

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Social cognitive theory as patterns of socio-educational impact and practices of accreditation among higher education institution in Sulu

Rolly B. Tolentino*, Abdel J. Amilhamja, Noreenna S. Sarahadil

School of Graduate Studies, Sulu State College, Jolo, Sulu, 7400, Philippines

* Corresponding author: Rolly B. Tolentino, rolly.tolentino@msusulu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

Accreditation is essential for maintaining educational standards, institutional accountability, and societal relevance in higher education. In the Philippines, AACCUP plays a pivotal role in advancing public colleges and universities. This study explored the socio-educational impact of AACCUP accreditation on higher education institutions in Sulu, a region with distinct socio-political and economic conditions. Using a descriptive-correlational approach, data from 100 faculty members across various departments were collected through a validated survey focusing on curricular standards, administrative support, faculty engagement, student involvement, and community outreach. Strong and statistically significant correlations were found among the different dimensions of accreditation's impact—such as between administrative support and faculty involvement ($r = 0.835$), and faculty involvement and student participation ($r = 0.779$). These relationships confirm that improvements in one area catalyze enhancements in others, reinforcing accreditation's role as a comprehensive mechanism for institutional development. The findings suggest that in regions like Sulu, accreditation goes beyond compliance, acting as a catalyst for academic excellence, stability, and community development. The study calls for ongoing investments in faculty development, broader stakeholder engagement, and further research to amplify accreditation's long-term impact on Philippine higher education. Shaping behaviors, strengthening belief in personal and collective capability, and fostering a socially responsive educational environment, accreditation emerges not only as a structural benchmark but also as a transformative force. It reinforces faculty and student self-efficacy, cultivates motivation, and promotes collaborative engagement across institutional and community domains. These support a holistic academic ecosystem in which accreditation enables sustained institutional growth, resilience, and relevance especially in underserved and conflict-affected regions.

Keywords: social cognitive theory; socio-educational impact; AACCUP; accreditation; higher education; Sulu

1. Introduction

Accreditation remains a foundational process for preserving academic integrity, assuring program quality, and promoting continuous growth in higher education worldwide. In the Philippines, the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP) leads in evaluating the academic and administrative performance of state universities and colleges, ensuring alignment with both national and global quality standards. Its influence extends across key stakeholders such as faculty, students,

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administrators, and local communities by driving systemic improvements within academic institutions^[1]. These reforms manifest in institutional policies, teaching methodologies, and student achievements, as accreditation criteria shape both educational delivery and governance^[2]. This study explores the socio-educational influence of AACCUP accreditation on higher education institutions in Sulu, focusing on curriculum quality, leadership involvement, faculty engagement, student contribution, and community connection.

On a global scale, accreditation is widely acknowledged as a structured process that ensures institutions of higher learning maintain academic rigor and institutional accountability. International and regional accrediting organizations have significantly influenced the transformation of educational systems by emphasizing transparency, performance evaluation, and quality assurance^[3]. As outlined by UNESCO^[4], the implementation of accreditation supports institutions in achieving academic excellence through systematic reviews and continual development strategies. Evidence from countries like the United States and various European nations indicates that accreditation contributes to institutional trustworthiness, enables greater access to financial and academic partnerships, and equips students with qualifications that align with international workforce demands^[5].

The wider socio-educational influence of accreditation extends beyond internal institutional reforms, contributing significantly to academic and professional advancements across diverse global settings. Studies have shown that accreditation supports curriculum enhancement, faculty development, and improved student performance^[6]. For example, curricular frameworks especially in disciplines like nutrition and dietetics are shaped by regulatory standards set by the Commission on Higher Education, ensuring alignment with established academic and industry benchmarks to better serve students and their future professions^[7]. Kumar et al.^[8] emphasize that modern accreditation functions not only as a quality assurance mechanism but also as a driver for innovation and adaptability to emerging societal needs.

In the Philippine context, the significance of accreditation continues to rise through the initiatives of AACCUP, which highlights the importance of academic excellence, sound institutional governance, and community participation in state colleges and universities^[9]. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) supports accreditation as a vital tool in promoting educational accountability, transparency, and quality across the country. These initiatives align with national priorities such as ensuring inclusive access to quality education, strengthening faculty capabilities, and creating supportive learning environments [10]. Furthermore, study habits are consistently associated with academic achievement. Scholars emphasize the need for learners to improve their study practices to boost academic outcomes, given the strong correlation between study habits and academic success^[11]. On a global scale, study habits are widely acknowledged as a key factor in academic performance, supported by substantial evidence^[12].

Although national progress has been evident, the socio-educational effects of accreditation in regional and less-urbanized areas remain underexplored. On a national scale, accreditation has played a role in raising academic standards, strengthening institutional accountability, and improving student outcomes^[13]. Yet, higher education institutions in areas like Sulu face distinct challenges, such as limited access to financial and material resources, a highly diverse and multicultural student body, and ongoing socio-political instability. The Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act (Republic Act No. 10931) underscores the value of accreditation in empowering institutions in remote locations to showcase their academic capabilities and administrative effectiveness, thus elevating their national recognition and credibility. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research on how accreditation influences faculty development, student involvement, and community progress in these more geographically isolated settings. Preparing for

accreditation generally results in enhanced staff management, improved faculty development, and increased operational effectiveness, as institutions align their systems with established standards and undergo rigorous assessments^[14-15].

