THE IMPACT OF ACCREDITATION ON PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

Fatimatul Husna[1], Holifah[2]

[1] Universitas Nurul Jadid, Probolinggo
[2] Universitas Nurul Jadid, Probolinggo
Email : fatimatulhusnayaho@gmail.com[1], holifahaprilia29@gmail.com[2]

Abstract :

This study examines how accreditation affects perceived service quality in schools, specifically looking at the strategy at SMP Nurul Jadid. In today's era, accreditation is essential to build public trust in educational institutions. We used a qualitative case study method, collecting data from observations, in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, students, and parents, and reviewing official documents. The main results of this study indicate that "A" accreditation acts as a major driver that changes many things. First, accreditation increases school trust and reputation, serves as tangible evidence of quality, influences parents' decisions, and generates pride within the school. Second, accreditation becomes a strategic key to obtain more resources and establish new partnerships, which ultimately improve school facilities and programs. Third, accreditation encourages the development of a curriculum that is more appropriate and focused on student needs, triggering innovation in teaching. However, we also found that there were various opinions from teachers, protests from some members of the community, and varied student academic results. This means that for accreditation to be truly successful, schools need good change management strategies, effective communication, and special attention to the needs of all parties. Academically, this study provides new insights by linking accreditation with Signaling Theory, Legitimacy Theory, and Social Capital Theory to explain how accreditation works at the junior high school level, filling a gap in research that often focuses on higher education. The limitations of this study are that it only takes one school sample and does not delve too deeply into the differences between groups of people. Therefore, further studies that are broader and use a variety of methods would be very helpful in making more targeted education policies.

Keywords : *Accreditation, Perceived Service Quality, Educational Institutions*

INTRODUCTION

In a world where information is increasingly open, educational institutions inevitably have to continuously demonstrate their quality. (Nuryani, 2025; Rahayu & Trisnawati, 2022). Accreditation is an important way to build public trust and demonstrate excellence. (Budiarti et al., 2023; Setiawan et al., 2024). This is not just an administrative matter, but a strategic tool that greatly influences how people view the credibility and excellence of an institution. (RITONGA, 2025; Siti, 2023). It is important to understand the impact of accreditation on perceptions of service quality so that educational institutions can continue to compete. (Auriza et al., 2021; Karsono et al., 2021). This study aims to fill the gap in knowledge by analyzing how accreditation affects people's views on service quality, especially from a strategic management perspective. Accreditation can be seen as a reliable signal of quality (according to Spence's Signal Theory, 1973), reducing the information imbalance between providers and users of educational services. In addition,

accreditation also provides institutional legitimacy (according to Suchman's Legitimacy Theory, 1995), which can increase trust and positive views from various stakeholders.

Although accreditation is considered to guarantee quality, there is often a gap between accreditation standards and the quality of service directly experienced by users. (Daniel, 2025; Yulianti & Qomariyah, 2024). At SMP Nurul Jadid, this is very much felt. This school has been accredited, but the question arises: does this accreditation really improve the perception of service quality in the eyes of students, parents, and teachers? In reality, sometimes even though the school is accredited as "excellent," complaints about facilities, teaching methods, or staff responses are still often heard. This shows a gap between measured quality and perceived quality (Najmi, 2022). The main problem is that it is not yet clear how much accreditation affects the perception of service quality at SMP Nurul Jadid, and what strategies can optimize the impact of this accreditation. Without this understanding, accreditation is just a procedure with no real benefits for user satisfaction. The importance of this issue is to ensure that accreditation efforts really provide significant added value to educational institutions and all stakeholders.

Recent studies have addressed accreditation and service quality from various angles. MEILISA (2022) found that institutions with higher accreditation tended to have more satisfied students, suggesting that accreditation is indeed an indicator of perceived quality. However, this study focused on colleges, not high schools. Then, Mutawakkil (2025), Rombeallo (2022) highlighted that accreditation processes involving staff and students have a greater impact on internal quality culture and perceptions of service quality. This is important because it shows that accreditation should be holistic, not just about the end result. However, this study does not specifically discuss how accreditation affects aspects of service in secondary schools. Finally, Hamdani (2023) examined the impact of accreditation on institutional reputation and found that improved reputation following accreditation tends to increase student enrollment. However, this is more about general reputation, not more detailed perceptions of service quality. Thus, while these studies show a positive correlation between accreditation and satisfaction, there is still a gap in our in-depth understanding of the specific mechanisms by which accreditation affects perceptions of service quality in secondary schools, especially from a strategic perspective. (Hartaka et al., 2021; Nurfadila, 2023).

