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Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Educational Equity and Accreditation Systems in Urban-Rural Disparities

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Abstract
Background: Province Banten's educational progress in Indonesia is hampered by limited internet, uneven tech infrastructure, and poor Accreditation Assessment System preparation. Quality assessments highlight persistent shortfalls in national standards for content, staffing, management, and funding.
Objectives: This research investigated educational quality gaps, contrasting rigid national standards with local conditions.
Methodology: Using a qualitative descriptive method, this study analyzed administrative data from schools across Banten—accreditation status, ISO certification, and school type (public, private, vocational)—to identify and describe patterns and disparities in resource allocation and technology utilization among different institutional contexts systemically.
Results: Key findings reveal that, despite the widespread adoption of the Education Universal Access Initiative in 2020, rural schools continue to struggle with the scarcity of crucial educational technology and digital resources. This deficit was found to significantly contribute to the widening urban-rural education gap in the region.

Conclusion: The findings underscore the critical need to adopt a context-sensitive accreditation framework to address the urban-rural disparities evident in Banten effectively. Policy efforts must focus on establishing differentiated standards that promote equitable growth rather than perpetuating complexity and resource gaps.
Unique Contribution: This research presents an evidence-based, context-sensitive accreditation framework with actionable policy recommendations to promote educational equity, strengthen

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support for underserved rural schools, and enhance accreditation relevance, long-term sustainability, and effectiveness across geographically diverse developing regions.
Key Recommendation: Recommend immediate adoption of a context-specific, flexible accreditation system addressing regional disparities, plus school-level strategies: strengthened school-based management, collaborative educator leadership, and adaptive teacher training to bridge urban–rural resource gaps.
Keywords: Educational Accreditation, Policy Effectiveness, Urban-Rural Disparity, Flexible Accreditation, Structural Barriers, Educational Equity

Introduction

Primary and secondary education in Indonesia continues to face significant quality challenges despite the implementation of various improvement policies. In the 2023/2024 academic year, Indonesia recorded 399,376 schools, a 1.18% increase from the previous year. These consist of 93,385 kindergartens (TK), 31,049 Raudatul Athfal (RA), 148,975 elementary schools (SD), 26,503 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), 41,986 junior high schools (SMP), 19,150 Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), 14,236 senior high schools (SMA), 14,265 vocational high schools (SMK), and 9,827 Madrasah Aliyah (MA). Private institutions dominate at the TK, MI, MTs, SMA, SMK, and MA levels, while SMPs are largely managed by the public sector. These figures do not include approximately 76,702 schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Ferdousi et al., 2022).

In Banten Province, the 2023 accreditation process for elementary and secondary education used the Sispena instrument developed by the National Accreditation Board (NAB), in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. However, several challenges remain. Many schools encountered difficulties with data entry and document uploads, hindering their ability to meet accreditation requirements for on-site evaluations. Consequently, numerous institutions received automatic extensions of accreditation certificates without undergoing a comprehensive evaluation, thereby limiting opportunities for real quality improvement (Kafaji, 2020).

These challenges are compounded by uneven technological infrastructure and limited internet access across Banten, as well as inadequate preparedness in using Sispena (the Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Accreditation Assessment System). The mapping of quality standards indicates that Banten's education sector continues to struggle to meet national benchmarks in curriculum content, teacher qualifications, institutional management, and financing. This situation highlights the urgent need for more focused supervision and targeted support to ensure accreditation serves as a meaningful instrument for improving education quality (Halim et al., 2024).

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This research analyses the implementation of the 2020 Education Unit Accreditation Instrument to capture the unique educational dynamics in Banten. Its objectives include: (1) identifying solutions to reduce inequities, (2) examining gaps between national standards and local contexts, (3) determining strategies to address structural constraints, (4) exploring responsive policies for IASP 2020, and (5) assessing challenges in the current accreditation framework.

The findings are expected to provide valuable insights into provincial-level implementation and contribute to the development of adaptable accreditation policies that better respond to local conditions while upholding national quality standards.