Higher education institutions in Sulu serve a crucial function by delivering education to a diverse population amid socio-political and economic challenges. In their pursuit of meeting AACCUP accreditation standards, these institutions offer a meaningful context for investigating the broader impacts of accreditation beyond urban and resource-rich environments. The efforts made toward accreditation are anticipated to reinforce internal academic and administrative systems while also promoting local socio-economic progress through improved curricular offerings, faculty-led initiatives, student engagement, and collaborative community programs^[16].

The projected advantages of AACCUP accreditation in Sulu extend well beyond institutional enhancement. Advancements in curriculum planning, faculty training, and administrative processes are anticipated to improve graduates' employability, encourage civic participation, and support better local governance. Considering the ongoing peace and security concerns in Mindanao, accrediting higher education institutions in Sulu could also foster social stability by equipping students and faculty to actively engage in community development and societal integration. With these dynamics in mind, the present study seeks to explore the scope of AACCUP accreditation's socio-educational influence on higher education institutions in Sulu. It specifically examines its impact on curriculum standards, administrative support systems, faculty engagement, student involvement, and community outreach—offering critical insights to bridge a notable gap in current academic literature.

This study is grounded in *Socio-Educational Model and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)*, which together provide a robust lens for examining the socio-educational impact of accreditation. Socio-educational model emphasizes the role of institutional environment, motivation, and social context in shaping academic success^[17]. In this study, AACCUP accreditation is viewed as a structural force that enhances faculty commitment, student engagement, and community involvement—key elements of the educational climate. Aligning institutional practices with quality standards, accreditation fosters a socially responsive academic environment that supports sustained improvement.

Bandura's^[18] SCT highlights reciprocal determinism—the interplay of personal factors, behavior, and environment—and underscores self-efficacy as central to performance. Accreditation processes, through clear benchmarks and structured support, strengthen the confidence of faculty and students to participate in institutional development. This leads to increased motivation, professional growth, and collective accountability, reflecting the observational and participatory learning emphasized in SCT. These theories clarify how accreditation operates not merely as an administrative requirement, but as a transformative mechanism that shapes attitudes, behaviors, and institutional culture in higher education.

1.1. Research objectives

1. Evaluate how AACCUP accreditation influences curriculum development, institutional governance, and faculty training by shaping the institutional environment and social norms that drive academic behavior and expectations.
2. Examine the impact of accreditation on faculty and student self-efficacy and participatory engagement, emphasizing how structured processes and modeling behaviors support confidence, motivation, and collective action.

3. Analyze how administrative support, academic collaboration, and community outreach reinforce reciprocal determinism—where institutional context, stakeholder behavior, and personal beliefs influence one another.
4. Assess the systemic interrelationships among curriculum reform, faculty involvement, student participation, and institutional backing, using SCT's triadic model to highlight mutual reinforcement and shared agency.
5. Generate theoretical and practical insights on how accreditation fosters institutional resilience and development, particularly in under-resourced or conflict-affected contexts, by promoting adaptive learning, shared efficacy, and transformational change.

2. Literature

This literature review is informed by socio-educational and psychological perspectives that underscore the institutional and behavioral impacts of accreditation. In particular, the guiding principles of Socio-Educational Model and Social Cognitive Theory highlight how motivation, environment, and self-efficacy influence learning and engagement. These insights frame the review of global and local studies on how accreditation shapes academic quality, institutional development, and stakeholder participation in higher education.

2.1. Foreign literature and studies

Accreditation has emerged as a globally recognized approach for strengthening the quality and operational efficiency of higher education institutions. It involves meeting stringent assessment standards and committing to continuous improvement through both internal reviews and external evaluations^[19-20]. Accredited institutions typically demonstrate enhancements in academic programs, administrative processes, financial management, and their attractiveness to students and educators alike. Philip^[21] estimates that more than 85% of countries worldwide have implemented accreditation systems to elevate academic quality and secure international recognition of qualifications.

2.2. Socio-educational model

Highlights how institutional quality, motivation, and social factors influence educational performance—an idea reflected in global accreditation studies that show improved faculty engagement, student learning, and community linkage following reform^[22]. In addition, The social cognitive theory addresses the role of personal and environmental factors in an individual's health behavior^[23]. Complementing this, *Social Cognitive Theory* supports findings that accreditation enhances self-efficacy among faculty and students by creating environments that promote goal-setting, feedback, and behavioral modeling^[24]. These theoretical foundations help explain the educational and institutional changes observed across accredited systems internationally.

These accreditation frameworks are vital for fostering institutional openness, credibility, and accountability. Schools undergoing accreditation are often expected to modernize their curricula, support faculty advancement, and establish governance structures aligned with societal demands^[25-26]. Such practices encourage the adoption of innovative instructional methods, the integration of technology, and a culture rooted in ongoing self-assessment. As observed by Alenezi et al.^[27], institutions that embrace accreditation tend to attract skilled faculty, high-achieving students, and promising research partnerships, thereby reinforcing their global academic standing.

