider.

Early childhood education (PAUD) in Indonesia consists of both public and private schools. The funding system for PAUD in Jakarta may be government support, private support, or mixed funding involving resources from various parties. These funding sources can affect the availability of facilities and infrastructure, the quality of teaching, and compliance with accreditation standards. In 2021, the head of the Jakarta Education Office reported that only 55% of the 4,017 PAUD schools in Jakarta province were accredited (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). In 2022, the national BAN PAUD PNF secretary stated that approximately 57% of the 5,252 PAUD schools in Jakarta province had been accredited. Despite this slight increase in accreditation, the internal

performance analysis conducted in 2022 indicated that many PAUD units still performed poorly, and the overall number of accredited units remained relatively low (Napitupulu, 2023).

There are various reasons for this, including PAUD teachers' perceptions of the accreditation process as burdensome and their inability to satisfy the criteria. Teachers may not be familiar with the methods or lack understanding of the requirements for accreditation. Teachers and principal may find difficulty in interpreting accreditation indicators which may result in a time-consuming process to prepare documentation for the accreditation (Afriandhi & Hasanah, 2022). Compounding these challenges is the typical ratio of one teacher to twenty to twenty-four students, with support staff often numbering only one to two people per PAUD. The age range of children in these PAUD schools typically spans from four to six years old. With the rapidly growing number of early childhood education institutions, it is necessary to elevate the quality of early childhood education on a provincial scale to ensure a better-quality PAUD system.

Method

Our study seeks to answer the question of what impact accreditation has in increasing the quality of early childhood education. Following its ability to develop a proposition or theory based on information gathered from an investigated setting, we used a qualitative case studies technique (Yin, 2017). We used purposive sampling to collect data and perform in-depth semi-structured interviews, as well as analysing accreditation documentation for early childhood education accreditation. Our informants included two school administrators from a national faith-based private PAUD and two officials of the Jakarta regional accrediting authority. The administrators were selected in this study to represent the school's perspective of PAUD accreditation. The two officials of the regional accrediting authority could provide background on the philosophy and perspective of the government.

Table 1: Informant profiles

Informant	Gender	Position and title	Degree
LS	Female	Kindergarten Principal	Masters
MM	Female	Kindergarten Principal	Bachelor
BE	Female	Assessor PAUD and member of Jakarta Province BAN PAUD Accrediting Body	Bachelor
BP	Male	Member of National BAN PAUD Accrediting Body	Masters

Face-to-face interviews lasted between 50 and 90 minutes using audio recordings that were transcribed. We employed computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software to evaluate data, which supplemented Yin's perspective on case studies (Yin, 2017). The researchers elicited general comments and input post-presentation. Based on successive rounds, the themes and sub-themes were subsequently developed for analysis purposes. We employed source triangulation to ensure data quality (Creswell, 2014). The interview

questions addressed how accreditation increases the quality of early childhood education and what opportunities a PAUD will get from becoming accredited. Individual cases were pooled by the researchers to do cross-case synthesis. Finally, reflections on the dataset and pattern discoveries allowed researchers to draw cross-case conclusions.

Findings

The role of accreditation in improving early childhood education quality management initially emerged from the interviews, and the cases were based on informants' responses when researchers posed experiences through accreditation-related questions for a clear depiction of the study findings. Following their comments as the individuals who lead and are responsible for the accreditation, no attempts were made to challenge informants' assessments of which components comprised roles of accreditation in improving early childhood education quality management. The results from interviews with the informants are presented as raw data in the following paragraphs which the researchers analysed based on the pattern shown.

Table 2: Questions to informants

Theory	Question	Interview result
Accreditation	How do you feel about the accreditation process?	<p>The PAUD accreditation was far superior in her most recent accrediting experience. It is because the process's aim was no longer paper-based evidence but compliance-based evidence. The preparation to satisfy the criterion was improved and streamlined. Furthermore, the procedure did not appear to be looking for flaws, but rather the development of what the institution still needs to achieve. (LS)</p> <p>The principal forms a team and conducts socialisation to educators and administrative staff with the aim that interested parties have knowledge about the importance of accreditation. (MM)</p> <p>Accreditation is an evaluation standard that determines the quality of an institution. (BE)</p> <p>Accreditation is a reference to the extent to which the institution meets the quality criteria set by the government. (BP)</p>
	How is the accreditation process going?	<p>Accreditation preparation to meet the criteria has been improved and simplified, so the school's arrangements are well in place. (LS)</p> <p>Accreditation procedures are completed quickly. The principal shares knowledge through participation in socialisation and ensures all educators contribute and are involved. (MM)</p> <p>The accreditation process is simplified, made easier, simpler, and more enjoyable for the schools that follow it. (BE)</p> <p>Accreditation results are the basis for improving and enhancing the quality of education, so the process is simplified. (BP)</p>

