

An Analysis of a School's PYP Accreditation in Terms of System Elements

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ABSTRACT

This research is a qualitative case study aiming at analyzing the effects of accreditation on school system elements. Accordingly, interviews were conducted with administrators and teachers at an IB-PYP accredited school. There are questions directed towards understanding the impacts of the accreditation on the elements of open system in the semi-structured interview form used for the data collection tool in the interviews. Thematic analysis was utilized as the data analysis method. Inputs, process, outputs, feedback and environment elements of open system were used as the data analysis framework. According to the study results, the administrators and teachers think that accreditation has positive effects on the school system. However, the school community's attitude, the staff's professional competency, communication and teamwork skills have a decisive role in the formation of these positive effects and successful implementation of the program. Moreover, it could be stated that schools devise strategies to manage the dilemma they encounter among the national system, exam pressure and the program's objectives, and learning outcomes.

Key words: accreditation, IB-PYP, quality in education, open system theory

INTRODUCTION

Reaching a certain degree of contentedness with regard to quantity in education leads to discussions about quality. Accreditation is shown as one of the methods used in ensuring the quality in education (Duman, 2007). Accreditation is defined as a written or official statement displaying the quality of an institution or a program as a result of evaluation based on standards (Kısakürek, 2007). Accreditation is of great significance in the quality literacy and functions as an open statement of development in school administration (Hedmo, 2004; Harvey, 2004).

International Baccalaureate (IB), Council of International Schools (CIS) and New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) are accreditation institutions serving schools all over the world. Accreditation in Turkey is seen as a means of ensuring quality in education mostly by private schools. There are 115 private schools accredited by these institutions, and 86 of them have IB accreditation (www.ibo.org). International Baccalaureate Organization (IB) is a program accreditation implemented in more than 5000 schools across the world. Primary Years Programme (PYP, for children aged 3-12), Middle Years Programme (MYP, for children aged 11-16) and Diploma Programme and Career Related Programme (DP and CP, diploma and career programmes for ages 16-19) are IB's programmes for different age groups. PYP, primary years

programme of IB, offers a schoolwide curriculum framework. It aims at bringing up individuals who research, question, think critically, can solve problems and claim a better and more peaceful world (IBO, 2014). PYP focuses on students' social and emotional development as well as the academic one.

When the related articles are studied, it is seen that accreditation is regarded as a means of quality improvement in different countries and there are a number of researches about accreditation and its effects upon quality improvement (Dattey et al., 2017; Lejeune and Vas, 2009; Nguyen and Hien, 2017; Patel, 2012; Pham, 2018; Wozniak, 2017). These studies set forth how accreditation affects various types and levels of schools. It is seen that accreditation focuses on different criteria on picking out the impacts of accreditation. For instance, Wood (1999) studied the effects of accreditation on four areas, that is, positive school change, quality processes, student achievement and school status. Patel (2012) investigated the effects of accreditation processes on students' learning and achievement. Then, Lejeune and Vas (2009) examined its effects on organizational effectiveness and culture.

It is seen that the number of research on accreditation is gradually increasing (Akdoğan, 2014; Demircioğlu, 2014; Metli, 2018; Özkanoglu, 2015; Pehlivan Polat, 2019; Sezer, 2020; Uçman, 2019; Ülker, 2015). Additionally, there are not enough studies about what sort of effects accreditation

has on schools in Turkey. It is thought that investigating the accreditation processes of these schools and revealing the impacts of accreditation is crucial to specify the role of accreditation.

The system approach was adopted to make out the effects of accreditation on schools and open system elements in this study. According to the open system theory, organizations present the inputs they receive from their environment after processing and transforming them as products and outputs and ensure feeding and continuity of a system through feedback (Katz and Kahn, 1966). Open systems are usually comprised of five essential elements: inputs, process, outputs, feedback, and environment. The relations of these elements are shown in Figure 1.

Lunenburg (2010) adapted the open system theory to schools. The elements in the input, process and output steps especially in the running of schools are explained one by one. The adapted version of the open system for schools can be seen together with these elements in Figure 2.

Purpose of the Study

This research aims at studying the effects of International Baccalaureate (IB) and Primary Years Programme accreditation on an accredited school in terms of open system elements. It is expected that the findings will shed light on the related studies about accreditation in education and determining the role of accreditation in terms of quality improvement strategies. An answer to the following question is sought in line with this general goal:

- What are the effects of accreditation on primary school with the PYP approval in terms of system elements (input, process, output, feedback and environment)?