The emphasis on faculty development is a recurring theme in accreditation protocols across higher education. Institutions undergoing accreditation are often required to implement ongoing professional learning opportunities such as seminars, skills training, and research-based activities aimed at enhancing instructional competence^[28]. Additionally, accreditation encourages the active involvement of faculty in the design and evaluation of academic programs, which contributes to collaborative academic environments and strengthens faculty engagement with institutional goals^[29-30]. Another important dimension emphasized in accreditation frameworks is the university's engagement with local communities. Institutions seeking accreditation are encouraged to develop collaborative initiatives that involve community partnerships, outreach programs, and research projects responding to social concerns^[31]. Such endeavors not only deepen student experiential learning but also position the institution as an active agent in promoting social progress and regional development^[32].

Accreditation guidelines have been instrumental in encouraging curriculum reform to better align with employment market requirements. In regions such as the United States and Europe, these standards necessitate the continuous updating of course content to ensure that graduates acquire industry-relevant skills^[33]. This process has led to increased integration of interdisciplinary studies and the cultivation of essential 21st-century competencies, preparing students for diverse and evolving professional environments^[34].

Student participation in accreditation processes is widely regarded as a factor that enhances academic engagement and institutional loyalty. Involving students in feedback mechanisms and accreditation-related activities develops critical thinking skills, increases awareness of academic standards, and fosters a stronger sense of belonging to the institution^[35]. Malik et al.^[36] further emphasized that empowering students through participatory governance during accreditation efforts leads to greater satisfaction and improved educational outcomes.

The long-term benefits of accreditation for institutional development have been documented across various studies. Accreditation not only leads to immediate improvements in academic quality but also supports sustained growth in areas such as research productivity, faculty advancement, and institutional prestige^[37]. As Frank et al.^[38] noted, institutions that consistently engage in accreditation processes are better positioned to maintain operational resilience and academic excellence over time.

2.3. Local Literature and studies

In the Philippines, accreditation is widely employed as a strategic approach to enhance quality assurance and institutional responsibility within the higher education sector. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) emphasizes its role in facilitating self-evaluation, strengthening academic benchmarks, and aligning university operations with the country's broader development agenda^[39]. Evidence from various accredited institutions highlights gains in academic performance, institutional governance, and their ability to prepare graduates who meet international standards^[40]. ***Socio-Educational Model*** is reflected in how accreditation fosters collaboration, shared academic standards, and stronger community ties^[41]. In same way, ***Social Cognitive Theory*** helps explain how structured institutional processes—such as training, self-assessment, and stakeholder involvement—build self-efficacy among faculty and students, contributing to sustained quality improvement^[42]. These theoretical perspectives provide a foundation for understanding accreditation not just as policy compliance, but as a transformative socio-educational mechanism in developing regions.

The accreditation status of higher education institutions in the Philippines plays a pivotal role in shaping their reputation and overall institutional performance. Those that actively pursue accreditation often experience increased public trust, attract a larger student population, and build more extensive international

collaborations^[43-44]. Furthermore, accreditation encourages the efficient use of institutional resources and stimulates the integration of progressive teaching methods. One key area emphasized is faculty development, as institutions are encouraged to invest in professional growth and pedagogical enhancement^[45].

In the Philippine academic context, accreditation has significantly influenced curriculum transformation. Schools aiming for accredited recognition regularly update their programs, integrate technological tools, and align course content with evolving workforce demands^[46]. These revisions aim to better prepare graduates for the rapidly shifting global job market. Chanda et al.^[47] highlight the importance of designing curricula that combine technological proficiency with well-defined learning objectives—a framework also supported by Rahma and Absharini^[48] in their exploration of educational innovation. Accreditation processes have become instrumental in advancing institutional accountability across Philippine universities. Accredited schools are expected to meet elevated standards of transparency, academic integrity, and responsiveness to stakeholder needs^[49-50]. As noted by Ololube and Mmom^[51], accreditation further strengthens an institution's credibility by enhancing governance mechanisms and aligning operations with both national and global quality assurance benchmarks.

One of the core pillars of accreditation is the emphasis on continuous faculty development. As Prado^[52] observed, institutions aiming for accreditation are encouraged to consistently offer professional development opportunities and share relevant information that enhances faculty effectiveness. Magno et al.^[53] further note that educators play a crucial role in fostering student engagement and maintaining academic rigor, making faculty training a central element in achieving institutional excellence. Supporting this view, Fernandes et al.^[54] report that accredited institutions frequently allocate resources toward faculty advancement, which in turn leads to improved teaching quality and learning outcomes.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study adopted a quantitative methodology, specifically employing a descriptive-correlational design to assess the socio-educational impacts of AACCUP accreditation among higher education institutions in Sulu. The descriptive component aimed to systematically outline how accreditation influenced institutional operations, while the correlational element focused on examining potential relationships between demographic characteristics and indicators of institutional impact, including curriculum, governance, faculty development, student participation, and community involvement. As highlighted by Adalia et al.^[55], adaptable research methods enable the identification of emerging trends without the limitation of rigid hypotheses. Siedlecki^[56] further explains that descriptive research explores existing conditions, while correlational studies reveal associations between various variables.