Which of the stages is the easiest, and why?	<p>The school has a management team responsible for managing accreditation documents to ensure a smooth accreditation process. The team organises the necessary documents for easy accessibility by educators and administrative staff. The involvement of the entire school, including educators and administrative staff, is crucial. (LS)</p> <p>Providing training to school principals regarding the accreditation process can make coordination easier and improve the quality of the accreditation process. It is important to note that this process requires time and commitment in preparation. The hope is that schools will have more convenience during the accreditation process as a result of the training. (MM)</p> <p>The evaluation of school quality improvement should be conducted objectively and without bias. All parties involved in the accreditation process must ensure that the evaluation results accurately reflect the actual quality. (BP)</p>
Which of the phases is the most difficult, and why?	<p>Coordinate among teachers, principals, administrative staff, and school infrastructure to make improvements during the accreditation process. This coordination requires good cooperation to ensure the accreditation process runs smoothly. (LS)</p> <p>Ensure that everyone contributes their own ideas and opinions, and that no one is left behind. This can be challenging, as some educators may have different levels of creativity, requiring careful consideration. (MM)</p> <p>To assign a score to an institution, documents found on the web are matched with the name of the institution at the time of the visit. It is important to exercise caution during this process as there may be discrepancies between the uploaded documents and those found on the web. (BE)</p> <p>Evaluating and grading the institution. After the visitation results are reported to the system, the following stage is validation and verification. This stage requires an additional cycle. (BP)</p>
Strategy and innovation What strategy do you have in place to ensure that the accreditation process goes smoothly?	<p>The meticulous organisation of document filing procedures is a task that may prove important when facing the accreditation process due to the PAUD certification process. When the school has all the required documents, the accreditation procedure will run smoothly. (LS)</p> <p>Organising the school internally during the accreditation process, conducting various social meetings, and socialisation related to the accreditation. (MM)</p>
What innovation do you have in place to ensure that the accreditation process goes well?	<p>Establishing a School Management Team where the team is tasked with organising all teachers and administrative staff into separate roles under the direction of one person who is responsible for collecting lesson plans, pictures, and files for student activities, teaching and learning, and so on. (LS)</p> <p>Organising cultural activities in the school, re-organising school records on <i>Google Drive</i>, and consolidating. (MM)</p>

Total quality management	What are the most important aspects of the school's community involvement for it to be a quality school?	Improving school quality through teacher training and improving facilities and infrastructure. (LS) Quality of human resources and school management. (MM) Collaboration for schools' growth. (BP)
	What are the markers for the larger community to determine if a school is good and qualified?	Safe infrastructure, well-accredited schools, professionally certified teachers. (LS) Improved quality of human resources, and promotion of school accreditation standards. (MM) Institutional distinctive qualities, school innovation, and the development in human resource quality. (BP)
	What actions should a school take to demonstrate its commitment to improving school quality?	Provision of continuing professional development for teachers and administrative staff, fulfillment of adequate infrastructure for learning. (LS) Ensuring the surrounding community is aware of the school's accreditation by promoting, planning and conducting teacher professional development. (MM) Commitment to improving quality of teachers and staff. (BP)

