
Accreditation as a guarantor of quality of educational services at Ma'had Aly Darussalam

Muh. Khotibul Umam^{1*}, Siti Aimah², Ahmat Zakaria Ramadan³

Author's Manajemen Pendidikan Islam /Universitas KH. Mukhtar Syafa'at(s), Indonesia
e-mail: Khotibumam167@gmail.com, sitiaimah 1@iaida.ac.id, zakasyam3@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author.

Received: 8 December 2024; Revised: 18 December 2024; Accepted: 31 December 2024

Abstract: The main objective of this study is to analyze the role of accreditation in ensuring the quality of educational services at Ma'had Aly Darussalam and how the accreditation process can encourage continuous improvement in various aspects of institutions, curriculum, and teaching. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design, combining in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation to explore the role of accreditation in improving the quality of education at Ma'had Aly Darussalam, with thematic data analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding. The results of this discussion indicate that the accreditation process at Ma'had Aly Darussalam has had a significant impact on improving the quality of education. Accreditation encourages the development of an adaptive curriculum, integrating religious knowledge and modern science based on competency, and preparing students to face the challenges of globalization. Ongoing training enhances lecturers' pedagogical skills, enabling them to adopt technology-based interactive teaching methods. Public trust in Ma'had Aly also increases, because accreditation provides legitimacy that confirms the quality of education. Overall, accreditation plays a major role in improving the quality of education and strengthening the position of Ma'had Aly in the eyes of the community and the world of education.

Keywords: Accreditation, Quality Assurance, Educational Services, Ma'had Aly Darussalam, and Academic Excellence.

How to Cite: Umam, M., K., Aimah, S., & Ramadan, A., Z., (2024). Accreditation as a guarantor of quality of educational services at Ma'had Aly Darussalam. *Al-Fikru: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sains*, 5(2), 335-342. <https://doi.org/10.55210/al-fikru.v5i2.1918>

Introduction

Accreditation is a form of formal recognition of the quality and quality of educational services in educational institutions, including Ma'had Aly Darussalam. As an Islamic religious higher education institution that prioritizes the study of classical books (turats), Ma'had Aly Darussalam views accreditation as a strategic step to ensure the quality of educational services provided to students. This accreditation involves a comprehensive assessment process. It evaluates aspects such as curriculum, human resources, facilities, and institutional governance (Rizki et al., 2024). By obtaining accredited status, Ma'had Aly Darussalam demonstrates its commitment to meeting nationally recognized educational standards, so that it is able to provide quality assurance to students, parents, and the wider community. In a social context, accreditation acts as an instrument for building public trust in educational institutions. For Ma'had Aly Darussalam, accreditation is not just an administrative symbol, but also an indicator of the institution's excellence in providing quality education. This process provides legitimacy to the institution, so that Ma'had Aly graduates are not only recognized within the religious community, but also in various other professional sectors. Accreditation provides certainty that graduates from Ma'had Aly have academic and scientific competencies that are able to compete in the modern world without ignoring the Islamic values that are their foundation (Muhsin, 2021).

In addition, accreditation also encourages Ma'had Aly Darussalam to continue to improve the quality of educational services through innovation and continuous evaluation. For example, developing a curriculum that is adaptive to the needs of the times, improving the quality of teaching staff, and

This is an open access article under the [CC-BY](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license.

utilizing technology in the learning process. Accreditation also encourages Ma'had Aly to improve institutional governance to be more transparent, accountable, and professional (Suwarno & Pd, 2021). In this way, Ma'had Aly is not only able to maintain its position as a credible center for Islamic studies, but also contributes to producing a generation of scholars who are relevant to global challenges. Through accreditation, Ma'had Aly Darussalam not only builds public trust, but also ensures that its educational mission in forming competent, integrity-based, and contributive scholars for society can be achieved optimally (Obet, 2023).

