

## STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN ACCREDITATION AND POST-VISITATION PHASES: A CASE OF PKBM AL GHOUTSILLAH

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### Abstract

*This study investigates the institutional management strategies of PKBM Al Ghoutsillah in preparing for and responding to the accreditation visitation process. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis involving seven key informants: the head of the institution, administrative personnel, and senior tutors. Data analysis followed the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña interactive model, encompassing data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate three key dimensions. First, accreditation success was achieved through the effective execution of the POAC management cycle – Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling. Second, responsive leadership was instrumental in shaping an adaptive organizational culture, promoting collective accountability and institutional flexibility in addressing accreditation feedback. Third, the post-visitation phase demonstrated adaptive crisis management and the strategic use of digital-based documentation systems, facilitating rapid institutional improvement within limited timeframes. Comparative analysis with prior studies on school and madrasah accreditation highlights PKBM Al Ghoutsillah as a best-practice model for non-formal education institutions. Theoretically, this study contributes to the discourse on educational management by elucidating the interrelation between responsive leadership and adaptive culture within the POAC framework. Practically, it offers a replicable model for transforming accreditation from a compliance-oriented procedure into a developmental and sustainable quality assurance mechanism in non-formal education settings.*

**Keywords:** Accreditation Management; Responsive Leadership; Quality Assurance; PKBM Al Ghoutsillah

### A. Introduction

Quality assurance in education is a mandate of Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System in Indonesia. One of the key mechanisms for external quality assurance is accreditation, currently governed by the National Accreditation Board for Education Quality Assurance (BAN-PDM) under Ministerial Regulation No. 38 of 2023 (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2023). Accreditation serves as a structured evaluation mechanism to ensure that educational institutions meet national quality standards. This process applies not only to formal schools but also to non-formal institutions such as Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat (PKBM) or

Community Learning Centers, which serve as vital community based educational entities in Indonesia's lifelong learning system.

Managing a PKBM is inherently complex because it integrates community engagement, administrative governance, and program development. Previous studies (Hartini, Noorhapizah, & Aslamiah, 2024; Hartini et al., 2020; Hartini, Aslamiah, & Noorhapizah, 2023) emphasize that effective PKBM management requires strategic planning to align programs with local needs and societal demands. In parallel, management of Sanggar Kegiatan Belajar (SKB) institutions with similar structures has been shown to depend on systematic and responsive management practices. Accreditation in PKBM contexts is evaluated based on the Eight National Education Standards (Standar Nasional Pendidikan/SNP), which include curriculum, educators, facilities, process, and assessment. Each standard demands strong documentation, coordination, and leadership. Studies by Novitawati (2018) and Novitawati & Suriansyah (2017) highlight that facility and environmental management directly influence learning quality. Similarly, Cinantya & Aslamiah (2019) demonstrate that process management in literacy education requires detailed planning and implementation to ensure measurable outcomes.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in orchestrating these elements. Sagala (2013) outlines the classical POAC framework Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling—as the backbone of effective education management. Building on this, Suriansyah (2014) and Aslamiah (2016) argue that transformational leadership enhances institutional quality through participatory decision-making and accountability. Moreover, leadership contributes to shaping an organizational culture that promotes collaboration and continuous learning (Suriansyah & Aslamiah, 2015; Suriansyah & Sulistiyana, 2019).

A positive organizational culture is also a foundation for implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) and the principle of Continuous Improvement (Kaizen) in education. As Suriansyah (2017) notes, effective TQM practices require leadership based on trust, empowerment, and shared vision. Internationally, Harvey and Green (2019) define educational quality as a multidimensional construct encompassing excellence, transformation, and value for stakeholders. Meanwhile, Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2020) advocate for a Continuous Improvement Model (CIM) in higher and community education, emphasizing institutional learning cycles and stakeholder participation. Integrating these perspectives, quality management in education is not merely a compliance mechanism but a transformative process that enhances institutional responsiveness and sustainability.

Despite extensive studies on leadership, culture, and quality assurance in formal education, research focusing on the accreditation management practices of non-formal institutions especially PKBM is still limited. Existing studies have not yet provided a comprehensive understanding of how PKBM leaders respond adaptively to assessor

feedback during and after accreditation visitations. Furthermore, few studies have articulated how responsive leadership interacts with an adaptive organizational culture to drive continuous institutional improvement.