Theoretical Research

Concept of Education and Social Development

Education drives national social and economic progress, acting as an equaliser, reducing poverty, and enhancing well-being. World Bank (2020) showed that the quality of primary and secondary schooling is crucial for sustainable development, a skilled workforce, and reduced inequality.(Bracco et al., 2024) also warned of the negative impact of pandemic learning on future earnings and GDP. Mohamed (2024) showed that improving learning for low-income students significantly cuts economic inequality by expanding access to better jobs and global markets .

Previous research showed that the impact of education was beyond economics. Shal et al. (2024) showed that only adaptive educational systems, with updated curricula and teaching, could prepare societies for 21st-century challenges. However, significant gaps in educational quality remain. Wang and Calvano (2022)reported disparities between high- and low-income countries, and urban and rural areas. In Indonesia, this is seen in unequal access to qualified teachers, good infrastructure, and vital digital resources. Halim et al. (2024) concept of "inclusive education policy" provided a framework for addressing the challenges. This method advocates for integrating universal standards with local interventions. Examples include implementing mobile learning laboratories on remote islands, establishing incentive programs for rural teacher postings, and developing community-operated learning centres.

Educational Quality Assurance Theory

Educational quality assurance offers pathways for clear, accountable improvements. Accreditation serves as a crucial tool for external review and internal enhancement. Teddlie, Fitrianto, and Hidayat (2024) defined the concept as independent bodies that evaluate and recognise schools based on standards, balancing institutions with national goals and modern development. Coutet (2022) suggested that effective accreditation balances external demands with internal improvement, and Aksela (2025)viewed the concept as a learning tool. Park and Kwon (2024) further argued that quality assurance should prioritise learning outcomes rather than just compliance.

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Educational Unit Accreditation Instrument as a Quality Assurance Tool

The Educational Unit Accreditation Instrument (IASP) is key to assessing and enhancing the quality of primary and secondary education in Indonesia. The instrument ensures adherence to national standards and addresses workforce needs, aiding schools in improving curriculum, teacher quality, management, and resource allocation. However, effective accreditation must move past administrative compliance. The IASP should target measurable student learning impacts and adapt to changing educational demands. Xu (2021) reported teacher engagement in self-assessment and development. Rigid systems risk stifling innovation, while flexible methods drive meaningful school change.

Aksela (2025) argued that accreditation must be consistent with equity principles, particularly in under-resourced areas. This should inform more equitable funding and acknowledge local conditions. Zaki Ewiss et al. (2019) demonstrated that systems combining evaluation with continuous coaching achieve superior results. Fitrianto and Hidayat (2024) reported that connecting accreditation with sustained professional development increased teacher effectiveness.

The findings align with McIntyre and Gilbert's (2021) concept of educational effectiveness, particularly in relation to how accreditation systems can enhance school quality.

Educational Policy Implementation Model

Implementing the Educational Unit Accreditation Instrument requires coordinated efforts from central governments, local authorities, and individual schools. Sabatier (1986) stated that effective implementation depended on institutional coordination, sustained political commitment, and adequately trained personnel.

The findings underscore the importance of flexibility in educational accreditation systems, as discussed by Dicicco and Faulkner (2024), but also reveal critical limitations in applying standardised criteria to rural areas such as Banten Province, Indonesia, where technological access and resource allocation differ significantly from those in urban settings. This challenges the one-size-fits-all approach typically advocated in national accreditation policies.

Successful policy implementation relies on clarity and active local stakeholder engagement, including principals and teachers. However, Wu et al. (2024) showed that fragmented authority and misaligned priorities affect success when national objectives diverge from local school needs. Ferdousi et al. (2022) emphasised "street-level bureaucrats" such as supervisors and principals in bridging policy directives and practical realities. Similarly, Alemu (2023) stated local actors' comprehension and ability to adapt policy to distinct school environments.

Kafaji (2020) suggested vertical coordination among governmental tiers and horizontal collaboration across institutions to ensure consistent policy application, especially across

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disparate regions. According to Wang and Calvano (2022), successful implementation goes beyond compliance and requires enhanced teacher capacity through collaboration with school accreditation. Park and Kwon (2024) advocated an "improvement science" method, namely iterative feedback, evaluation, and continuous refinement. This ensures adaptive, relevant, and responsive policy implementation to field conditions. Implementing IASP demands a systemic, collaborative, and adaptive method, built on coordinated efforts, capacity, and relevant practices.

