

School Improvement through Accreditation: Examining Perspectives of School Employees

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Abstract— This study aimed to explore the perspectives of school employees on school improvement achieved through accreditation. A descriptive-survey research design was used participated by 33 employees in one private higher education institution in the Philippines with Level 3 Reaccredited programs. Mean was utilized for data analysis. The results of the study reveal that the respondents strongly agree that participation in the accreditation process has led to school improvement in general with the highest mean on classroom instruction, professional development training for teachers, academic environment for students, and work environment for the faculty. In general, strong improvement was observed on factors of school improvement as a result of the school accreditation with the highest mean on professional development, curriculum development and study, and organizational effectiveness and long-term planning. Further, the respondents generally observe strong improvement on the aspects of school climate as a result of the school accreditation with the highest mean on school-community relations, disciplined environment, and attitude and culture. By maintaining the strengths revealed in this study, addressing weaker areas, and regularly monitoring progress, the school can ensure a high standard of education, foster a positive learning environment, and enhance overall stakeholder satisfaction.

Keywords— employee perspectives, school accreditation, school climate, school improvement.

I. INTRODUCTION

School accreditation has become one of the most recognized mechanisms for promoting accountability and continuous improvement in educational institutions. It serves as an external validation process that assesses whether a school meets established standards of quality in its programs, instruction, and management (Germaine & Spencer, 2016; Jaafaripooyan et al., 2011; Shal et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, as per CHED Memorandum Order No. 01, series of 2005, accreditation is a process for assessing and upgrading the educational quality of higher education institutions (HEIs) through self-evaluation and peer-judgment. Through the Commission on Higher Education, HEIs are encouraged to attain standards of quality over and above the minimum required by the state. Accreditation ensures that institutions remain committed to maintaining excellence, transparency, and relevance in their educational offerings as well as to improvement in documentation systems and accountability mechanisms particularly in areas such as program organization, administrative efficiency, and quality monitoring (Bougherira et al., 2024). The process provides a structured framework through which schools engage in self-assessment, identify strengths and weaknesses, and implement evidence-based plans for improvement (Jones, 2014). Through this system, educational institutions are encouraged to align their practices with national and international benchmarks of quality assurance. Moreover,

Kafaji (2020) noted that in this era of globalization many institutions are placing greater emphasis on accrediting their teaching and learning environments to gain a strategic edge over their competitors.

Research consistently highlights the positive impact of accreditation on institutional growth and development. Ulker and Bakioglu (2018) revealed that accreditation significantly contributes to academic quality, especially in institutions that are relatively new or undergoing initial accreditation cycles. Their findings emphasize that accreditation has the greatest influence on improving institutional processes and fostering a stronger focus on student learning outcomes. Similarly, studies found that accreditation enhanced various school factors, including instructional quality, teaching activities, accountability, professional development, and organizational effectiveness (Prado, 2018; Nguyen & Ta, 2017). Faculty members perceived the accreditation process as a vital driver for maintaining excellence, aligning programs with stakeholder expectations, and ensuring continuous development.

In addition, Canul (2009) emphasized that accreditation fosters a culture of reflection and collaboration among educators by encouraging them to view their schools as professional learning communities. This process not only generates useful data for school improvement but also clarifies and focuses the institution's goals toward measurable outcomes. Pham (2018) similarly found that accreditation in Vietnamese higher education institutions enhanced quality assurance systems, increased stakeholder trust, and motivated administrators to strengthen internal management practices. These studies collectively demonstrate that accreditation acts as both a mirror and a roadmap—allowing institutions to evaluate their performance while guiding them toward systematic improvement.

However, accreditation is not without challenges. Harvey (2007) cautioned that the growing emphasis on accreditation may lead to bureaucratic burdens, where compliance with documentation requirements overshadows genuine educational innovation. Faculty members in his study expressed concerns that accreditation processes sometimes prioritize external validation over meaningful pedagogical reform. Jarvis (2017) further noted that the increasing influence of neoliberal managerialism in accreditation systems has transformed higher education into a more controlled environment, where administrative procedures dominate academic priorities. This managerial shift can limit creativity and autonomy among educators, leading some to perceive accreditation as a restrictive rather than empowering process. While accreditation strengthened teaching quality and accountability, it also created tension between following standards and maintaining academic freedom (Ito et al., 2024). Similarly, Romanowski (2021) argued that while accreditation provides legitimacy, it can also constrain academic freedom and reduce educational quality to standardized checklists if not critically implemented.