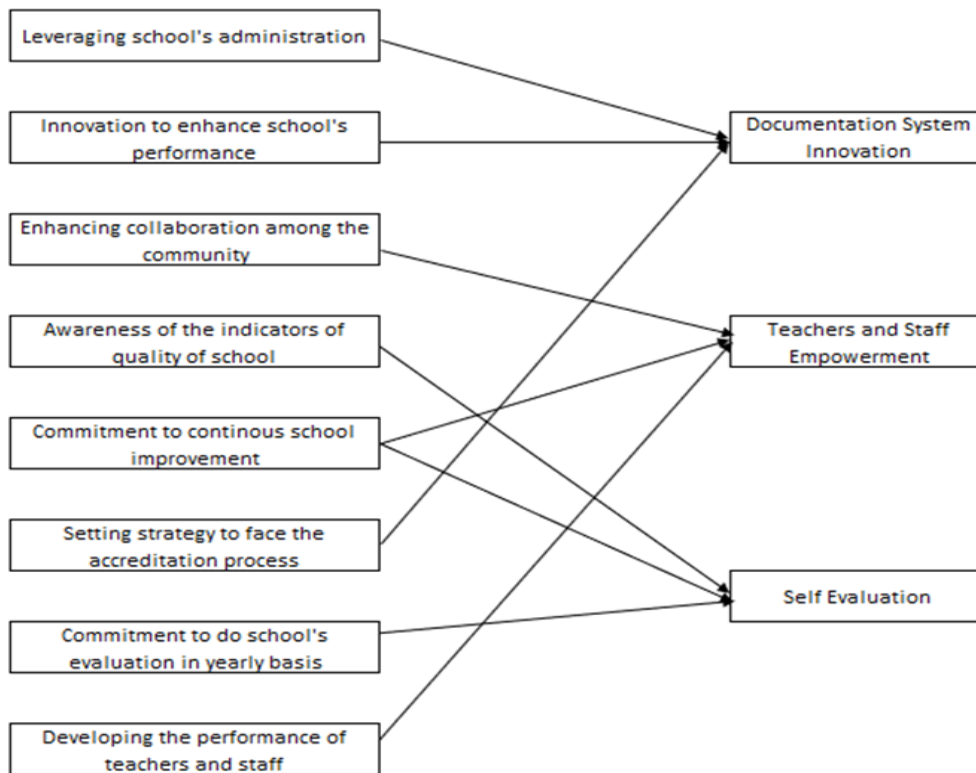


Figure 1: First order themes (left side) and sub-order themes (right side). Source: Researchers

With computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, researchers used an iterative process on the transcripts consisting of coding, clustering, higher-order concepts, and theorising based on interviews with all the informants. We looked at patterns and secondary data in the accreditation process, such as how and why schools approach accreditation, the challenges, and opportunities that they faced during the accreditation process, and the perceptions that schools have because of the accreditation process. Initially, we categorised the sections with the terms and grouped the codes with related topics. We aggregated first-order themes into second-order themes by combining passages into first-order codes. These are listed in Figure 1.

Emergent themes and sub-themes

The researchers were able to analyse the data to identify emerging themes and sub-themes based on the perspective of the informants. To provide further details, *Atlas.ti* analysed the data and included the number of comments for each sub-theme, along with related quotes (Table 3).

Table 3: Emergent themes and sub-themes

Themes and sub-themes	Description	Illustrative quotations
Theme 1: Documentation system innovation		
Leveraging schools' administration	Informants say it's critical to have well-organised files and paperwork to make it easier to find files, lesson plans, and school resources.	Neatness of filing documentation is indeed important, otherwise we will become confused. In my opinion, it is the most important. If we do it, then the evidence should be documented. If the evidence is not properly documented, then it will be really challenging. (LS, MM).
Innovation to enhance the school's performance	Schools should innovate and abandon their old database system in favour of online cloud storage services such as Google Drive or OneDrive.	We made one big drive so that everyone could share and save files and data there, to be uploaded to SISPENNA later. (LS) We are already connected to a fairly [good] Internet network; thus, we can upload all documents smoothly. The important thing is that it is already there for us to upload to SISPENNA. (MM)
Accreditation strategy	During the accrediting process, each institution should undertake a variety of things to ensure that all requirements are completed in a variety of ways.	We form a team, strengthen, and unite the team first in their knowledge and understanding. We come to understand why we must take part in accreditation so that when we follow the process, everyone can contribute. So that all teams in the school, starting from teachers, staff, and everyone can be involved. in improving the quality of education. We don't stay silent, but everyone understands, thus we strengthen our team. We learn together. (MM)