3.2. Research instrument

The table 1 shows that the study utilized a structured questionnaire originally developed by Schuermann and Harter^[57], which was modified to align with the Philippine academic context—particularly in terminology related to governance structures, faculty roles, and student engagement. These adaptations were reviewed and validated by three academic experts in educational research and accreditation. Instrument validation involved both expert content analysis and pilot reliability testing. Three academic specialists assessed each item's clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's theoretical framework, ensuring strong content validity. Ethical standards were upheld throughout the study to ensure participant safety and voluntary involvement, with no potential harm posed to respondents^[58].

Table 1. Utilize Rating Scale.

Point	Scale Value	Interpretation
5	4.50 – 5.00	Highly Effective
4	3.50 – 4.49	Generally Effective
3	2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Effective
2	1.50 – 2.49	Slightly Effective
1	1.00 – 1.49	Not Effective

3.3. Sampling

As shown in **Table 2**, the study focused exclusively on 100 faculty members to ensure data collection was centered on those with direct and comprehensive involvement in AACCUP accreditation procedures. While administrators and students play vital roles, their perspectives were excluded to maintain methodological consistency and reduce variability. Future research is recommended to incorporate these stakeholders for a more holistic understanding of accreditation’s institutional impact.

Table 2. Allocation of respondents across academic colleges.

COLLEGE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
College of Agriculture	13
College of Arts and Sciences	13
College of Business Administration and Accountancy	12
College of Computer Studies	12
College of Education	13
College of Fisheries	13
College of Health Sciences	12
College of Public Affairs	12
TOTAL:	100

3.4. Data gathering procedure

Prior to the collection of data, the researcher sought formal approval from the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies at Sulu State College, along with the academic heads of the participating colleges. Each participant received a copy of the approved request letter, which clearly outlined the research objectives, ethical guidelines, and their right to voluntary participation^[59]. Upon receiving authorization, the researcher distributed the questionnaires directly to the respondents and later collected them to maximize response accuracy and return rate. In addition to the surveys, short interviews were held with select faculty members to gain deeper qualitative insights regarding their experiences with AACCUP accreditation and its broader socio-educational implications.

3.5. Data analysis

Once the data collection was completed, the responses were systematically organized and subjected to statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics—including frequency counts and percentages were used to summarize the demographic profiles of the respondents. To measure the extent of accreditation’s socio-educational impact across five domains, the study computed the weighted mean and standard deviation. For inferential analysis, an independent t-test was applied to examine gender-based differences, while one-way ANOVA was utilized to explore variations based on factors such as age, marital status, academic

qualifications, and service length. Furthermore, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation was chosen due to its appropriateness for evaluating linear relationships between continuous, interval-level variables. The decision to apply this method was based on the parametric nature of the data and the study's objective to quantify the strength and direction of associations between accreditation domains, such as curriculum quality and administrative support.

3.6. Ethical considerations

To safeguard participant rights and uphold academic integrity, the study strictly followed ethical protocols. All participation was voluntary, and respondents were fully informed about the study's nature, purpose, and procedures before giving their consent. Confidentiality was rigorously maintained, ensuring that all personal and sensitive information remained protected. Additionally, all research procedures strictly adhered to ethical standards, including informed consent, voluntary participation, and data confidentiality. Participants were provided with the approved research communication, which reiterated the voluntary nature of their involvement and key ethical commitments. The entire process was conducted under formal ethical clearance and aligned with institutional standards, as well as the ethical principles outlined by Wu et al.^[60], such as informed consent, respect for participant dignity, and accurate data reporting.

4. Result

4.1. Demographic profile of respondents

A total of one hundred (100) faculty members from a higher education institution in Sulu, spanning several academic departments, participated as respondents in the study. As illustrated in **Table 3**, over half (51%) of the participants fell within the 25 to 40 age range, suggesting a relatively youthful academic group with strong adaptability potential. In terms of gender, the composition included 57% female and 43% male participants, indicating a fairly balanced gender distribution. **Table 3.1** outlines civil status, with 51% of respondents being married and the rest categorized as single, separated, or widowed. As shown in **Table 3.2** 39% of respondents had completed bachelor's degrees along with some graduate coursework, while a notable number had already earned full master's or doctoral degrees. **Table 3.3** further reveals that 66% of faculty members had served for less than five years, signifying a relatively new academic workforce undergoing professional growth. These demographic indicators provide important context for understanding the faculty's views and experiences related to the socio-educational effects of accreditation.

Table 3. Demographic profiles of the respondents in terms of gender.

Gender	Number of Respondents	Percent	Cumulative percent
Male	43	43%	43%
Female	57	57%	100%
Total	100	100%	

Table 3.1. Demographic profiles of the respondents in terms of civil status.

Civil Status	Number of Respondents	Percent	Cumulative percent
Single	45	45%	45%
Married	51	51%	96%
Legally Separated	4	4%	100%
Widowed	0	0%	100%
Total	100	100%	

Table 3.2. Demographic profiles of the respondents in terms of highest educational attainment.

Highest Educational Attainment	Number of Respondents	Percent	Cumulative percent
Completed Bachelor's Program	19	19%	19%
Bachelor's Graduate with Ongoing Master's Studies	39	39%	58%
Holder of a Master's Degree	28	28%	86%
Master's Degree with Ongoing Doctoral Studies	3	3%	89%
Doctoral Degree Holder	11	11%	100%
Total	100	100%	

Table 3.3. Demographic profiles of the respondents in terms of length of service.