Quality Improvement Strategy Through Accreditation

Accreditation is a continuous improvement cycle, not a one-time compliance check, using self-assessment, external review, and targeted coaching to drive sustained quality growth (Aksela, 2025; Mohamed, 2024). This includes evaluating results and providing actionable insights. In the context of professional development, needs-based training improves teachers' pedagogical skills and ensures consistent curriculum delivery (Kafaji, 2020; Xu, 2021; Ebekozien, 2022).

Continuous monitoring completes the feedback loop, ensuring changes are evaluated, refined, and scaled. The combination of accreditation with cyclical evaluation, training, evidence-based standards, and strong leadership is a powerful catalyst for enduring school improvement (Zaki Ewiss et al., 2019; Shal et al., 2024)

Methods

Research Design and Data Collection.

This research adopted a qualitative descriptive design to explore the implementation of the 2020 Education Unit Accreditation Instrument in primary and secondary schools in Banten Province. The descriptive approach enables an in-depth examination of the processes, strategies, challenges, and impacts of accreditation implementation. Through this design, we aimed to capture the perspectives of key stakeholders and gain insights into the practical application of IASP 2020.

Informant Selection and Sampling Criteria

A purposive sampling method was employed to select informants who could provide meaningful insights into the implementation of IASP 2020. The selection criteria included participants with relevant experience, such as principals, teachers, and school committee members, who were directly involved in the accreditation process. Sampling focused on ensuring diversity in terms of school type (state/private), accreditation level (A, B, C), and geographic location (urban/rural)**.** The 2025 school distribution data from Banten Province was used to guide the selection, ensuring representation from various regions and school types. This diverse sample enabled a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and successes encountered across different contexts.

In Regency Tangerang, with 938 state schools and 3,930 private schools, a balanced sample was chosen to capture both urban and rural experiences, as shown in Table 2. These schools varied in their accreditation levels and ISO certification status, which are critical factors affecting their accreditation outcomes.

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Table 1: Distribution of Schools in Banten based on Regency/City in 2025

Item	Regency/City	State	Private	Accreditation A	B	C	ISO 9001: 2000	ISO 9001: 2008	Amount
1	Regency Tangerang	938	3.930	617	1.621	523	77	78	4.868
2	Regency Serang	853	2.140	257	1.167	761	76	54	2.993
3	Regency Pandeglang	1.062	1.828	106	1.288	600	63	54	2.890
4	Regency Lebak	1.019	1.861	131	1.230	555	31	16	2.880
5	City Tangerang	362	1.969	809	496	99	41	69	2.331
6	City Tangerang Selatan	215	1.783	645	342	70	48	52	1.998
7	City Serang	289	901	152	431	217	29	42	1.190
8	City Cilegon	198	567	202	269	104	23	20	765
Banten Province	**4.936**	**14.979**	**2.919**	**6.844**	**2.929**	**388**	**385**	**19.915**	

Source: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of the Republic of Indonesia (2025).

Information:

1. **Amt** could be changed to "Amount of Schools"
2. **N** could be labeled as "Number of Accredited Schools"
3. **S** might be clarified as "Schools without Accreditation"

Data Collection Techniques

Data was collected using multiple methods**,** including interviews, observations, and document analysis**,** to ensure a robust understanding of the implementation process. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing flexibility to explore the informants' experiences while ensuring key topics were addressed. Observation focused on school practices and the use of accreditation tools, while document analysis provided insights into the administrative procedures and accreditation reports.

A sample size of 30 schools was selected, with 10 schools from each of the three categories (elementary, junior high, and senior high schools) to capture a broad range of perspectives. The final sample comprised 50 informants: 20 school principals**,** 20 teachers**,** and 10 school committee members. This sample size ensured that a diverse range of viewpoints were

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represented, strengthening the credibility of the findings. Informants were selected using purposive sampling**,** based on specific criteria relevant to the objectives.