Theme 2: Teachers and staff empowerment		
Community collaboration	Informants agree that accreditation would necessitate community engagement, including parental involvement.	Not only the teacher but each part of the educational unit, parents and students as well as the foundation and governing body, where we are part of it, so we all should improve ourselves, trust each other, support each other so that we can get better. (BE)
Improvement commitment	It is critical for stakeholders to commit to enhancing long-term professionalism in order to produce the most up-to-date teaching methods and strategies.	So that the quality of education in that school or educational unit can be better, the quality of human resources must also be improved. (LS)
Staff performance development	Staff performance development ensures mutual understanding among stakeholders and increases the school's efficacy in attaining its missions and goals.	Leaders and teachers took part in training so that we would get better and continue to learn and join training so that in the future we would know more about things that we didn't know before. (MM).
Theme 3: School self evaluation		
Awareness of schools' indicators of quality	To track their progress, schools should be aware of good quality indicators	Schools should be credible and have good performance that can be seen from various elements which related and indicated to the quality that is developed. (LS, BE) We believe that good indicators in accordance with accreditation standards should not be just a label that we have accredited, but the implementation in accordance with the standards. We should have good infrastructure, and good teaching and learning activities, the children are comfortable and safe. As part of a community, people in the neighbourhood know who [is in] our school and even get involved. (BP)
Commitment to school improvement	Commitment to progress should not be limited to teachers and staff but should be shared by the entire school. It guarantees that they provide high quality teaching and learning.	To improve the quality of education in Indonesia or in our own school, we, of course, should consider the commitment to improve human resources (teachers and staff). (LS).
Commitment yearly to the school's self-evaluation	A continuous school improvement plan should include a yearly self-evaluation to allow for reflection and the development of a long-term plan.	That the school continues to improve the quality of education gradually, be competitive and orderly planned, whether in the environment or competing with other schools in the area, provincial or national or even international, for improvement. (BE, BP)

Discussion

Documentation system innovation

Innovations to the documentation system can make very good improvements to a school's performance. Early childhood schools should participate in documentation system innovation in this technological era, where data should be accessible at a distance and in real time. Having an innovative documentation system assists PAUDs to achieve: (1) Greater efficiency as online documents speed up teacher and staff access to necessary files, lesson plans, and teaching resources; (2) Effectiveness with cloud storage such as *MS Teams*, *OneDrive*, or *Google Drive*, which allows teachers and staff to get back to more meaningful work instead of staying buried in paper-based tasks; and (3) Centralised collaboration for better school performance and productivity.

To support the success of schools, integrating technology as part of an innovative documentation system is essential. An online documentation system enhances administration, enabling the school community to easily access and manage files and any school-related documents (Cetinkaya, 2019). By streamlining the management of records, the system ensures that important information is readily available, reducing the time and effort needed to retrieve documents. This increased efficiency allows educators and administrative staff to focus more on educational activities and less on administrative tasks (Pettersson, 2021). An online system promotes better communication and collaboration among staff, students, and parents by providing a centralised platform for sharing information.

When dealing with the accrediting database system SISPENA, PAUD schools that innovate by managing their documentation files online benefit from enhanced convenience and efficiency (Ng et al., 2023). The ability to access, verify, and correct required files without the need for printing saves time and resources, while also promoting environmental sustainability (Javaid et al., 2021). Recognising the importance of such innovations, the government has taken proactive steps to support schools and teachers by providing them with *Google Drive* accounts featuring unlimited data storage. These accounts are integrated through the national database systems, namely *Dapodik* (Data Pokok Pendidikan) and *AkunBelajar*, the national databases for teachers. This strategic move ensures that all necessary documentation can be stored securely and accessed easily, facilitating a smoother accreditation process and promoting a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within PAUD schools (Rahma et al., 2022). By leveraging these digital tools, schools and educators can focus more on enhancing the quality of education, knowing that their administrative processes are streamlined and efficiently managed (Forrester, 2019).

Several studies have investigated the effect of innovation on school performance. Bulturbayevich & Yusufxonovich (2021) found that some types of innovation, such as process and teacher professionalisation, have a positive correlation with productivity. Their research underlined the importance of implementing innovative strategies that streamline processes and improve teachers' professional development, which ultimately

leads to better results. In addition, Atasoy (2020) identified five phases of school and system improvement, highlighting the importance of understanding school culture, managing change and building capacity for student learning. This research highlights the complexity of school improvement efforts and emphasises the need for a holistic approach that includes cultural, managerial and educational dimensions. Maca (2019) emphasised the importance of school-based management in facilitating curriculum and instructional innovation. Salifu & Odame (2023) showed a positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy, the perceived value of the program and their success in implementing innovations. This underscores the importance of not only introducing innovative initiatives, but also ensuring that educators feel empowered and supported to effectively integrate these innovations into their teaching practices.