Despite these contrasting perspectives, the role and experiences of school employees—teachers, administrators, and support staff—are central to understanding how accreditation truly functions within educational settings. As the primary implementers of accreditation policies, they directly experience both the advantages and the constraints of the process. According to Seyfried and Pohlenz (2018), the effectiveness of accreditation largely depends on how quality managers and staff perceive its purpose and outcomes. When school employees view

accreditation as a developmental tool rather than a compliance task, its impact on institutional improvement becomes more meaningful and sustainable.

Examining the perspectives of school employees provides valuable insights into how accreditation affects educational institutions. Their perceptions reveal whether accreditation fosters genuine professional growth, enhances collaboration, and strengthens instructional practices, or whether it contributes to administrative fatigue and resistance to change. As Lewis (2016) observed, faculty attitudes toward accreditation play a crucial role in determining its success; positive perceptions often translate into more engaged participation and greater institutional commitment to quality. Conversely, negative perceptions can hinder implementation and reduce the overall effectiveness of the process.

Given these considerations, this study sought to examine the perspectives of school employees on school accreditation. The researchers intended to get feedbacks from teachers, non-teaching personnel, academic heads, and heads of units regarding observed improvements in areas like curriculum, facilities, leadership, and school climate. These feedbacks provide a well-rounded understanding of how accreditation has influenced various areas, such as teaching quality, facilities, leadership, and school climate. The data they provide may help identify areas where accreditation efforts have succeeded and areas that require further improvement, ensuring targeted and effective planning. Drawing from the literature review, the perspectives of the school employees serve as a critical tool for assessing the effectiveness of accreditation, enhancing institutional growth, and creating a more inclusive and responsive school environment.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study aimed to determine the perspectives of the participants towards the impact of participating in the accreditation process on school improvement. Furthermore, this intended to determine the participants' ratings on the factors of school improvement as well as the aspects of school climate that they have observed as a result of the school accreditation process.

III. METHODS

This study used descriptive-survey research design to describe the perspectives of the participants towards the impact of participating in the accreditation process on school improvement, their ratings on the factors of school improvement, and aspects of school climate that they have observed as a result of the school accreditation. This study was conducted in one private higher education institution in the Philippines with Level 3 Reaccredited programs in graduate education, teacher education, business, and basic education.

Thirty-three respondents participated in this study with inclusion criteria that they have experienced or been involved in the accreditation process and that their years of service in school should be three years and more. Out of 33 respondents, 72.7% were females; 63.6% aged 40 years old and above; 48.5% were teachers, 30.3% were academic heads, and 21.2% were non-teaching personnel; and 60.6% have been in the school for more than 10 years.

The survey questionnaire contained items about demographic profile, 16 items for perspectives on accreditation towards school improvement which were answerable with strongly agree, agree, not certain, disagree, and strongly disagree; seven factors for school improvement, and eight aspects of school climate which can be answered with (1) No Improvement, (2) Very Slight Improvement, (3) Slight Improvement, (4) Moderate Improvement, (5) Noticeable Improvement, (6) Strong Improvement, and (7) Significant Improvement. The items in the instrument were adapted from the study of Mensching (2012). The instrument was content validated and pilot tested to measure the desired outcomes of the study. A Google Form version of the questionnaire was administered with the instruction that submitting the online questionnaire would signify their consent to participate in this study.

Mean was used to describe the data provided by the respondents. These data were then organized and presented in tables for analysis and interpretation. To analyze the rated data, the scales used for the perspectives on the impact of accreditation on school improvement were: 1.00-1.49 (Strongly Disagree), 1.50-2.49 (Disagree), 2.50-3.49 (Not certain), 3.50-4.00 (Agree), and 4.50-5.00 (Strongly Agree).