Previous research relevant to this research focuses on the role of accreditation in improving the quality of education in religious higher education institutions, including Islamic boarding schools and Ma'had Aly. One of the relevant studies was conducted by Aliyah (2021), emphasized that accreditation is an evaluation tool that functions to standardize the quality of education in Islamic-based institutions. This study found that accreditation not only functions as an indicator of quality, but also as a reflection tool for institutions to continue to improve themselves in facing the dynamics of community needs. Another study by Kusuma (2022), which discusses the relationship between accreditation and the competitiveness of graduates of Islamic educational institutions shows that institutions that have superior accreditation status tend to be more trusted by the community and have a higher level of graduate acceptance in the world of work. This study is relevant to Ma'had Aly Darussalam because this institution faces similar challenges, namely how to ensure that their graduates have academic competencies that are recognized both in religious and professional circles.

In addition, research by Basri et al., (2024) which focuses on educational governance at Ma'had Aly shows that the accreditation process often encourages institutions to improve aspects of management, curriculum, and facilities. This study notes that accreditation acts as a catalyst for change at Ma'had Aly, so that the institution can keep up with the demands of modern education without losing its traditional identity. The results of these studies show that accreditation is not just an administrative assessment, but also a strategic element in improving the quality of education holistically. In the context of Ma'had Aly Darussalam, this study can provide a theoretical and practical basis for understanding the importance of accreditation in maintaining the quality of educational services in accordance with national standards and community needs. Thus, this study provides direct relevance to the study of how Ma'had Aly Darussalam can continue to improve its role in producing superior Islamic scholars and intellectuals.

The novelty of the research with this title lies in its specific focus on Ma'had Aly as an Islamic higher education institution based on Islamic boarding schools which has unique characteristics compared to other higher education institutions (Ulufah et al., 2024). So far, studies on educational accreditation have been mostly conducted in formal educational institutions such as universities, public colleges, or Salafiyah Islamic boarding schools, while studies on the implementation and impact of accreditation in Ma'had Aly are still very limited. Ma'had Aly Darussalam as one of the institutions that integrates classical Islamic scientific traditions with the needs of modern education offers a research context that has not been widely explored, especially regarding how accreditation can be a strategic tool to maintain a balance between traditional values and demands for quality educational services in the global era (Yanto et al., 2024).

In this study, the aspect of novelty also lies in a deeper exploration of how accreditation affects the management of education at Ma'had Aly, including institutional governance, competency-based curriculum development, and improving the quality of teaching staff. This study attempts to uncover the dynamics of the accreditation process at Ma'had Aly which faces unique challenges such as the adaptation of national education standards which are often based on the formal education system, whereas Ma'had Aly has traditional characteristics rooted in the study of yellow books and an Islamic boarding school-based educational approach. This study highlights the social dimension of accreditation, particularly its role in building public trust in Ma'had Aly Darussalam. It also examines

the relevance of its graduates in the professional and social sectors. This approach provides a new perspective, because previous studies tend to focus more on the technical aspects of accreditation without exploring the social impacts and long-term contributions to the sustainability of Islamic educational institutions. By combining academic, practical, and social studies, this study contributes to the literature on Islamic education accreditation, especially in the context of Ma'had Aly, while providing strategic recommendations for the development of similar institutions in the future. This study also provides new insights into how traditional Islamic educational institutions can remain relevant and competitive in the modern era through the implementation of effective accreditation.

The main objective of this study is to analyze the role of accreditation as a guarantor of the quality of educational services at Ma'had Aly Darussalam and how the accreditation process can encourage continuous improvement in various aspects of institutions, curriculum, and teaching. Accreditation is one of the important instruments used to assess the extent to which an educational institution meets the expected quality standards. In the context of Ma'had Aly Darussalam, which has a tradition of Islamic boarding school-based education, the accreditation process is not only an administrative recognition, but also a tool to advance the institution in facing the challenges of globalization of education and the demands of society that are increasingly critical of the quality of education. As an educational institution that combines traditional and modern values, Ma'had Aly Darussalam needs to ensure that its curriculum and teaching quality meet nationally recognized standards, without sacrificing the Islamic values that are the basis of teaching. Accreditation can provide encouragement to continue to improve the quality of the curriculum, update teaching methods, and strengthen the capacity of lecturers and other teaching staff. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify how accreditation plays a role in encouraging the improvement of the internal quality of Ma'had Aly Darussalam and how it impacts the management of the institution, including in the development of human resources and educational facilities.