This study addresses that research gap by analyzing the accreditation preparation and post-visitiation management strategies of PKBM Al Ghoutsillah, located in Pulau Laut Timur District, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. Distinct from other PKBMs, PKBM Al Ghoutsillah has successfully demonstrated digital-based documentation systems, collaborative leadership practices, and rapid organizational adaptation, offering an emerging best-practice model for non-formal educational quality management in Indonesia.

## **B. Method**

### **Research Design**

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design, which allows for an in-depth exploration of a particular phenomenon within its real-life context (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Sugiyono, 2017). The phenomenon under investigation was the management of accreditation preparation and the institutional responses following the visitation findings at PKBM Al Ghoutsillah. A case study approach was selected because it enables the researcher to capture the contextual nuances, managerial practices, and leadership dynamics that arise throughout the accreditation process. The research was conducted at PKBM Al Ghoutsillah, a non-formal education institution located in Pulau Laut Timur District, Kotabaru Regency, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. Established in 2010, the institution operates community-based education programs including Paket A (equivalent to elementary school), Paket B (junior high school equivalent), Paket C (senior high school equivalent), and Pendidikan Kecakapan Kerja (PKK) or Work Skills Education Program. PKBM Al Ghoutsillah serves approximately 180 active learners and employs 12 educators and tutors.

Prior to this research, the institution held a “B” (Good) accreditation rating based on the previous cycle in 2018. During the latest accreditation period (2023–2024), PKBM Al Ghoutsillah underwent an intensive visitation process under the supervision of BAN-PDM. Its consistent record of digital-based documentation management and collaborative leadership distinguished it from other PKBMs in the region, making it a strong case for studying responsive leadership and adaptive culture within the context of educational quality assurance (Harvey & Green, 2019; Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2020).

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals directly involved in the accreditation management process. The key informant was the Head of PKBM, who oversaw institutional planning and coordination. Supporting informants included the administrative staff (SISPENA operator) and a senior tutor who served as the head of the accreditation preparation team. These participants were chosen for their strategic roles, institutional knowledge, and active involvement during the accreditation and post-visitiation phases.

Data were collected through three complementary qualitative techniques to ensure depth, validity, and triangulation of information:

1. In-Depth Interviews: Conducted with the head of the PKBM, administrative staff, and senior tutor to obtain detailed insights into management functions—Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC)—as well as the challenges and responses experienced during accreditation.
2. Non-Participant Observation: Observations were carried out during internal meetings, document preparation sessions, and accreditation evidence compilation activities to capture authentic managerial behavior, teamwork patterns, and leadership interactions.
3. Document Analysis: Documentary reviews included accreditation team decrees (SK Tim Akreditasi), drafts of the Eight National Education Standards (SNP), and SISPENA system documentation. These materials supported cross-validation and contextual understanding of institutional practices.

#### **Data Analysis Procedures**

Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), comprising three iterative activities:

1. Data Reduction: Selecting, simplifying, and categorizing data from interviews, observations, and documents to identify emerging themes related to accreditation management, leadership, and institutional responsiveness.
2. Data Display: Organizing data in descriptive narratives, tables, and matrices to facilitate pattern identification and interpretation.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Synthesizing findings to develop interpretive conclusions, which were continuously verified against primary data to ensure validity and consistency.

#### **Data Trustworthiness and Validation**

To ensure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), several validation strategies were applied:

1. Triangulation: Cross-verification of data across sources (head, tutor, staff) and methods (interviews, observation, documents) to enhance credibility.
2. Member Check: Draft findings were shared with participants to verify accuracy, interpretation, and contextual alignment.
3. Peer Debriefing: The analysis process was reviewed by two academic peers specializing in educational management to ensure analytical rigor and minimize bias.

Audit Trail: Systematic documentation of data collection and analysis procedures was maintained to support dependability and confirmability.

#### **Research Gap and Distinctive Contribution**

While numerous studies have examined educational leadership and quality assurance in formal education settings, few have explored how non-formal institutions like PKBM manage accreditation dynamically particularly how they respond adaptively to assessor feedback and sustain improvement post-visitation. This study addresses that gap by presenting PKBM Al Ghoutsillah as a best-practice model where responsive

leadership, digital documentation systems, and a culture of continuous improvement interact to achieve sustainable accreditation performance.