For the observed level of improvement in school and aspects of school climate, the following scales were used:

Scale	Description
6.50-7.00	Significant improvement (Transformational changes have been made, resulting in profound, highly impactful improvements that greatly enhance the area being assessed)
5.50-6.00	Strong improvement (Substantial and well-defined changes have been implemented, significantly improving the area and making a visible difference in outcomes)
4.50-5.00	Noticeable improvement (Clear and impactful changes have occurred, contributing meaningfully to the enhancement of the area)
3.50-4.00	Moderate improvement (Moderate changes are evident, leading to a noticeable enhancement in the area, though there is still room for significant growth)
2.50-3.49	Slight improvement (Small, noticeable changes have been made, resulting in a minor positive effect on the area being evaluated)
1.50-2.49	Very slight improvement (Minimal changes are evident, but they have little to no impact on the overall situation or performance).
1.00-1.49	No improvement (No observable or measurable changes have occurred in the specified area).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the data on the perspectives of the respondents towards the impact of accreditation on school improvement. Overall, the respondents strongly agreed ($\bar{x} = 4.60$) that participation in the accreditation process has led to school improvement in general.

The findings suggest that participation in the accreditation process has been perceived as highly effective in driving various improvements within the school. Improvements in classroom instruction and professional

development for teachers indicate a significant enhancement in teaching quality and staff skills. Positive changes in the academic environment for students and the work environment for faculty reflect a better overall atmosphere conducive to learning and teaching. The visiting team's recommendations were found to be thorough and instrumental in shaping the overall school improvement plan, highlighting the value of external evaluation. Accreditation has prompted critical developments, such as a better understanding of the curriculum, enhanced faculty communication, and improvements in school organization, and leadership. These changes demonstrate how accreditation fosters both structural and interpersonal advancements within the school. Further, the respondents perceive accreditation as a necessary process for sustained school improvement, influencing long-term planning, and critical areas like recruitment. Overall, the accreditation process is regarded as one of the most important drivers of educational improvement, emphasizing its vital role in maintaining quality education and operational efficiency. These findings indicate that accreditation is not just a compliance requirement, but a transformative process that improves various aspects of the school, promoting long-term benefits and overall institutional growth.

Table 1: Perspectives of the Respondents towards the Impact of Accreditation Process on School Improvement

School Improvement	Mean	Description
Participation in the accreditation process has led to improvements in classroom instruction.	4.78	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has led to improvements in the professional development training for teachers.	4.70	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has resulted in better faculty communication.	4.67	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has been considered by most of the faculty to be necessary for ensuring school improvement.	4.64	Strongly Agree
The recommendations of the visiting team were valid and thorough. These recommendations were effective in the overall school improvement plan	4.76	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has led to improvements in the academic environment for students.	4.70	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has led to improvement in the work environment for the faculty.	4.70	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has improved the use and allocation of resources at my school.	4.42	Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has improved the organization of my school.	4.58	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has improved the management of my school.	4.48	Agree

I believe that accreditation affects school improvement in the short-term (1-2 years) planning of the school.	4.18	Agree
I believe that accreditation affects school improvement in the and long-term (3-5 years) planning of the school.	4.55	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process led my school to evaluate its curriculum and gain a better understanding of our school curriculum.	4.67	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process is one of the most important factors in ensuring educational improvements at my school.	4.64	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has led to improvements in school leadership.	4.58	Strongly Agree
Participation in the accreditation process has led to an improvement in school recruitment.	4.64	Strongly Agree
Overall Mean	4.60	Strongly Agree

Data in Table 2 provide the observation ratings of the respondents on factors of school improvement as a result of the accreditation process. The findings suggest that substantial progress was made in enhancing teacher skills and knowledge, and in the development and evaluation of the school's curriculum. The accreditation process enabled the school to clearly recognize areas of success and areas needing improvement and improvements were observed in how effectively the school operates and plans for the future. Likewise, improvements were made in the availability and condition of school resources and facilities and a noticeable improvement was observed in the overall school environment, making it more conducive to learning. Overall, respondents indicated strong improvement ($\bar{x} = 5.72$) across the various factors, highlighting the positive impact of the accreditation process on the school's development.

Table 2: Respondents' Observation Ratings on Factors of School Improvement as a Result of the School Accreditation

Factors of School Improvement	Mean	Decision
Curriculum development and study	5.91	Strong
School climate	5.30	Noticeable
Parental and community involvement	5.60	Strong
Enabled school to identify strengths and weaknesses	5.97	Strong
Organizational effectiveness and long-term planning	5.79	Strong
School resources and physical needs	5.39	Noticeable
Professional development	6.06	Strong
Overall Mean	5.72	Strong

In Table 3, the respondents observed strong improvement on the following aspects of school climate: school-community relations ($\bar{x} = 6.06$), disciplined environment ($\bar{x} = 5.88$), attitude and culture ($\bar{x} = 5.85$), learning

environment ($\bar{x} = 5.82$), leadership and decision making ($\bar{x} = 5.82$), student interactions ($\bar{x} = 5.82$), and faculty relations ($\bar{x} = 5.61$) while noticeable improvement on the appearance of the building ($\bar{x} = 4.79$). Overall, the respondents observed strong improvement ($\bar{x} = 5.70$) on the aspects of school climate as a result of the school accreditation. The findings suggest that accreditation led to significant improvements in several areas of the school climate, including community relations, discipline, culture, leadership, and student and faculty interactions. Although the appearance of the building showed noticeable improvements, it was less impactful compared to other areas. Ongoing investments in facilities and infrastructure could further enhance the learning experience.