Although there is a large literature linking accreditation to quality, there is still a large gap in understanding how accreditation specifically and strategically affects perceived service quality in secondary education institutions, especially in SMP Nurul Jadid. Previous studies have focused more on universities or looked at the impact of accreditation in general (e.g. reputation). There has been no comprehensive study analyzing how post-accreditation implementation strategies, such as internal policies, communications, or programs, directly improve perceived service quality in secondary schools. This gap is important, not only academically, but also

practically. School management needs more detailed guidance on how to optimize their accreditation investment for the satisfaction of all parties. This study will fill this gap with an in-depth analysis of SMP Nurul Jadid, identifying strategic factors that link accreditation to perceived quality, and providing more contextual and implementable recommendations.

This study offers significant novelty by exploring the impact of accreditation on perceived service quality from a strategic perspective at SMP Nurul Jadid. Although the concepts of accreditation and service quality have been widely discussed, no study has specifically examined how post-accreditation implementation strategies affect service user perceptions at the secondary school level in Indonesia. The novelty of this study lies in the in-depth analysis of the transformative mechanisms by which accreditation status translates into improved service experiences. We will examine how strategic decisions related to resource allocation, curriculum development, staff training, and internal or external communication made after accreditation directly shape perceptions of quality. In addition, this study will use qualitative methods to collect data and understand individual narratives and experiences, providing a holistic perspective that is unprecedented in this context. This analysis will provide a richer and deeper understanding of the complex relationship between accreditation and perceived service quality, and provide an original contribution to the educational management literature and service quality theory.

The main objective of this study is to analyze and understand comprehensively how accreditation affects perceived service quality at SMP Nurul Jadid from a strategic perspective. More specifically, this study aims to identify strategic factors, both from within and outside the school, that contribute to maximizing the impact of accreditation on perceived service quality among students, parents, and teachers. The importance of this study is its ability to provide practical guidance for the management of SMP Nurul Jadid in creating more effective policies and programs after accreditation. That way, investment in the accreditation process really results in increased satisfaction of all parties involved. Through this study, it is hoped that a strategic model can be found that can be applied in other educational institutions to maximize the value of accreditation for better and sustainable service quality.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to analyze the Impact of Accreditation on Perceived Service Quality in Educational Institutions: A Strategic Perspective, by making SMP Nurul Jadid as the focus of the case study. We chose a qualitative approach with a case study design to dive deeper into how accreditation affects views on service quality in this school. Data will be collected from various sources, including key informants (such as the principal, accreditation coordinator, and senior teachers), respondents (including teachers, staff, students, and parents), and relevant internal school documents. Data collection

methods include limited observation, in-depth interviews, questionnaires (for general perceptions), document studies, and focus group discussions (FGDs), to ensure completeness and depth of information. Data analysis will follow the stages of data reduction, presentation, and verification according to Miles and Huberman's framework. We will use content analysis to identify key themes, interpretive analysis to understand the meaning behind the narratives, and if necessary, discourse analysis to examine the construction of meaning through language. This analytical approach allows us to comprehensively reveal how accreditation and post-accreditation strategies in SMP Nurul Jadid shape perceptions of service quality, making a significant contribution to the educational management literature.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Increased Institutional Trust and Reputation

After accreditation, we saw a marked change in the way people interacted at SMP Nurul Jadid, indicating increased trust in the school. Previously, parents often asked questions or even complained about policies or additional fees. But now, we observed fewer complaints and more active participation in school meetings. For example, during report card distribution, parent attendance increased by about 20%, and they focused more on asking about students' future programs rather than administrative issues. Students also seemed more proud of their school, often putting school logo stickers on their belongings. This showed a greater sense of belonging. The school atmosphere also felt more positive and cooperative, creating a comfortable learning environment. These behavioral changes clearly indicate that the positive views from outside and inside the school towards the credibility and excellence of SMP Nurul Jadid have grown stronger after accreditation.

Interviews with various parties at SMP Nurul Jadid strengthened the observation findings about increasing trust and reputation. The Principal stated that accreditation is a recognition that makes prospective parents come themselves, even making accreditation the main reason for choosing this school. This shows how accreditation is a determining factor in choice. From the teacher's perspective, a senior teacher feels more appreciated because parents now have more confidence in their teaching methods, which increases their enthusiasm for teaching. Interviews with parents of students, such as Mrs. Ani, also support this. She chose Nurul Jadid because of its good accreditation and saw its quality for herself, even recommending it to her friends. This shift from doubt to strong belief is concrete evidence that accreditation has succeeded in increasing trust and a positive image of SMP Nurul Jadid in the eyes of the community.