The use of web-based tools in education has been shown to increase efficiency and effectiveness for teachers and staff. These tools, such as *Skype*, *Google* tools, and *Second Life*, enable collaboration and immediate feedback, reducing time and costs. Additionally, personalising web searches can increase efficiency in finding teaching resources. Specialised tools, such as *E-portfolio Manager* and *Lesson Plan Creator*, can streamline tasks and improve teaching quality. Cloud storage solutions, such as *MS Teams*, *OneDrive* and *Google Drive*, have been shown to significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of educational institutions. These platforms offer a variety of benefits, including improved resource utilisation, data security, and network transmission speed (Simangunsong, 2019). Cloud storage is a valuable tool in educational environments as it streamlines paper-based tasks and improves collaboration among teachers and staff (Mulimani & Naikar, 2022).

Teachers and staff empowerment

The positive impact of the process itself, teachers and staff who become an empowered school community have enough resources and freedom to meet the task given. The importance of human resources empowerment is also illustrated by everyone's role in increasing teacher motivation, improving critical thinking skills, and collaboration among the community (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2020). The significance of teachers and staff empowerment is further demonstrated by everyone's role in enhancing teacher motivation, improving critical thinking abilities, and fostering community collaboration (Bektaş et al., 2020). Research consistently demonstrates the important role of teacher and staff empowerment in increasing teacher motivation, improving critical thinking skills, and promoting community collaboration. Empowerment in education can be achieved through various means, such as teacher collaboration with administrative support, participation in key decision-making and the provision of opportunities for shared decision-making, status enhancement, and trust-based relationships by school administrators. Furthermore, Yafie et al., (2020) identified teacher leadership as a potential avenue for improving schools, enhancing effectiveness, and motivating teachers. Teacher leadership is characterised by collective leadership and collaborative skill development (Yafie et al., 2021).

The accreditation process, together with a commitment to continual school improvement, is critical in empowering teachers and staff (Altrichter, 2021). The school's commitment to

continuous improvement would be impossible to achieve without the participation of teachers and employees. Furthermore, everyone should be motivated to empower the school's community by the school's dedication to ongoing improvement. Active participation from teachers and employees is essential for continuous school improvement (Nooruddin & Bhamani, 2019). This participation can be fostered through shared vision, collaborative decision-making, and professional development (Yulianti et al., 2022). However, the success of such initiatives depends on effective leadership, clear communication, and conflict management (Grissom & Condon, 2021). Therefore, while a commitment to continuous improvement does depend on teacher and staff engagement, it also requires supportive and effective leadership to ensure its success.

School's self-evaluation

Learning from the experiences of informants in PAUD accreditation, school self-evaluation awareness is crucial for schools to review their performance, identify strengths, and areas for improvement effectively. It encourages evidence-based decision-making among teachers, administrators, and principals, leading to improved quality management. Aderet-German (2021) emphasised the importance of schools engaging in independent self-evaluation for school improvement. However, Cobbinah & Eshun (2021) found that in Ghana, teachers lacked a deep understanding of self-evaluation's potential for enhancing performance. Barry et al. (2022) cautioned against self-evaluation focusing solely on accountability rather than improvement, suggesting inter-school collaboration to maintain a focus on improvement. O'Brien et al. (2022a) identified positive attitudes towards self-evaluation, school innovation capacity, and the relevance of evaluation results as key factors influencing its effective use. These findings highlight the complexity and importance of school self-evaluation in promoting continuous improvement in education systems.

Every organisation, including early childhood education institutions (PAUDs), should prioritise self-evaluation as a fundamental commitment. School self-evaluation plays a crucial role in assessing performance, identifying strengths, and pinpointing areas for improvement in alignment with the eight national education standards (Blaik Hourani et al., 2023). One effective approach to conducting self-evaluation is by understanding the quality indicators established by the government for schools. PAUDs should be fully aware of these indicators and actively engage in continuous quality improvement efforts. This commitment transcends mere compliance with certification requirements; it is about elevating the standard of teaching and learning experiences nationwide. By embracing self-evaluation and actively participating in quality improvement initiatives, PAUDs can ensure that they meet and even exceed the highest educational benchmarks (Datnow et al., 2022). This proactive approach benefits the institutions themselves and contributes significantly to the broader development of a robust and effective education system throughout Indonesia.

Research has consistently shown the importance of self-evaluation in organisational improvement. Heo & Han (2021) both emphasised the role of self-evaluation in driving performance and improving impact and efficiency. Heo & Han specifically discussed the

need for NGOs to prioritise this practice. O'Brien et al. (2022b) underscored the importance of self-evaluation in education, highlighting the impact of educators' interest in research work and ongoing professional development. Ding & Lin (2021) extended the discussion to the role of self-evaluation in leadership, noting its positive impact on organisational performance. These studies collectively emphasised the value of self-evaluation in driving improvement across different types of organisations.