Length of Service	Number of Respondents	Percent	Cumulative percent
5 years and below	66	66%	66%
6-10 years	16	16%	82%
11-20 years	10	10%	92%
21-30 years	4	4%	96%
31 years and above	4	4%	100%
Total	100	100%	

4.2. Overall extent of socio-educational impact

Respondents from the faculty consistently evaluated the socio-educational influence of AACCUP accreditation as either Effective or Very Effective across the five targeted dimensions: curriculum, administration, faculty roles, student involvement, and community outreach. The weighted mean values revealed generally high levels of satisfaction, pointing to a shared perception of accreditation as a constructive force in institutional improvement. Notable areas of impact included curriculum enhancement, governance transparency, capacity-building for faculty, and strengthened ties with local communities. These findings indicate that the accreditation process was seen not just as a regulatory obligation, but as a strategic avenue for fostering long-term academic and operational progress.

4.3. Curricular requirements

The implementation of accreditation measures resulted in purposeful and systematic improvements in curriculum design and content. As shown in **Table 4**, faculty responses indicated that academic programs were realigned to comply with CHED guidelines and international standards. These curricular revisions integrated key components such as critical thinking, research proficiency, digital literacy, and interdisciplinary approaches—skills vital for meeting the demands of the global workforce. Moreover, course syllabi were redesigned to emphasize outcomes-based education, and assessment instruments were enhanced to ensure consistency with instructional objectives. Institutions also conducted regular curriculum review workshops and engaged external stakeholders to maintain academic relevance. Collectively, these initiatives strengthened the institution's educational framework and elevated the quality of academic delivery.

Table 4. Degree of influence of AACCUP accreditation on curricular standards in higher education institutions within Sulu.

No	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Description
1	The academic curriculum at MSU-Sulu has been enhanced through AACCUP accreditation.	4.52	.674	Very Effective
2	The accreditation process has facilitated a stronger alignment between the curriculum and industry requirements.	4.59	.570	Very Effective
3	AACCUP accreditation has promoted the integration of more application-based subjects into the curriculum.	4.51	.659	Very Effective
4	Ongoing curriculum updates have been driven by the requirements set forth by AACCUP accreditation	4.52	.659	Very Effective
5	Accreditation has contributed to the establishment of more well-defined learning objectives in academic programs.	4.58	.622	Very Effective
6	Course content and instructional resources have improved as a result of AACCUP accreditation.	4.50	.674	Very Effective
7	The incorporation of emerging technologies into the curriculum has been influenced by AACCUP accreditation.	4.43	.685	Effective
8	Due to AACCUP accreditation, the curriculum now features a greater number of interdisciplinary courses.	4.41	.668	Effective
9	AACCUP accreditation has reinforced the shift toward a more student-centered approach to learning.	4.39	.709	Effective
10	The process of curriculum evaluation has become more thorough as a consequence of AACCUP accreditation.	4.51	.703	Very Effective
Weighted Mean		4.496	.54009	Effective

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00=Very effective; (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Effective; (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderately effective; (2)1.50 – 2.49=Less effective; (1)1.00 – 1.49=Not effective at all

4.4. Supportive administrative environment

Institutional leadership was central in steering accreditation efforts by securing essential resources, implementing enabling policies, and cultivating a culture that supports quality assurance. As shown in **Table 5**, respondents noted active participation from administrators, marked by clear articulation of accreditation objectives and the promotion of faculty involvement through training sessions and open discussions. Administrative units played a key role in organizing self-evaluation activities and preparing for compliance requirements. Their ongoing dedication to transparency and adherence to assessment criteria significantly strengthened the institution's capacity to adjust and sustain enhancements after accreditation.

Table 5. Scope of AACCUP accreditation's socio-educational influence on administrative support in higher education institutions of Sulu.

No	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Description
1	The university administration demonstrates active involvement in supporting the AACCUP accreditation process.	4.66	.590	Very Effective
2	Adequate resources are allocated by the administration to meet AACCUP accreditation standards.	4.54	.626	Very Effective
3	MSU-Sulu's leadership maintains effective communication with faculty concerning accreditation developments.	4.45	.730	Effective
4	Infrastructure enhancements have been made by the administration to comply with AACCUP requirements.	4.58	.684	Very Effective
5	Administrative backing for accreditation has led to greater faculty participation in the process.	4.62	.632	Very Effective
6	The administration promotes a culture centered on ongoing improvement in line with accreditation efforts.	4.58	.622	Very Effective
7	A well-defined and organized timeline for achieving accreditation goals is established by the administration.	4.57	.700	Very Effective
8	The administration ensures that faculty and staff remain well-informed about each phase of the accreditation process.	4.43	.832	Effective

No	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Description
9	Support resources for faculty development related to AACCUP accreditation are readily accessible.	4.29	.769	Effective
10	The administration actively tracks and assesses the progress of accreditation-related initiatives.	4.48	.703	Effective
Weighted Mean		4.529	.54556	Very Effective

Table 5. (Continued)

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00=Very effective; (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Effective; (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderately effective; (2)1.50 – 2.49=Less effective; (1)1.00 – 1.49=Not effective at all

4.5. Active faculty involvement

Faculty engagement in accreditation efforts emerged as active and wide-ranging. Involvement included tasks such as drafting self-assessment documents, assembling instructional portfolios, refining course content, and contributing to institutional quality assurance bodies. **Table 6** shows that respondents perceived a significant increase in access to professional development programs, covering areas like research practices, assessment design, and outcomes-based instruction. The process also promoted cross-disciplinary collaboration, allowing for shared innovations in teaching and curriculum development. This demonstrated not only compliance but a deeper commitment to enhancing the educational environment—underscoring the faculty’s role in championing quality assurance and academic leadership.