Furthermore, this study aims to explore the extent to which the accreditation process influences public trust in Ma'had Aly Darussalam, as well as the role of accreditation in increasing the legitimacy and competitiveness of this institution, both in the context of Islamic religious education and in the world of work. Through this study, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding can be found regarding the benefits of accreditation, both in terms of improving academic quality, management, and its social impact on Ma'had Aly Darussalam as an Islamic higher education institution.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the specific dynamics of accreditation in Islamic higher education institutions. This study aims to understand the role of accreditation in ensuring quality educational services, making a qualitative approach focused on descriptive and interpretive data appropriate. The case study was chosen because Ma'had Aly Darussalam has unique characteristics as an Islamic higher education institution that integrates the pesantren tradition with modern education, and the accreditation process carried out can provide specific insights into the dynamics that occur in the institution. Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted with related parties who have roles in the accreditation process, such as Ma'had Aly managers, lecturers, and the institution's accreditation team. This interview aims to explore their perceptions, experiences, and views on how accreditation affects the quality of education provided at Ma'had Aly Darussalam. In addition, the interview also serves to determine the challenges faced by the institution in meeting accreditation standards and their impact on improving the curriculum, facilities, and quality of teaching (Pahleviannur et al., 2022).

Observations were conducted to directly observe the implementation of accreditation results in the field, especially related to the teaching and learning process, institutional management, and the use

of facilities and technology in learning. This observation is expected to provide a more concrete picture of the real impact of accreditation on the quality of educational services at Ma'had Aly Darussalam. Documentation in the form of accreditation reports, the curriculum implemented, and the policies and procedures taken by Ma'had Aly Darussalam during and after the accreditation process will be analyzed to complement the data obtained from interviews and observations. All data collected will be analyzed thematically, by identifying the main patterns that emerge related to the role of accreditation in improving the quality of education and services at the institution. With this approach, this study is expected to provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of how accreditation functions as a guarantor of the quality of educational services at Ma'had Aly Darussalam, as well as provide useful recommendations for the development of similar institutions in the future (Rukin, 2019).

Results and Discussion

Improving the Quality of Curriculum and Learning:

One key aspect identified in this study is the enhancement of curriculum development and learning methodologies at Ma'had Aly Darussalam through the accreditation process. A well-structured and competency-based curriculum is essential to ensure the quality of education received by students is in accordance with the needs of the times. The accreditation process not only assesses administrative aspects, but also provides encouragement for institutions to update the curriculum to be more relevant to developments in science and technology, while maintaining Islamic values that are the basis of education at Ma'had Aly. This study found that accreditation encouraged Ma'had Aly to develop a more adaptive curriculum, by integrating formal and traditional education. This allows students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of religious knowledge and general knowledge, and prepares them to face the challenges of globalization. In an interview with one of the senior lecturers at Ma'had Aly Darussalam, Dr. Ahmad, who was also directly involved in the curriculum revision process for accreditation purposes, he stated:

"Before accreditation, the curriculum we implemented was more traditional, which prioritized teaching yellow books. However, along with accreditation, we began to adjust the curriculum so that it not only teaches religious knowledge but also integrates other competencies such as modern science. Accreditation motivated us to develop a competency-based curriculum, which not only prepares students to become scholars, but also so that they are ready to compete in an increasingly developing world."

Dr. Ahmad's insights align with the study's findings, highlighting accreditation's critical role in fostering curriculum improvements at Ma'had Aly Darussalam. The integration between religious knowledge and general knowledge becomes more visible, and a more structured curriculum can prepare graduates with broader knowledge and competitive skills in the world of work. In addition, this opinion also shows that accreditation functions as a major driver in encouraging institutions to be more responsive to changes and the needs of the times.