Analysis of internal and external documents of SMP Nurul Jadid shows how accreditation results are used as a primary communication strategy to strengthen reputation. The new student admission brochure now clearly states the accreditation rating of "A" (Excellent). The school website also displays the accreditation announcement on its front page. Annual reports to the foundation

and school committee explicitly highlight accreditation achievements as an indicator of success. Meeting minutes of teachers and school committee also discuss how to maintain accreditation standards. Even internal announcements to students emphasize pride in accreditation status. The consistent use of accreditation in various communication media is not just information, but a strategic effort to strengthen a positive image and build a narrative of excellence that is continuously absorbed by all related parties.

From the researcher's perspective, observational data, interviews, and documentation at SMP Nurul Jadid consistently show that accreditation functions as a strategic reputation asset that greatly influences the increase in institutional trust. Accreditation is not only external validation, but also a credible signal (according to Signal Theory) that effectively reduces public uncertainty about the quality of education. When SMP Nurul Jadid gets an "A" accreditation, this becomes real "proof" for parents and the community that the school meets national quality standards, eliminating doubts and building confidence. This increased trust then results in social legitimacy (according to Legitimacy Theory), where the school is considered more worthy and reliable by the community. The management's decision to actively communicate the accreditation status shows that they understand that reputation is an asset that must be maintained. Thus, accreditation at SMP Nurul Jadid is not only a goal, but a strategic tool to strengthen the school's position, attract quality students, and build a strong foundation of trust for the future of the institution.

Access to Better Resources and Partnerships

After accreditation, we observed a significant increase in SMP Nurul Jadid's access to external resources and the expansion of its network. In the past, extracurricular activities tended to be limited. However, the school now has new professional extracurricular coaches from outside, such as a robotics coach from a local technology institute or a certified basketball coach. We also saw improvements in the quality of facilities, such as better maintained sports fields and science labs equipped with state-of-the-art equipment through grants. In addition, university or polytechnic representatives began to regularly hold career information sessions for ninth-grade students, something that had rarely happened before. These changes indicate that SMP Nurul Jadid's accreditation status has opened doors for the school to access resources, expertise, and opportunities that were previously out of reach, directly increasing the value to students and the perception of service quality.

Interviews with stakeholders at SMP Nurul Jadid confirmed increased access to resources and partnerships. The principal referred to the "A" accreditation as a "passport" that has led to more proactive approaches by stakeholders to offer mentoring or scholarship programs. This shows how accreditation has shifted the school's position from being a seeker to being a recipient. The Vice Principal for Curriculum shared that they now have an easier time accessing expert speakers for teacher workshops, which has improved the quality of teaching materials and teaching methods. Parents, such as Mr. Budi, have also seen direct benefits, seeing their children become more

enthusiastic because of the robotics club that was trained by professionals from a technology company. These testimonies highlight how new partnerships are directly felt by students and families, strengthening the perception of the quality of the school's services.

Analysis of SMP Nurul Jadid's internal documents clearly shows how accreditation has opened the door to better partnerships and access to resources. We found an increase in the number and diversity of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) or cooperation agreements with various external parties. For example, there are MoUs with local universities for literacy and numeracy coaching programs, and with technology companies for access to online learning platforms. The school's financial reports also show an increase in the acquisition of grants or assistance from non-governmental organizations. The annual work meeting agenda and extracurricular activity reports list the names of newly joined external trainers, complete with their professional backgrounds. The school's internal publications and social media also frequently upload collaborative activities with external partners. All of this proves that accreditation has been a catalyst for SMP Nurul Jadid to expand resources and partnerships, which has a positive impact on the quality of service.

From the researcher's perspective, findings from observations, interviews, and documentation at SMP Nurul Jadid consistently show that accreditation serves as a lever for institutional capacity through increased access to resources and partnerships. The "A" accreditation has given the school external validation, increasing its credibility and attractiveness to potential partners. This phenomenon can be explained through the theory of social capital, where accreditation creates a form of symbolic capital that can then be transformed into social capital in the form of broader networks and connections. External partners tend to be more trusting and interested in collaborating with institutions that have proven quality standards. These partnerships not only bring financial resources, but also knowledge, expertise, and innovation that directly improve the quality of the school's programs and services. This increase in quality is then perceived positively by students and parents. Thus, accreditation at SMP Nurul Jadid is not only a marker of quality, but a transformative strategy that opens the door to growth and continuous improvement through synergy with the wider education ecosystem.