Table 6. Scope of AACCUP accreditation’s socio-educational effects on faculty engagement in sulu’s higher education institutions.

No	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Description
1	Faculty are actively encouraged to engage in the accreditation process.	4.47	.717	Effective
2	Adequate training is provided to faculty to help them fulfill the standards required by AACCUP accreditation.	4.14	.792	Effective
3	AACCUP accreditation has led to increased faculty involvement in curriculum development.	4.34	.728	Effective
4	Faculty now play a more significant role in making decisions related to program enhancement as a result of accreditation.	4.37	.774	Effective
5	The accreditation process has heightened faculty motivation to improve their instructional strategies.	4.48	.717	Effective
6	AACCUP accreditation has expanded opportunities for faculty collaboration and exchange of effective practices.	4.40	.739	Effective
7	Faculty engagement in research activities has grown due to the influence of AACCUP accreditation.	4.43	.728	Effective
8	Faculty regularly attend workshops and seminars that focus on accreditation standards.	4.37	.774	Effective
9	Faculty members receive consistent feedback on their roles and contributions within the accreditation process.	4.26	.799	Effective
10	Faculty are encouraged to pursue advanced degrees to align with accreditation requirements.	4.50	.704	Very Effective
Weighted Mean		4.376	.64387	Effective

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00=Very effective; (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Effective; (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderately effective; (2)1.50 – 2.49=Less effective; (1)1.00 – 1.49=Not effective at all

4.6. Students’ participatory engagement

As reflected in **Table 7**, which reports an overall Effective rating of 4.26, student participation in accreditation activities became increasingly significant. Students engaged in institutional assessments, feedback systems, and forums that informed accreditation planning and oversight. Through their organizations, they contributed insights on curriculum, facilities, and services, actively shaping program

enhancements. Their involvement in leadership training and outreach programs further demonstrated their growing commitment to institutional advancement. These avenues of engagement enabled students to have a meaningful impact on institutional decision-making and highlighted the importance of incorporating student voices in quality assurance efforts.

Table 7. Scope of AACCUP accreditation's socio-educational impact on student participation in higher education institutions of Sulu.

No	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Description
1	Students are made aware of the accreditation process and its significance.	4.11	.840	Effective
2	AACCUP accreditation has fostered greater student involvement in academic planning activities.	4.14	.841	Effective
3	As a result of AACCUP accreditation, students have more avenues to share feedback on their educational experiences.	4.14	.876	Effective
4	There has been a rise in student participation in extracurricular activities influenced by AACCUP accreditation.	4.26	.787	Effective
5	Students are encouraged to engage in community service initiatives that align with accreditation standards.	4.31	.761	Effective
6	AACCUP accreditation has strengthened student participation in research and innovation efforts.	4.27	.790	Effective
7	Student involvement in governance and leadership roles within organizations has increased due to accreditation.	4.31	.720	Effective
8	The accreditation process has heightened student understanding of the institution's objectives and standards.	4.28	.753	Effective
9	Students now have improved access to academic and personal development resources as a result of AACCUP accreditation.	4.26	.747	Effective
10	AACCUP accreditation has positively influenced student motivation to perform well academically.	4.24	.698	Effective
Weighted Mean		4.232	.69789	Effective

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00=Very effective; (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Effective; (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderately effective; (2)1.50 – 2.49=Less effective; (1)1.00 – 1.49=Not effective at all

4.7. Community development

Findings in **Table 8** indicate that accreditation played a substantial role in deepening institutional ties with the surrounding community. Academic institutions broadened their involvement through extension programs, civic projects, and research collaborations focused on addressing local development concerns in Sulu. Initiatives such as skills training, health education, environmental advocacy, and literacy campaigns were carried out in partnership with government bodies and civil society groups. Accreditation guidelines encouraged structured documentation and evaluation of these activities, ensuring alignment with institutional goals and regional priorities. Faculty feedback confirmed that community engagement had become a more deliberate and integral aspect of institutional operations following accreditation.

Table 8. Scope of AACCUP accreditation's socio-educational contribution to community development in Sulu's higher education institutions.