These findings indicate that the accreditation process at Ma'had Aly Darussalam plays an important role in driving positive changes in the quality of curriculum and learning. Accreditation not only serves as a tool to assess and recognize the quality of education, but also becomes a driver for institutions to continue to adapt to the development of science and the needs of society. In an interview with Dr. Ahmad, it can be seen that the curriculum that previously focused more on teaching yellow books began to be adjusted to the needs of the times by incorporating modern science and a competency-based approach. This reflects a paradigm shift that occurred at Ma'had Aly Darussalam in responding to the challenges of globalization and the demands to produce graduates who not only master religious knowledge, but are also ready to compete in an increasingly developing world.

The theory relevant to this finding is the theory of competency-based education (CBE) which emphasizes the development of skills and knowledge needed by individuals to succeed in work or life. According to Syarifah et al., (2020) in their learning taxonomy theory, competency-based education focuses on achieving measurable learning outcomes, namely skills that can be applied in real-world situations. Thus, the application of the competency-based approach applied in the Ma'had Aly Darussalam curriculum not only prepares students to understand religious knowledge in depth, but also develops skills that are relevant to developments in the outside world, in accordance with the demands of globalization. Accreditation here functions as a tool to ensure that the curriculum applied can create graduates who have more holistic and adaptive skills.

Improving the Competence of Lecturers and Teaching Staff:

An important finding of this study is that the accreditation process at Ma'had Aly Darussalam significantly enhances lecturers' and teaching staff competencies, directly improving the quality of teaching and classroom interaction. Accreditation forces institutions to meet certain quality standards in terms of teaching, including the obligation for lecturers to attend training and professional development that focuses on improving pedagogical and academic skills. In the context of Ma'had Aly, where teaching often refers to the classical Islamic scientific tradition, strengthening the capacity of lecturers in mastering modern teaching methods is very important. With continuous training and competency improvement, lecturers can adapt more effective teaching methods, improve student understanding, and ensure that teaching is not only transactional, but also interactive and competency-based. This has an impact on the effectiveness of the learning process and ultimately contributes to improving the quality of educational services at Ma'had Aly Darussalam. In an interview with Dr. Zainab, one of the senior lecturers at Ma'had Aly Darussalam, she explained:

"Since the accreditation process, we as lecturers have been given the opportunity to participate in various trainings related to competency-based teaching and learning methodologies. This is a very positive thing because it not only improves our ability to teach, but also makes interactions with students more effective. We are more aware that teaching is not only about delivering material, but also guiding students to develop critical and applied thinking skills."

The results of this interview indicate that accreditation plays an important role in improving the competence of lecturers at Ma'had Aly Darussalam, especially in the pedagogical and academic aspects. With continuous training, lecturers not only master the material, but also have the ability to manage the teaching and learning process more effectively, which ultimately improves the quality of classroom interactions and student learning outcomes. This improvement also supports the goal of accreditation to improve the quality of educational services as a whole.

These findings illustrate that the accreditation process at Ma'had Aly Darussalam significantly influences the improvement of lecturers' competencies, which in turn has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and classroom interaction. Accreditation not only assesses the final results of education, but also encourages institutions to improve important aspects of the learning process, such as the development of lecturers' pedagogical competencies. Through continuous training and professional development, lecturers at Ma'had Aly become better prepared to adapt modern, more interactive and competency-based teaching methods, which enable them to enhance students' understanding in greater depth. This improvement in competency leads to more effective interactions between lecturers and students, as well as an improvement in the quality of classroom learning, which further contributes to the improvement of the quality of educational services at this institution.