The school self-evaluation should be an ongoing and gradual process, conducted annually rather than rushed at the last minute solely to meet accreditation requirements. This partnership fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility towards ensuring that schools meet accreditation standards. The relationship of the three themes from the data analysis can be visualised as in Figure 2.

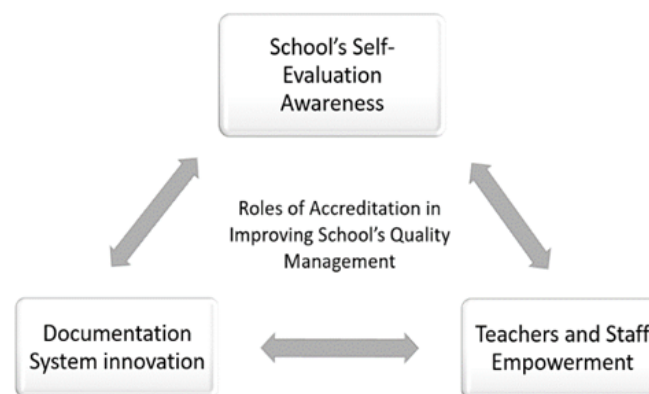


Figure 2: Key roles of PAUD accreditation in improving schools' quality management
Source: Researchers

We investigated how the early childhood education accreditation process could aid in the quality management of PAUD schools in Jakarta province. Innovative documentation systems, teacher and staff empowerment, and self-evaluation are critical to improving PAUD quality management. Documentation system innovation will assist PAUD in successfully and efficiently managing files, educational resources, and school paperwork (Tsabedze & Ngoepe, 2020). Collaboration and empowerment strategies prove particularly beneficial for schools with a limited number of teachers and personnel (Çoban et al., 2023). Empowering human resources fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among staff while contributing significantly to enhancing their competence and work performance, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes (Yin et al., 2019). By regularly evaluating achievements and areas for improvement beyond accreditation requirements, institutions can proactively address challenges, refine strategies, and continuously elevate the quality of education delivery. In essence, through innovative documentation systems, teacher and staff empowerment, and a dedicated focus on self-evaluation, PAUD institutions in Jakarta province can navigate towards comprehensive and effective quality management practices, ensuring a conducive and enriching learning environment for young learners.

Research consistently shows that human resource (HR) factors like work discipline, organisational commitment, and a supportive work environment have a positive influence on teacher performance in early childhood education. This highlights the crucial role of HR empowerment in schools, especially those with fewer teachers and staff. Aboramadan et al. (2020) underscored the importance of person-centred and performance-centred approaches, motivation, delegation, and performance management in managing HR in educational institutions. Collaboration, a key aspect of HR empowerment, is particularly beneficial in small schools, helping to overcome limitations in peer group socialisation and teacher expertise. Tanjung (2020) emphasised the need for active and effective empowerment of teacher resources, achievable through robust HR planning and management. Empowering teachers and staff enhances their competence and improves their work performance. Self-evaluation of schools is essential in PAUD, requiring a reflective approach to assess accomplishments and areas for improvement consistently, not solely as a prerequisite for accreditation (Yıldırım Hacıbrahimoglu, 2022).

Conclusion

Our study concludes that to improve early childhood education quality management, innovations in the documentation system, teacher and staff empowerment, and school self-evaluation are essential. Innovations in the documentation system provide efficiency and effectiveness in managing files, educational resources, and school documents online. Empowering teachers and staff, particularly through collaboration and human resource development, can improve their performance and competencies. School self-evaluation is a crucial tool for reflecting on achievements and identifying areas for improvement. It is an accreditation requirement and contributes to the improvement of early childhood education quality management. The success of this process relies on technological support, collaboration, and self-reflection.

The objective of our research was to outline the role of accreditation in improving early childhood education quality management perspectives from informants in Jakarta province. When applying to other provinces in Indonesia, additional elements may be present. As our study sought to establish an early childhood framework and explain its development, no attempt has been made to adapt it in detail to all levels of school accreditation. Future research could prioritise identifying in more detail essential records for quality improvement that minimise teacher workload, addressing how collecting data contributes to the core objectives of early childhood education's quality management, and refining documentation practices to enhance educational outcomes.

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