No	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Description
1	AACCUP accreditation has enhanced MSU-Sulu's engagement in community outreach initiatives.	4.41	.668	Effective
2	The university's collaborations with local industries and organizations have been reinforced through AACCUP accreditation.	4.37	.661	Effective
3	Faculty and students at MSU-Sulu are encouraged to take part in community service efforts that align with accreditation criteria.	4.51	.611	Very Effective
4	The university extends support to community development initiatives in accordance with AACCUP accreditation standards.	4.45	.716	Effective

No	Statements	Mean	S.D.	Description
5	Accreditation has fostered improved collaboration between MSU-Sulu and local government agencies.	4.50	.644	Very Effective
6	In response to AACUP accreditation, the university has broadened its outreach efforts to better serve community needs.	4.50	.704	Very Effective
7	There has been increased participation of faculty and students in social development programs as a result of accreditation.	4.42	.654	Effective
8	As part of its accreditation initiatives, the university actively promotes volunteerism and social responsibility.	4.33	.697	Effective
9	AACUP accreditation has contributed to cultivating a stronger sense of community among MSU-Sulu's faculty, staff, and students.	4.48	.703	Effective
10	Funding linked to AACUP accreditation has supported the enhancement of MSU-Sulu's community development projects.	4.45	.642	Effective
Weighted Mean		4.442	.58139	Effective

Table 5. (Continued)

Legend: (5) 4.50 – 5.00=Very effective; (4) 3.50 – 4.49=Effective; (3) 2.50 – 3.49=Moderately effective; (2)1.50 – 2.49=Less effective; (1)1.00 – 1.49=Not effective at all

4.8. Correlation among subcategories

Statistical analysis revealed strong and significant positive correlations among the different areas of socio-educational impact. **Table 9** clearly shows that Administrative support and faculty involvement exhibited a very high correlation coefficient of $r = 0.835$, while faculty involvement and student participation correlated at $r = 0.779$, and curricular requirements and administrative support at $r = 0.760$. These results indicate that improvements in administrative functions are strongly associated with enhancements in faculty engagement and curricular innovations. Likewise, active faculty involvement was closely linked to heightened student participation. All relationships were significant at the 0.01 level, suggesting that institutional improvements are systemic and mutually reinforcing rather than isolated.

Table 9. Relationships among subcategories under the socio-educational impact of AACUP accreditation in Sulu's higher education institutions.

Variables		Pearson r	Sig.	N	Description
Curricular Requirements					
Administration Support		.760**	.000	100	Very High
Faculty Involvement		.695**	.000	100	Very High
Students' Participation		.538**	.000	100	High
Community Development		.456**	.000	100	Moderate
	Administration Support				
Faculty Involvement		.835**	.000	100	Very High
Students' Participation		.611**	.000	100	High
Community Development		.543**	.000	100	High
	Faculty Involvement				
Students' Participation		.779**	.000	100	Very High
Community Development		.668**	.000	100	High
	Students' Participation				
Community Development		.605**	.000	100	High

Legend: ** Correlation Coefficient is significant at alpha .01 level

Correlation Coefficient Scales Adopted from Hopkins, Will (2002): 0.0-0.1=Nearly Zero; 0.1-0.30=Low; 0.3-0.5 0=Moderate; 0.5-0.7-0=High; 0.7-0.9= Very High; 0.9-1=Nearly Perfect

4.9. Differences based on demographic profile

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed no significant differences in the perception of accreditation impacts when respondents were grouped according to gender, age, or civil status. However, significant differences were observed based on the highest educational attainment. Faculty members holding master's degrees or higher reported higher engagement levels, particularly regarding faculty involvement and community development initiatives. This suggests that academic maturity and advanced training positively influenced the depth and quality of participation in accreditation processes.

5. Discussion

The demographic characteristics of the respondents reflect a changing and growth-oriented academic landscape. A younger faculty cohort brings with it an adaptive mindset and readiness to embrace institutional innovations, which is beneficial for the integration of quality assurance mechanisms such as accreditation^[61]. The prevalence of faculty members with advanced academic qualifications further signals the institution's prioritization of continuous professional development and academic quality^[62]. This contributes to the sustainability of institutional reforms, especially when combined with high levels of career satisfaction that support retention and engagement in quality initiatives^[63].

The findings of this study affirm that accreditation in Sulu's higher education institutions has cultivated a culture of responsiveness, collaboration, and shared purpose. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) provides a valuable framework for understanding the behavioral transformations observed during accreditation processes. Central to SCT is the concept of reciprocal determinism, which describes the dynamic interplay between personal beliefs, institutional environment, and observable actions^[64]. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) offers a valuable lens for interpreting the behavioral shifts observed among faculty and students. The concept of reciprocal determinism illustrates how environmental structures (e.g., accreditation benchmarks, quality assurance training) interact with personal beliefs and behaviors. For instance, faculty exposure to accreditation-driven workshops boosts their teaching self-efficacy, leading to greater motivation and willingness to participate in institutional reforms. Likewise, when students observe peers engaging in feedback systems or community outreach linked to accreditation, they model these behaviors, reinforcing a culture of participation. These patterns exemplify SCT's core mechanism: learning through observation, reinforcement, and social modeling. As faculty engage in quality assurance activities and students participate in academic planning and outreach, their confidence in contributing meaningfully to institutional development grows^[65]. This increased self-efficacy leads to sustained motivation, collaborative action, and a shared sense of responsibility—elements that are essential for long-term institutional resilience and progress.

Socio-Educational Model emphasizes the influence of institutional context, motivation, and social interaction in shaping academic success. Accreditation efforts in Sulu's higher education institutions exemplify this model by fostering environments that promote collective purpose and stakeholder engagement^[66]. Faculty members, empowered through training and involvement, contribute not only to instructional quality but also to broader institutional reforms. Similarly, student participation in feedback systems and community-based initiatives reflects the alignment of academic culture with social development goals^[67]. Through AACCUP accreditation, institutional structures have become more inclusive and socially responsive, supporting the notion that educational outcomes are a product of both individual agency and systemic support.