## **C. Finding and Discussion**

### **1. Findings**

The research findings reveal that the success of PKBM Al Ghoutsillah in achieving an optimal accreditation outcome is not merely the result of administrative compliance but the manifestation of a learning-oriented management system rooted in strategic leadership, collaborative governance, and adaptive institutional culture. The management process follows the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) cycle, operationalized through distinct yet interconnected stages pre-visitation, visitation, and post-visitation each characterized by systematic coordination and reflective learning.

#### **a. Pre-Visitation Management: Strategic Planning, Structuring, and Execution**

At the planning stage, PKBM Al Ghoutsillah demonstrated a strong sense of purpose and direction. The Head of PKBM explained:

“We started from the awareness that accreditation reflects quality. Each document must have meaning for service improvement, not merely meet the format.”

This orientation shaped the institution’s Accreditation Evidence Matrix, mapping every indicator of the Eight National Education Standards (SNP) to measurable evidence and responsible personnel. Through this mapping, the institution not only ensured procedural readiness but also identified areas for pedagogical and managerial improvement.

The digital collaboration system adopted through shared folders and SISPENA integration proved essential in overcoming limitations of human resources. Every staff member could access, edit, and verify evidence in real time. This digital democratization of tasks reflects the institution’s attempt to distribute authority creating the foundation of a *shared accountability culture*.

The organizing process further reinforced the principles of participatory governance. The Head of PKBM delegated roles according to expertise, fostering both trust and autonomy. The senior tutor emphasized during an interview:

“We felt part of something meaningful. The Head of PKBM didn’t just give orders, but listened and provided space for ideas.”

This participatory dynamic elevated the psychological ownership of staff toward institutional success an important component of sustainable quality management (Harvey & Green, 2019).

#### **b. On-Site Visitation: Assessment Dynamics and Institutional Behavior**

During the two-day visitation, PKBM’s interaction with assessors revealed how the institution internalized feedback and demonstrated professional integrity. The assessors noted the completeness of documentation and the responsiveness of the accreditation team, though they identified minor deficiencies in administrative records. Instead of perceiving this as a failure, the PKBM treated it as constructive input for improvement. One assessor remarked,

“This accreditation team is open to feedback, not defensive. That is rarely seen in non-formal institutions.”

This response signifies a shift from a compliance-oriented to a learning-oriented accreditation culture, in which feedback becomes part of institutional reflection. Such dialogic engagement transforms accreditation into an educative process (Stensaker et al., 2020). The institution also showcased innovative forms of evidence photo and video documentation illustrating real classroom interactions, student activities, and community programs. This “visual assurance strategy” not only compensated for limited written archives but also reflected contextual creativity suited to community-based education.

### c. Post-Visitation Phase: Responsive Leadership and Institutional Learning

The post-visitation period marked the most dynamic and revealing stage of management practice. When the BAN-PDM team allowed a two-day extension for document revision, the Head of PKBM immediately convened an emergency meeting. Within hours, tasks were redistributed: one group handled content revision, another ensured formatting compliance, and the SISPENA operator updated all uploads. The Head of PKBM stated:

“We learned that leadership is not just about giving direction, but ensuring everyone moves together when time is limited.”

This swift coordination represents a model of responsive leadership (Suriansyah, 2014) a leadership style that balances decisiveness with empathy under pressure. The rapid completion and validation of revisions not only strengthened the institution’s credibility but also inspired the formation of a Quality Assurance Desk, a permanent structure responsible for continuous monitoring and documentation updates. This marks the institutionalization of a continuous improvement cycle (CQI) transforming accreditation from a one-time event into an ongoing culture of reflection.

### d. Institutional Learning and Quality Culture

The overall findings indicate that PKBM Al Ghoutsillah’s success lies in its ability to transform external evaluation into internal growth. The staff developed what Srikanthan & Dalrymple (2020) describe as a *quality culture* a shared belief that institutional excellence is everyone’s responsibility. The statement from the senior tutor encapsulates this:

“Quality is not just the Head’s task it’s everyone’s responsibility.”

**Table 1. Quality is not just the Head’s task it’s everyone’s responsibility**

Phase	Core Strategy	Key Outcomes	Institutional Meaning
Pre-Visitation	Evidence mapping, digital collaboration	Systematic readiness, shared accountability	Building a participatory foundation
Visitation	Constructive engagement with assessors	Learning-oriented dialogue	Transforming evaluation into reflection
Post-Visitation	Rapid mobilization and revision	Strengthened credibility	Responsive leadership in action
Institutional Learning	Establishment of QA Desk	Sustainable improvement culture	Institutionalization of quality mindset

## **2. Discussion**

The findings demonstrate that PKBM Al Ghoutsillah exemplifies adaptive educational management in the non-formal sector balancing structural efficiency, human engagement, and technological adaptability. The institution's journey reflects both classical management logic and contemporary organizational learning theory.