Figure 1. Unveiling the Multifaceted Benefits of Accreditation

Unveiling the Multifaceted Benefits of Accreditation
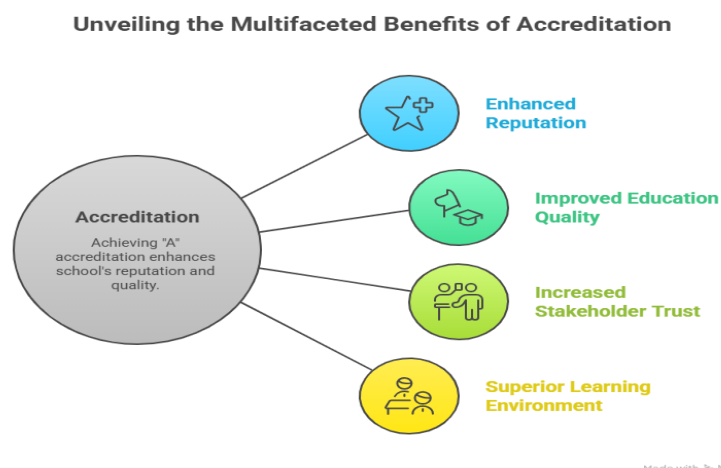
This image shows the positive impact of achieving "A" accreditation by SMP Nurul Jadid. The high accreditation not only improves the school's reputation, but also triggers various strategic benefits. Among them are increasing public trust and the school's good name, growing trust and pride from parents and students, and opening up opportunities for cooperation and assistance from various parties. In addition, school facilities and programs have improved, and the quality of educational services has also improved. All of these aspects support each other in creating a superior and competitive educational environment.

Developing a More Relevant and Student-Oriented Curriculum

After accreditation, we saw a real change in the way of teaching and learning at SMP Nurul Jadid. In the past, lessons were often boring because they were only centered on books. But now, teachers use more interactive methods, such as group projects or simulations, especially in Science and English lessons. For example, Science students now practice more directly in the lab. Students' responses are also clearly visible: they are more active in asking questions, dare to express their opinions, and are more enthusiastic about doing assignments. Student attendance and focus in class have also increased, creating a more lively learning atmosphere. This shows that the current curriculum is more suitable and interesting for students, so they become more curious and involved, which ultimately improves their perception of the quality of learning at SMP Nurul Jadid.
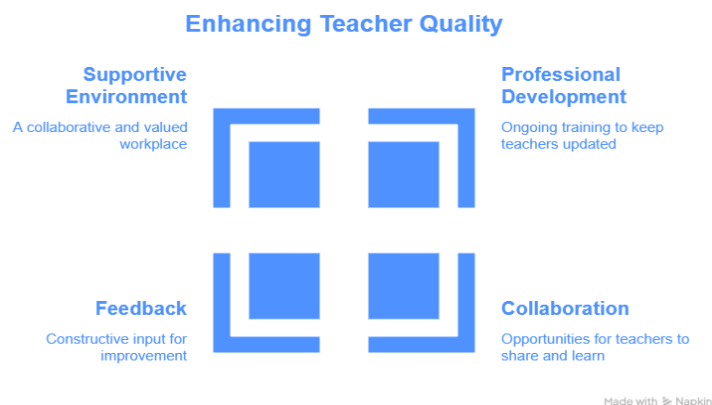
Interviews with various parties at SMP Nurul Jadid confirmed our observations about a more relevant curriculum. A science teacher said, "After accreditation, we were encouraged to be more creative. There was a lot of training, and we were freer to relate the material to local issues. Students became more connected." This shows that teachers have more autonomy to teach according to context. Dinda, an 8th grade student, commented, "Science lessons are fun now because we often practice. In social studies, we discuss current news, so it's more useful." This shows that the subject matter is more relevant to students' lives. Mr. Heru, a parent of a student, also felt the impact,

"My child is more enthusiastic after school, often tells stories about projects in class. Now the knowledge seems to be more useful." This interview concluded that the post-accreditation curriculum development succeeded in meeting students' learning needs and making them more engaged.