The theory relevant to this finding is the Constructivism Teaching Theory developed by Prihatini & Wathon (2021), which emphasizes that effective learning occurs when students actively construct knowledge through direct experience and social interaction. In the context of Ma'had Aly, the application of this constructivist approach is reflected in teaching that not only focuses on delivering

material, but also on empowering students to think critically and applicatively, as explained by Dr. Zainab in an interview. The development of lecturer competence in implementing competency-based teaching methods is in line with the principles of constructivism, where lecturers act as facilitators who guide students in the active learning process. Therefore, accreditation ensures that the teaching process at Ma'had Aly Darussalam aligns with modern educational standards, emphasizing critical thinking and real-life knowledge application

Increasing Public Trust and Institutional Legitimacy:

One of the significant findings in this study is the increase in public trust in Ma'had Aly Darussalam after obtaining accreditation. The accreditation process provides formal recognition of the quality of education provided by this institution, thus building strong legitimacy both locally and nationally. The community, including prospective students and parents, feel more confident that the education received at Ma'had Aly has a quality that is recognized by the national accreditation body. This of course has a positive impact on public perception of this educational institution, where accreditation is considered an indicator that Ma'had Aly is able to compete with other higher education institutions in terms of the quality of teaching and educational services. This increased public trust has the potential to attract more prospective students and support the sustainability of the institution in the future. In an interview with Mr. Hasan, a parent of a student whose child is studying at Ma'had Aly Darussalam, he stated:

"I feel more confident in sending my child to Ma'had Aly after they received accreditation status. Previously, I already knew that Ma'had Aly had good quality education, but with this accreditation, I feel more confident because there is official recognition of the quality of education there. Accreditation makes me feel that the education my child receives is more guaranteed and relevant to current developments."

The results of this interview confirm the research findings that accreditation contributes significantly to increasing public trust in Ma'had Aly Darussalam. Public trust in this institution is getting stronger because they feel that the education received by their children at Ma'had Aly has been standardized and recognized by authorized institutions. This also shows that accreditation functions as a legitimation tool that provides certainty and a sense of security for parents and prospective students regarding the quality of education provided by Ma'had Aly.

These findings indicate that the accreditation process at Ma'had Aly Darussalam has increased public trust in the institution. By gaining formal recognition from a national accreditation body, Ma'had Aly has gained stronger legitimacy in the eyes of the community, both locally and nationally. The trust of parents and prospective students in the quality of education provided has increased because they feel more confident that the education received at Ma'had Aly has met officially recognized standards. This shows that accreditation not only functions as an indicator of internal quality, but also as an external signal that provides confidence to the community about the quality of educational institutions. This increased trust will of course have a positive effect on the attractiveness of the institution, allowing Ma'had Aly to attract more prospective students and strengthen the sustainability of the institution in the future.

The theory relevant to this finding is the Legitimacy Theory proposed by Nurhatika & Deviani (2023) explaining that organizational legitimacy is the public's perception or belief that an organization or institution operates in accordance with applicable social norms and expectations. In this context, accreditation functions as a legitimacy mechanism that confirms that Ma'had Aly Darussalam meets recognized educational standards, both nationally and internationally. This improves public perception of the institution, as expressed by Mr. Hasan in his interview. The trust that is built from this legitimacy provides a sense of security for parents and prospective students, because they feel that education at

Ma'had Aly is not only of good quality, but is also formally recognized by the authorized body, ensuring the relevance and quality of education received by students.

Conclusion

Conclusion from the discussion above shows that the accreditation process at Ma'had Aly Darussalam has had a significant impact in various aspects, especially in improving the quality of the curriculum, lecturer competence, and public trust. Accreditation plays an important role in encouraging the development of a more adaptive curriculum, integrating religious knowledge with modern science and competency-based, which ensures that students are ready to face the challenges of globalization. In addition, accreditation also motivates the improvement of lecturer competence through training and professional development, which has an impact on more effective and interactive teaching methods. This creates a more dynamic learning atmosphere and improves the quality of interaction in the classroom. Public trust in Ma'had Aly has also increased significantly after the institution received accreditation. Accreditation provides legitimacy that confirms the quality of education provided, provides a sense of security for parents and prospective students, and ensures that education at Ma'had Aly meets standards recognized by the national accreditation body. Overall, the accreditation process has served as a major driver for improving and enhancing the quality of education at Ma'had Aly Darussalam, which focuses not only on academic achievement, but also on the relevance of education to the needs of the times and the world of work. Accreditation thus not only improves the internal quality of the institution, but also strengthens the position of Ma'had Aly in the eyes of the community and the world of education.