### **a. Strategic Leadership and Participatory Management**

The leadership approach observed aligns with Fullan's (2021) concept of *moral purpose leadership* where change is driven by shared values and collective vision. The Head of PKBM played multiple roles: as planner, facilitator, and motivator. The participatory structure mirrors Bush's (2020) model of *collegial leadership*, emphasizing dialogue, trust, and shared vision as levers of institutional transformation. By internalizing the POAC framework within an inclusive structure, PKBM translated abstract management theory into concrete, lived practice. This validates the enduring relevance of classical management concepts when contextualized in modern, community-based educational governance.

### **b. Shared Accountability and Collaborative Culture**

The culture of shared accountability observed in PKBM represents an evolution of the traditional hierarchical model. Drawing on Harvey and Green (2019), quality is no longer imposed from above but co-created through mutual responsibility. The institution's collaborative routines peer verification, shared digital workspaces, and collective monitoring manifest the principle that "quality assurance is a collective act." This resonates with Stensaker et al. (2020), who argue that *institutional learning* occurs when feedback loops are embedded into daily practice, rather than confined to evaluation periods. PKBM's reflection meetings and internal audits illustrate how collaboration becomes an epistemic tool for organizational learning.

### **c. Adaptive Innovation through Digital Systems**

The integration of SISPENA 4.0 illustrates a pragmatic response to the challenges of limited administrative capacity. Technology became both a management and learning tool, reinforcing transparency, traceability, and shared access. Similar findings by Sari et al. (2024) indicate that digital accreditation systems can reduce error margins, increase participation, and enhance institutional accountability. The use of multimedia documentation (photos, videos) also signifies contextual innovation a way of evidencing quality through authentic, local means rather than formal bureaucracy. Such innovation reflects *organizational intelligence* the ability to adapt creatively to structural constraints.

### **d. Post-Visitation Transformation and Institutional Maturity**

The post-visitation response embodies the essence of what Deming (1986) described as *continuous improvement* and what Arcaro (1995) termed *quality in education*. The two-day revision period became a microcosm of institutional learning: coordination, reflection, and execution under time pressure. PKBM's decision to establish a permanent Quality Assurance Desk represents a transition from episodic compliance to systemic improvement echoing the global trend toward sustainability in educational quality assurance (Harvey & Williams, 2022).

### **e. Theoretical Implications**

This study contributes to educational management theory by reaffirming that non-formal education institutions often marginalized in policy discourse can serve as models of adaptive governance. The integration of POAC with participatory and digital elements exemplifies a *hybrid model* of management that blends structure, culture, and technology. It also expands the notion of *quality culture* (Srikanthan & Dalrymple, 2020) into the non-formal context, showing that shared accountability and reflective learning can emerge even in small, resource-limited institutions when leadership fosters inclusivity and trust.

### **f. Practical Implications**

Practically, the PKBM Al Ghoutsillah model offers three transferable lessons for non-formal institutions:

1. Integrate participatory planning with digital systems to optimize limited human resources.
2. Embed reflection as a routine practice through regular feedback loops and internal audits.
3. Institutionalize quality assurance mechanisms (such as QA Desks) to sustain post-accreditation improvement.

This model transforms accreditation from a compliance checklist into a dialogic and developmental process, positioning it as a *driver of continuous quality transformation* within Indonesia's non-formal education system.

## **E. Conclusion**

This study concludes that the accreditation success of PKBM Al Ghoutsillah resulted from the effective application of the POAC management cycle supported by responsive leadership, team collaboration, and adaptive organizational culture. Accreditation was transformed from a compliance process into a mechanism for continuous quality improvement. Practically, the findings offer a best practice model for other non-formal institutions to strengthen quality assurance through digital documentation, participatory teamwork, and reflective evaluation. Theoretically, the study reinforces the relevance of leadership responsiveness and quality culture in sustaining institutional effectiveness. However, the single-case design and limited duration restrict the generalization of results. Future studies should compare multiple PKBMs and develop a more comprehensive model linking strategic leadership, digital management, and institutional learning.

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