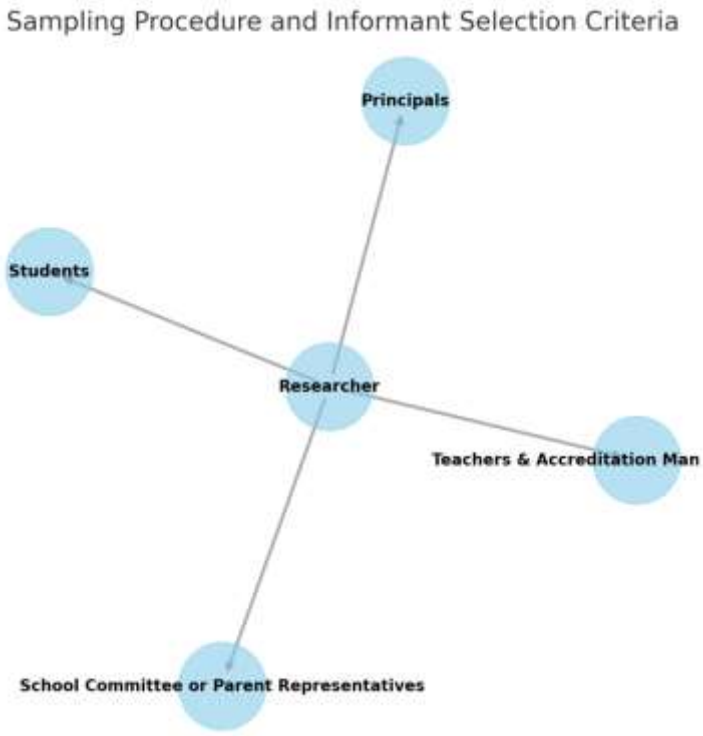

Figure 2. Informants were selected

Thematic Data Analysis

The data was analysed using the interactive model of Ebekozien (2022). ~~Miles and~~ Huberman (2014), which involves three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

Data Validity and Triangulation

To ensure the reliability and credibility of the findings, source triangulation was applied. Information was gathered from a variety of informants, including principals**,** teachers**,** and school committees**,** to verify consistency and provide a well-rounded perspective. Additionally, method triangulation was employed, with data from interviews, observations, and documents cross-checked**.** This multiple-source approach, as recommended by Ebekozien et al. (2022) strengthened the findings by offering diverse perspectives and ensuring a more accurate representation of the situation.

Method Limitations

While the study provides valuable insights, it is important to note that the findings may not fully capture the experiences of schools that were not included in the sample, particularly those in more remote areas of Banten Province.

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Results

Banten Province was selected for this study due to its distinctive and diverse educational landscape, which presents unique challenges and opportunities requiring deeper investigation. While existing research has addressed accreditation implementation at a national level, a significant gap remains regarding the specific barriers schools face in applying the 2020 Education Unit Accreditation Instrument policy McIntyreand and Gilbert (2021). (Education Unit Accreditation Instrument, 2020).

Therefore, this research aimed to explore the strategies schools employ to overcome these challenges. By focusing on localised policy development, the study seeks to improve accreditation practices and educational quality at the regional level. The findings are intended to provide schools with valuable support, enabling them to respond effectively to contextual needs and offer sustainable recommendations to elevate educational standards.

Distribution of Schools in Banten by City in 2025

Banten Province has 19,915 schools, comprising 4,936 public and 14,979 private schools in 2025. Approximately 2,919 (14.66%), 6,844 (34.37%), and 2,929 (14.71%) have received A, B, and C accreditations, respectively. Furthermore, 36.27% schools in the province remain unaccredited.

A geographic map of the sites has been reported to show the school's diversity. Figure 3 shows the distribution of participating schools across urban and rural areas and educational levels, suggesting contextual differences and localised challenges.