Acknowledgment

Praise be to Allah SWT for all His grace and gifts so that the author can complete this report entitled "Accreditation as a Guarantor of the Quality of Educational Services at Ma'had Aly Darussalam". The author realizes that the preparation of this report will not be completed properly without the support, assistance, and guidance of various parties. Therefore, with all humility, the author would like to express his gratitude to: The Head of Ma'had Aly Darussalam, who has given permission and opportunity to conduct research and support in data collection. The Supervisor, who has provided valuable direction, input, and guidance during the process of preparing this report. All Staff and Educators at Ma'had Aly Darussalam, who have been willing to take the time and share the necessary information. Colleagues and other parties who have helped both directly and indirectly in completing this report. The author realizes that this report is far from perfect. Therefore, constructive criticism and suggestions are highly expected for future improvements. Finally, I hope this report can provide a useful contribution to the development of the quality of education at Ma'had Aly Darussalam and become a reference for similar research in the future.

References

- Aliyah, N. (2021). *Quality Assurance Management of Al-Qur'an Education at Sdit Buahati Islamic School 2 East Jakarta*. PTIQ Institute Jakarta.
- Basri, B., Wahidah, W., & Mahyiddin, M. (2024). Innovation of aceh islamic educational institutions in preparing the qur'ani generation in the digital era. *At-ta'dib: scientific journal of islamic religious education products*, 32–50.
- Kusuma, IW (2022). *Madrasah Principal's Strategy in Realizing Excellent Madrasah (Case Study at MTs Negeri 2 Ponorogo)*. IAIN Ponorogo.
- Muhsin, H. (2021). Independent Campus in the New Normal Era. *The Future of Independent Campus & Independent Learning: A Lecturer's Anthology*, 143 .
- Nurhatika, N., & Deviani, D. (2023). The Impact of Good Governance on Public Trust in Pasaman Regency. *Accounting Exploration Journal*, 5 (4), 1528–1543.

- Obet, I. (2023). *Principal Leadership Model Based on Prophetic Values in Improving the Quality of Education at Mts Abu Bakar Al-Islamy Sumbawa*. PTIQ Institute Jakarta.
- Pahleviannur, MR, De Grave, A., Saputra, DN, Mardianto, D., Hafriada, L., Bano, VO, Susanto, EE, Mahardhani, AJ, Alam, MDS, & Lisya, M. (2022). *Qualitative research methodology*. Pradina Pustaka.
- Prihatini, I., & Wathon, A. (2021). Online Learning and Children's Cognitive Knowledge. *Management Information Systems*, 4 (1), 140–158.
- Rizki, NJ, Qomariyah, S., & Neneng, N. (2024). The Role of School Accreditation in Improving the Quality of Education at SDIT Adzkia 1 Sukabumi. *Khirani: Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 2 (3), 137–152.
- Rukin, SP (2019). *Qualitative research methodology*. Ahmar Cendekia Indonesia Foundation.
- Suwarno, SA, & Pd, M. (2021). *Islamic Education Management: Theory, Concept and Application in Islamic Educational Institutions*. Adab Publisher.
- Syarifah, N., Indrawati, V., Sulandjari, S., & Purwidiani, N. (2020). Application of Problem-Based Learning Model to Improve Student Learning Outcomes in Sandwich Basic Competencies. *E-Jurnal Education*, 9 (2), 745–754.
- Ulufah, AN, Safi'i, A., Soki, S., & Islam, MT (2024). Islamic Boarding School-Based Higher Education (Case Study at Darussalam Gontor University). *Tarbawi Ngabar: Journal of Education*, 5 (2), 222–244.
- Yanto, A., Yanto, M., & Kholilah Harahap, E. (2024). *The Strategy of the Principal of the State Islamic High School (MAN) Rejang Lebong in Increasing the Number of Students in the Era of Globalization of Education*. State Islamic Institute of Curup.