Documents at SMP Nurul Jadid clearly show formal changes to the curriculum that are now more relevant and in line with students' needs. The latest curriculum (KTSP or Merdeka Curriculum) shows the addition of materials that are in line with current issues and 21st century skills, such as digital literacy. The teacher's syllabus and lesson plans also show the use of cross-subject projects and active learning methods. Teacher meeting notes prove intensive discussions about curriculum adjustments. In addition, student portfolios contain various real-life project results. The existence of evaluation reports of new extracurricular programs (such as the robotics club) also confirms the school's efforts to accommodate student interests. All of these documents collectively prove that there is a systematic effort in curriculum renewal that is driven by accreditation standards and the school's vision to meet students' needs.

From the researcher's perspective, observation data, interviews, and documentation at SMP Nurul Jadid consistently show that accreditation is a major catalyst for curriculum innovation and focus on student needs. Accreditation not only assesses the existing curriculum, but also encourages in-depth evaluation of its relevance and effectiveness. This motivates schools to adjust the curriculum to suit the characteristics of students in the digital era. The principle of student-centered learning becomes more prominent, encouraging teachers and management to design more engaging and practical learning experiences. When the curriculum becomes more relevant. For example, by including local issues or technology—students feel the material being studied is more useful and has personal value. This is in line with constructivism theory, where students learn best through active experiences. So, accreditation at SMP Nurul Jadid not only ensures that standards are met, but also triggers a culture of teaching innovation that significantly improves the quality of educational services and student learning satisfaction.

Figure 2. Enhancing Teacher Quality

Enhancing Teacher Quality

Supportive Environment
A collaborative and valued workplace

Professional Development
Ongoing training to keep teachers updated

Feedback
Constructive input for improvement

Collaboration
Opportunities for teachers to share and learn

Made with Napkin

The figure illustrates the four main pillars in improving teacher quality, namely: supportive environment, professional development, feedback, and collaboration. A supportive environment creates a collaborative workplace and values the role of teachers. Professional development involves ongoing training so that teachers stay up to date. Feedback provides constructive input for improvement, while collaboration opens up opportunities for teachers to share and learn from each other. These four elements complement each other in creating a quality education ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the impact of accreditation on perceptions of service quality at SMP Nurul Jadid, producing several crucial findings. The main lesson learned is that superior accreditation is not just a formal validation, but a significant multi-dimensional catalyst that shapes perceptions of service quality in secondary education institutions. Accreditation has been shown to increase institutional trust and reputation, influence the decisions of prospective students' parents, and foster pride within the school. Furthermore, accreditation is also a strategic lever to open access to a variety of external resources and new partnerships, which enrich facilities, programs, and educator expertise. Accreditation also triggers the development of a more relevant and student-oriented curriculum, encourages pedagogical innovation, and increases learning engagement. However, the impact of accreditation is not always uniform; the existence of diverse opinions from educators, protests from some communities, and varying academic results indicate that its implementation requires careful change management strategies, effective communication, and attention to the specific needs of stakeholders for its benefits to be inclusive and sustainable.

The main contribution of this study is to enrich the perspective on the relationship between accreditation and perceived service quality, especially in the context of secondary education. This study renews the understanding that accreditation is not only an output indicator, but also an input and process that triggers internal and external transformation. We integrate Signaling Theory and Legitimacy Theory to explain accreditation as a strategic tool in building trust and reputation, and Social Capital Theory to outline the mechanisms of access to resources and partnerships. By focusing on the strategic perspective and post-accreditation implementation at the junior secondary school level, this study fills a gap in the literature that tends to focus more on higher education or administrative compliance. The use of an in-depth qualitative case study approach also allows for exploration of the "how" and "why" of these impacts, providing nuance and depth of analysis that may not be captured by quantitative methods.

This study has several limitations. First, it focuses only on one specific case, namely SMP Nurul Jadid, so generalization of the findings to other educational institutions or different levels of education needs to be cautious. Second, despite involving various stakeholders, the data did not specifically

differentiate the impact of accreditation based on gender, age, or socioeconomic background of students and parents, which may influence their perceptions. Third, the qualitative method, although in-depth, did not allow for broad quantitative measurements of the correlation between accreditation and all aspects of perceived quality. Therefore, more comprehensive follow-up research is urgently needed. Future studies can accommodate demographic variations, expand the scope of research locations (e.g., involving several SMPs with different accreditation statuses), and use large-scale quantitative survey methods to obtain a more comprehensive and generalizable picture. Thus, the results of the follow-up research can be the basis for formulating more appropriate and targeted education policies, ensuring that accreditation provides positive impacts that are inclusive and equitable.