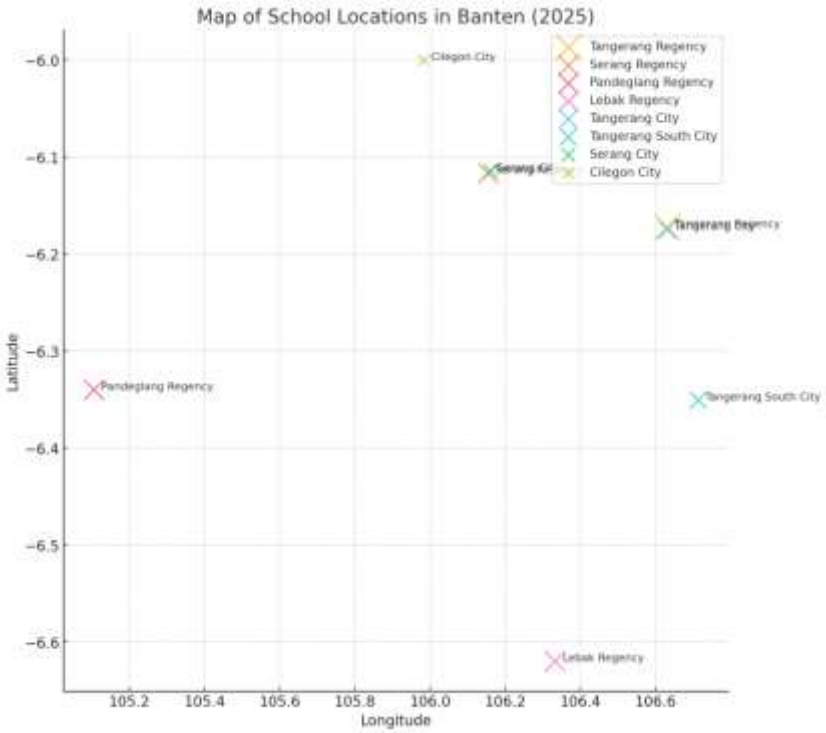

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Figure 3. Geographical Distribution of Research Sites in Schools across Banten Province

Focus of Education Unit Accreditation Instrument Assessment

McIntyre and Gilbert (2021 emphasised four key standards: graduate quality, learning process, teacher competence, and school management. In Banten Province, the accreditation process has become a strategic tool for improving educational quality. Accreditation is increasingly used to evaluate and catalyse institutional development across instruction, governance, and student outcomes. The Sispena digital platform streamlines this process through online data collection.

They have observed improvements in attributes such as student discipline and interpersonal skills, which they consider just as important as academic prowess. This indicates that the school's efforts to provide a balanced education, giving due attention to both academic and non-academic (character-building) aspects, are resonating with stakeholder expectations. Parents believe that the school nurtures well-rounded individuals: students who are knowledgeable in core subjects and who simultaneously exhibit values such as responsibility, respect, and teamwork.

Such outcomes align with stakeholders' definition of high-quality education in the community. Schools have made concerted efforts to foster creativity and innovation in students by integrating dedicated projects and extracurricular activities into the learning process.

Obstacles and Challenges in the Implementation of Education Unit Accreditation Instrument (2020)

Challenges in rolling out the 2020 Education Unit Accreditation Instrument are evident from field interviews and observations. Remote schools are affected by inadequate technology and infrastructure. Moreover, a poor understanding of student-centred learning (SCL) among many teachers affects proper, active, and authentic assessment (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. The Effective Application of Active Learning and Authentic Assessment

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Teachers do not consistently use creative and innovative teaching methods. Despite some teachers integrating technology and imaginative approaches effectively, many schools underuse current resources. This inconsistency contributes to ongoing disparitieffectively integrating technology and imaginative approacheses in educational quality across Banten Province**.**

The journey of developing student talent and interest is vividly brought to life through the school's musical programs, which transform individual potential into collective achievement. This development is not a single note but a symphony of activities, each contributing a vital part to the students' growth. Two prime examples—the intimate group drumming session and the grand marching band performance—showcase the complementary pathways of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, both essential for holistic talent development.

Figure 5. Developing talents and interests through achievement

The process often begins in the focused environment of the group drumming session, see figure 5. Here, the primary driver is intrinsic motivation. The room is filled with the concentrated energy of students engaged in repetitive practice, their hands working to master complex hand-eye coordination and precise tempo control. This is a micro-learning environment where skill acquisition is personal and immediate.

This internal drive is then elevated and validated through the public spectacle of the Marching Band Performance. This activity translates individual skill into collective excellence, leveraging extrinsic recognition as a powerful motivator.