Table 3: Participants' Observation Ratings on the Aspects of School Climate as a Result of the School Accreditation

Aspects of School Climate	Mean	Decision
Appearance of the building	4.79	Noticeable
Faculty relations	5.61	Strong
Student Interactions	5.82	Strong
Leadership and decision making	5.82	Strong
Disciplined environment	5.88	Strong
Learning environment	5.82	Strong
Attitude and culture	5.85	Strong
School-community relations	6.06	Strong
Overall Mean	5.70	Strong

Implications of the Results

The results of this study suggest that accreditation plays a crucial role in fostering substantial and sustained improvements within the school. The positive impact on classroom instruction, professional development, academic and work environments, curriculum understanding, faculty communication, and leadership indicates that the accreditation process should be seen as a strategic tool for continuous school improvement.

The strong improvement in professional development indicates that ongoing investment in teacher training should continue. Additional professional development opportunities to further enhance teaching quality and effectiveness should be continuously provided. The ability of the accreditation process to help the school identify its strengths and weaknesses suggests that regular evaluations and self-assessments should be part of the school's ongoing improvement strategy. This data-driven approach will enable informed decision-making for targeted improvements. The observed improvements in curriculum development and organizational effectiveness indicate that the school should continue to refine its curriculum and focus on long-term planning. Ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant and aligned with evolving educational needs should be a continuous goal. The improvement in parental and community involvement also highlights the importance of maintaining and expanding community partnerships. The school should explore more ways to actively engage parents and community members in the educational process, strengthening partnership. While the improvements in resources

and physical needs and school climate are notable, there may still be areas for further enhancement. The school should prioritize continued upgrades to facilities, resources, and school culture to ensure a conducive learning environment for both students and staff.

Furthermore, the observed improvements in leadership and decision-making highlight the importance of strong, transparent leadership in driving school success. It's crucial for the school to continue empowering leaders to make informed, inclusive decisions that support the school's vision. The results also imply that accreditation contributes to both short-term and long-term goals, such as enhancing recruitment and organizational structure, and aligns with the school's long-term planning.

Therefore, the school should continue to actively engage in the accreditation process to maintain and build upon these improvements, ensuring ongoing growth, a high standard of education, and a positive learning environment for all stakeholders. Additionally, the consistent improvements highlighted by the respondents emphasize the need for regular reviews and implementation of the visiting team's recommendations to drive further progress.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing results, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The respondents strongly agree that participation in the accreditation process has led to school improvement in general with the highest mean on classroom instruction, professional development training for teachers, academic environment for students, and work environment for the faculty. Improvements in resource utilization and allocation, and short-term planning received slightly lower mean scores, but still within the category of agree.
2. In general, the respondents observe strong improvement on factors of school improvement as a result of the school accreditation with the highest mean on professional development, curriculum development and study, and organizational effectiveness and long-term planning while a noticeable improvement on school resources and physical needs and school climate.
3. The respondents generally observe strong improvement on the aspects of school climate as a result of the school accreditation with the highest mean on school-community relations, disciplined environment, and attitude and culture while a noticeable improvement on the appearance of the building.

Based on the results and conclusions, the following recommendations are given:

1. The school community should sustain and enhance key areas of improvement. Efforts should be directed toward improving areas that received relatively lower mean scores. A system for continuous monitoring and evaluation should be implemented to track progress in the identified areas.
2. Building on the noticeable improvements in the school's appearance, the management may allocate resources for the maintenance, renovations, and aesthetic upgrades of the facilities.

3. The school should continue to build a positive environment that benefits students, staff, and the wider community.
4. In future studies, the perceptions of other stakeholders, including students, parents, alumni, industry partners and community leaders, regarding the impact of accreditation on school improvement should be explored.

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