The results of this study align with the observations of Sabouri et al.^[68], who emphasized that accreditation fosters long-term institutional development across educational, managerial, and societal

functions. The consistently high effectiveness ratings indicate that, when embraced genuinely, accreditation serves as a catalyst for continuous quality advancement rather than mere regulatory compliance. Faculty support for accreditation outcomes points to strong organizational commitment, which is a key factor in sustaining meaningful improvement. Consistent with Tharaba et al.^[69], repeated engagement with accreditation practices enhances not only academic quality but also institutional resilience and competitiveness at both national and international levels.

Effective implementation of accreditation frameworks requires active administrative support, as noted by Bogren et al.^[70]. Cardoso et al.^[71] similarly observed that institutions with open and accountable leadership structures achieve higher performance outcomes. In Sulu's case, administrators did more than coordinate processes—they led transformational efforts by integrating accreditation goals into institutional strategies and governance frameworks^[72]. Their leadership helped foster a culture of collective responsibility, promoting unity and adaptability among stakeholders throughout the accreditation process. The role of faculty in the accreditation process has been consistently recognized as central to institutional success^[73]. According to Conchada & Tiongco^[74], accreditation initiatives that prioritize faculty development contribute to stronger teaching quality and scholarly productivity. Furthermore, the promotion of interdisciplinary collaboration, as discussed by Srinivas & Varaprasad^[75], fostered both curricular creativity and enhanced research output, leading to a more robust academic environment.

As Mori^[76] points out, community engagement is a vital component of accreditation that enhances both institutional relevance and social contribution. Abbas et al.^[77] highlight that universities are expected to address societal needs through impactful outreach and service-learning programs. In the context of Sulu, accreditation helped formalize and expand the institution's involvement in community development, moving beyond informal volunteerism to strategic partnerships. These collaborations addressed local issues and advanced community empowerment. The focus on social responsiveness also reinforced the broader civic objectives of higher education and aligned institutional efforts with national development goals^[78].

This outcome supports that educators with advanced degrees tend to be more involved in institutional improvement efforts, including accreditation. The greater engagement of those holding master's or doctoral qualifications points to the value of higher education in fostering commitment to quality initiatives^[79]. These faculty members often bring a deeper understanding of academic standards, research culture, and social relevance, thereby contributing meaningfully to institutional development. As Shernoff et al.^[80] suggest, investing in the academic advancement of faculty is essential for sustaining quality outcomes and driving continuous innovation.

6. Conclusion

The results of this research confirm that AACCCUP accreditation plays a pivotal role in advancing both the academic quality and operational effectiveness of higher education institutions in Sulu. Faculty evaluations revealed that accreditation initiatives led to improvements across all principal domains—curriculum enhancement, institutional governance, faculty advancement, student engagement, and community partnership. Rather than being perceived merely as a procedural requirement, accreditation was recognized as a strategic mechanism for institutional revitalization and sustained quality assurance. Aligned with existing literature, the collaborative involvement of faculty, administrators, students, and community stakeholders collectively bolstered the institution's ability to align with national educational priorities and meet international academic benchmarks.

7. Limitations of the study

This study, while offering valuable insights into the socio-educational impacts of AACUP accreditation, is subject to several limitations that must be acknowledged when interpreting the results. First, the sample size was relatively small, comprising only 100 faculty members from a single state higher education institution in Sulu. While the sample was adequate for basic statistical analysis, certain inferential tests such as Pearson's correlation ideally require a larger and more diverse sample to increase statistical power and ensure robustness. Moreover, the study employed a non-probability purposive sampling technique, which limits the representativeness of the sample. Participants were selected based on their familiarity with the institution's accreditation process, potentially introducing selection bias. This method, while practical for the context, reduces the generalizability of the findings to other institutions, regions, or faculty populations who may have different accreditation experiences or institutional cultures. Furthermore, while the findings offer relevant insights into the context of Sulu, a conflict-affected and underserved region—they may not fully represent the diversity of experiences in other conflict-affected areas of the Philippines. Socio-political dynamics, institutional capacities, and regional governance structures vary significantly. As such, multi-institutional studies across various geographic and cultural contexts are recommended to assess whether these patterns of accreditation impact hold true elsewhere and to strengthen the study's generalizability.

8. Recommendations and suggestions

Future research should involve multiple higher education institutions across various provinces to improve generalizability and comparative analysis. The inclusion of students, administrators, and community stakeholders in the data-gathering process will provide a more comprehensive understanding of accreditation's broader effects. A mixed-method design is encouraged to deepen contextual and behavioral insights. Longitudinal studies should also be conducted to explore the enduring impacts of accreditation on institutional performance, graduate employability, and adaptability to external challenges such as digital transformation and policy shifts. The study underscores that accreditation influences not only technical quality but also psychological readiness and social transformation within institutions. Faculty and student behaviors shifted as confidence grew, opportunities expanded, and institutional expectations became clearer. Accreditation thus supports a broader institutional mission that combines academic excellence with civic engagement, particularly vital for higher education in conflict-sensitive and underserved areas like Sulu.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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