This external milestone is more than just a performance; it is a catalyst for identity formation. Donning identical uniforms and fulfilling ceremonial roles instils a profound sense of group cohesion and pride, transforming a group of individuals into a single, proud unit. Furthermore, it creates natural leadership opportunities in which senior members guide formations and mentor newer students, reinforcing valuable skills in shared leadership and responsibility.

Table 3 Comparative Analysis of Musical Activities

Dimension	Group Drumming	Marching Band

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Dimension	Group Drumming	Marching Band
Primary Skill Focus	Fine motor coordination & rhythmic timing	Gross motor synchronization & formation
Feedback Mechanism	Immediate auditory & instructor cues	Audience response & formal evaluation
Motivational Drivers	Intrinsic flow and personal mastery	Extrinsic recognition and collective pride
Social Learning Aspect	Peer modelling within a small group	Hierarchical mentorship across ranks

Source: Triangulation results

Table 3 shows a comparison highlighting how varied achievement contexts, classroom versus public ceremony, differentially nurture both talent and sustained engagement.

Collectively, these activities constitute a comprehensive talent-development cycle: the drumming circle cultivates curiosity and self-mastery, while the marching band affords public recognition and collective pride; together, they promote intrinsic artistic engagement and milestone-driven skill refinement, producing confident, competent, motivated graduates. Quality Improvement Strategies Through Accreditation.

Strategies to implement the 2020 Education Unit Accreditation Instrument include school-based management and enhancing stakeholder collaboration for local decisions. Collaborative school leadership also enhances educational quality by fostering full staff participation in program planning and evaluation.

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Figure 6. Quality Improvement Strategies

Based on a comprehensive analysis of interviews, observations, and document reviews, the following key findings emerged, as shown in Figure 6, indicating that: (1) Student discipline is generally strong.. (2) Religious behaviour is actively demonstrated through student participation in congregational prayers, Quran recitation, and religious holiday commemorations. (3) Regarding freedom from bullying, schools employing character education and enhanced supervision have successfully reduced incidents.

Stakeholder perceptions are highly positive: parents and school committee praise graduates' character, discipline, and social skills, valuing the school's balanced academic and non-academic focus; structured remedial and enrichment coaching enhances learning outcomes and non-academic competencies across primary and secondary levels.

Development of School Management-Based Education Policy

Effective school management aligns purpose, people, and processes to foster student flourishing; our conceptual framework treats governance as a dynamic system—compass and engine—grounded in parents', students', teachers', principals' experiences, synthesising organisational theory, educational leadership, and community engagement into a blueprintFigure 7 shows this.

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Figure 7. School Management

At the heart of this system lies a compass: the School Vision and Mission**.** This is our collective "why," the aspirational destination that guides every decision and action. It is the promise we make to our community about the future we are building together. But a compass alone is not enough. It requires an engine to propel the school forward. interconnected domains power this engine:

Collaborative Leadership acts as the steering mechanism. Rejecting a top-down approach, it distributes leadership across administrators, teachers, and community representatives. This shared responsibility, inspired by transformational leadership theories, fuels staff morale and sparks innovation, ensuring we are all rowing in the same direction. This collaborative leadership directly fuels two critical components: building bridges outward and nurturing growth inward. Building Communication and Interaction with Residents ensures a vibrant, two-way flow of information and energy with the community. Through town halls and joint projects, we move beyond mere outreach to genuine partnership, fostering shared responsibility for our students' success.

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Simultaneously, Teacher Supervision turns leadership inward, focusing on our core mission: teaching and learning. Framed not as inspection but as instructional coaching, it creates a culture of reflective practice. Through mentoring, classroom observations, and personalised feedback, we ensure every educator is supported in their professional journey, directly elevating the quality of instruction in every classroom. This focus on quality is systematised through our Internal School Quality Assurance (IQA)**.** Drawing from total quality management, the IQA is our diagnostic system. It uses data-driven audits, self-assessments, and peer reviews to continuously monitor our health and performance, providing an honest check on our progress toward our goals.

Education policy must be inclusive and context-sensitive; this study adapts the 2020 Education Unit Accreditation Instrument to prioritise equity and affirmative measures for under-resourced schools, noting implementation challenges—limited technology, insufficient teacher capacity, and urban–rural disparities—requiring targeted support and policy reforms.