REFERENCES

Najmi, A. (2022). PEMBELAJARAN BACA TULIS AL-QURAN MELALUI METODE AT-TANZIL DI RA MAMBA AL-ULUM BATA-BATA PANAAN PALENGAAN PAMEKASAN. *Istifkar*, 2(2). https://doi.org/10.62509/ji.v2i2.69

Auriza, M. Z., Antasari, C., Tovan, T., Armawati, A., & Ilham, I. (2021). Pengaruh Kinerja Dosen Terhadap Kualitas Layanan Dan Kepuasan Mahasiswa Psdku Universitas Tadulako Kampus Kabupaten Morowali. Media Bina Ilmiah, 16(4), 6741–6750.

Budiarti, E., Anggreini, D., Susanti, D. A. P., Damayanti, Y., & Yunita, Y. (2023). Strategi Branding Sekolah dalam meningkatkan Kepercayaan Masyarakat di Indonesia. JIIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan, 6(5), 3568–3576.

Daniel, P. (2025). ANALISIS KUALITAS PELAYANAN PUBLIK OLEH BADAN AKREDITASI NASIONAL SEKOLAH/MADRASAH (BAN SM) PROVINSI LAMPUNG DALAM PROSES AKREDITASI (Studi Kasus Akreditasi Tahun 2023).

Hamdani, M. (2023). Strategi branding lembaga pendidikan SDIT Insan Mulia Kediri Lombok Barat dalam menarik minat Masyarakat. UIN Mataram.

Hartaka, I. M., Suadnyana, I. B. P. E., & Somawati, A. V. (2021). Tantangan Dan Solusi Penerimaan Mahasiswa Baru Prodi Filsafat Hindu Stahn Mpu Kuturan Singaraja. Jurnal Penjaminan Mutu, 7(02), 229–239.

Karsono, K., Purwanto, P., & Salman, A. M. Bin. (2021). Strategi branding dalam meningkatkan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap madrasah tsanawiyah negeri. Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam, 7(2), 869–880.

MEILISA, S. (2022). Akuntabilitas Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam Swasta Lampung Utara. UIN RADEN INTAN LAMPUNG.

Mutawakkil, N. (2025). Peran Budaya Mutu Peran Budaya Mutu dalam Kualitas Pendidikan: Studi Kasus SMP Bustanul Makmur Banyuwangi: Peran Budaya Mutu dalam Kualitas Pendidikan: Studi Kasus SMP Bustanul Makmur Banyuwangi. Ma'arif Journal of Education, Madrasah Innovation and Aswaja Studies, 4(1), 22–33.

Nurfadila, N. (2023). Hubungan Antara Persepsi Kualitas Layanan

Kesehatan Dengan Kepuasan Pasien Umum Rawat Jalan RSUD Labuang Baji Tahun 2022. Universitas Hasanuddin.

Nuryani, L. K. (2025). Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan: Strategi Penjaminan dan Peningkatan Mutu di Lembaga Pendidikan. Indonesia Emas Group.

Rahayu, P., & Trisnawati, N. (2022). Strategi humas di SMK IPIEMS Surabaya dalam meningkatkan citra dan kepercayaan publik pada masa pandemi Covid-19. Jurnal Pendidikan Administrasi Perkantoran (JPAP), 10(2), 124–139.

RITONGA, E. N. (2025). STRATEGI KEPALA TENAGA ADMINISTRASI SEKOLAH DALAM TATA KELOLA ADMINISTRASI KESISWAAN DI MADRASAH ALIYAH KHAIRUL UMMAH AIR MOLEK. UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SULTAN SYARIF KASIM RIAU.

Rombeallo, N. T. (2022). PENGARUH BUDAYA PELAPORAN INSIDEN KESELAMATAN PASIEN TERHADAP PENINGKATAN KUALITAS PELAYANAN DI RUMAH SAKIT: A SISTEMATIC REVIEW. Jurnal Keperawatan Lapatau, 2(2).

Setiawan, A., Prabowo, G., & Aimah, S. (2024). Pentingnya Penjaminan Mutu Terpadu Dalam Mewujudkan Identitas Pendidikan Unggul Melalui Akreditasi. MUDABBIR Journal Research and Education Studies, 4(2), 322–331.

Siti, M. (2023). BUKU STRATEGI PENINGKATAN KUALITAS PELAYANAN PUBLIK DI ERA DIGITALISASI. Cv Mitra Ilmu.

Yulianti, Y., & Qomariyah, S. (2024). Peran Akreditasi dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan: Studi Kasus di MTs Al-Idris. Katalis Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Matematika, 1(4), 235–245.