Discussion

Accreditation disparities are significant in Banten Province since 36.27% of schools are unaccredited, and only 14.66% achieved A-level status. These figures were consistent with the World Bank (2020), which reported a strong link between infrastructure and accreditation results. Urban schools are better equipped for accreditation, while rural schools struggle due to limited facilities (Shal et al., 2024)

The stark accreditation disparities in Banten Province are not merely a statistical anomaly; they are a symptomatic manifestation of deep-seated, interlocking inequities that plague the education system. The fact that over a third of schools (36.27%) remain unaccredited while a mere fraction (14.66%) achieve top-tier status points to a systemic failure that disproportionately penalises students based on their geographic and socioeconomic location.

Therefore, the accreditation gap in Banten cannot be addressed by focusing on accreditation standards alone. It is a polycrisis where physical infrastructure poverty and digital marginalization converge. Policymakers must recognize that mandating digital systems without ensuring universal access is an inherently inequitable act. A truly effective strategy must be two-pronged: 1) investing in the foundational physical and digital infrastructure of rural schools to create a level playing field, and 2) critically re-evaluating the accreditation mechanism itself to ensure it is adaptive and equitable, rather than a one-size-fits-all process that inadvertently reinforces the very disparities it seeks to eliminate. Without this dual approach, accreditation will continue to be a marker of privilege rather than a genuine measure of quality, and the cycle of educational inequality in Banten will persist unabated.

Remedial and enrichment programs have increased student performance, but often exclude the most vulnerable groups. Approximately 30% of underprivileged students, mostly working part-time, remain unreached. This is supported by Coutet (2022), Kafaji (2020), and Xu (2021), who

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found that academic interventions without accompanying socioeconomic support failed to improve outcomes for disadvantaged students.

The strategies employed by schools in Banten, while theoretically sound and aligned with established principles of educational change, are critically hampered by the pervasive socioeconomic realities that form an inescapable context for their implementation. This creates a frustrating paradox where innovative policies are undermined by structural constraints, limiting their effectiveness and often widening existing equity gaps.

The narrative emerging from Banten, Indonesia, is that well-intentioned school strategies are consistently running aground on the rocks of structural inequality. Economic pressures are not peripheral; they are a central determinant of the effectiveness of educational policy. Schools are being asked to solve educational disparities with tools that are blind to the economic and social determinants of those disparities.

Therefore, a critical shift in approach is required. Policymakers and school leaders must move beyond designing interventions for a disadvantaged context and begin designing them with that context at the forefront.

Rigidity of Standards vs. Local Realities

Uniform criteria often overlook the contextual challenges faced by disadvantaged schools, even though IASP 2020 seeks to standardise education quality. According to Aksela's (2025) recommendation, accreditation systems should incorporate "value-added" indicators that recognise progress achieved under resource constraints. For example, schools with poor infrastructure must be evaluated based on student learning gains, such as improvements in National Examination (NE) scores. Therefore, Indonesia's zoning policy has deepened educational inequalities. Wang and Calvano (2022) found that zoning restricts rural schools' ability to recruit qualified teachers. In Banten, 65% of rural schools report shortages of STEM educators, undermining their ability to meet the Education Unit Accreditation Instrument (2020) standards and diminishing educational outcomes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research showed a central paradox in the implementation of the Education Unit Accreditation Instrument in Banten Province to ensure equitable education quality and inadvertently increase existing disparities when applied uniformly. The results reported the need to adopt a context-sensitive accreditation approach, particularly in regions such as Banten, which reflect broader educational complexity. Banten showed the effects of uneven infrastructure, limited access to technology, and disparities in teacher capacity on the effectiveness of standardised national policy with the wide-ranging demographic, geographic, and institutional diversity.

At the policy level, an accreditation framework that is more responsive and equitable is essential. Affirmative mechanisms grounded in social justice should guide the design of national standards,

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enabling disadvantaged schools to meet baseline requirements and develop culturally relevant and sustainable learning environments. This research contributes to the limited literature on sub-national accreditation policy implementation in developing countries and offers practical, data-driven recommendations for reform. To be effective, future education policy must be flexible, grounded in local realities, and committed to improving meaningful, systemic change from the ground up.

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