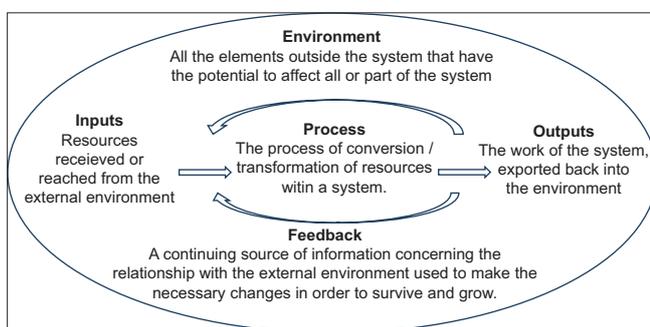


Figure 1. Katz and Kahn's open system model

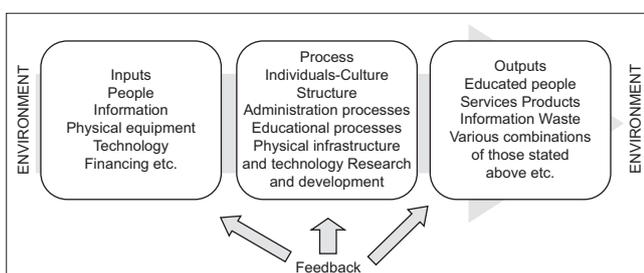


Figure 2. Adaptation of open system model to schools (Lunenburg, 2010)

METHOD

Research Design

Case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used in this study. In the case study method, elements concerning one or more cases are researched with a holistic approach. An in-depth study is conducted about how these elements influence the case(s) in question and how they are influenced (Gürbüz and Şahin, 2017). The effects the accreditation lead to at an accredited private school were specified as a case.

Participants

This study seeks to depict the effects of accreditation at a school which went through the accreditation process. In line with this goal, that the school was a PYP accredited school and that it agreed to be involved in the study were settled as the criteria to choose the school for the study. The participants were specified using the maximum variation sampling technique, one of the purposive sampling methods. Variables; such as, professional seniority, year of service at the school, branch, and level s/he works, were utilized as the source of variation to choose the administrators and teachers for the study group of the research. Interviews with four teachers, one head of department, a vice-principal, and a PYP coordinator serving at a private school were conducted in accordance with the research criteria. The information related to the participants is presented in Table 1.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected during the interviews with the participants. The participants were informed about the aim and content of the research and ethical issues were clarified. After ensuring the participants' willingness, online interviews were performed after setting appointments with each participant. Each interview lasted 45-65 minutes and interviews were recorded with the consent of the participants.

Teachers were coded as T1, T2, T3 and T4, whereas administrators were coded as A1, A2 and A3. A semi-structured interview form was used as the means of data collection for the interviews. Questions directed at making out the impacts of accreditation on open system elements were posed to the administrators and teachers engaged in the study. While preparing the questions, a literature review, field research, and document analysis were made as per the research problem and goal.

With reference to this scope, the interview forms were presented to three field experts to get their opinions and necessary adjustments were made. Pilot interviews were made with five people (three administrators and two teachers) working at a private school in the PYP process to identify the appropriacy of the data collection tool for the aim of the study, its clarity, and possible drawbacks. After trial-runs, the administrator and teacher interview forms were finalized. The forms consisted of two parts as the questions to elicit the participant's background information and those devoted to open system elements. The questions for open system

Table 1. Information regarding the participants

Code	Year of Service	Year of Service at School	Branch	Position	Level S/he Works at
T1	15	3	Music	Music Teacher	All primary school
T2	3	3	English	English Teacher	Kindergarten
T3	38	6	Elementary School Teacher	Elementary School Teacher	Grade 4
T4	12	6	KG Teacher	KG Teacher	Kindergarten
A1	16	3	English	Vice-principal	Grade 1-2
A2	24	21	Elementary School Teacher	Head of Department	Primary school
A3	13	3	English	PYP Coordinator	All primary school

elements have five sub-dimensions as the questions about input resources, process, output, feedback, and environment questions.

Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of the data. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail. (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Open system theory (Katz and Kahn, 1966) and its adaptation to schools (Lunenburg, 2010; Lunenburg and Ornstein, 2013) were referred to as the data analysis framework. The input, process, output, feedback and environment elements of the open system were used as the framework to discover the effects of accreditation upon schools.

FINDINGS

In this study, the effects of accreditation as well as input, process, output, feedback and environment elements of school system were analyzed under five themes. These themes and the sub-themes under each theme are shown together with their codes in Table 2.

Effects of Accreditation on the Input Elements

As shown in Table 2, the input elements theme of the school system was analyzed in people, information, technology and financing sub-themes. The participants in the "people" sub-theme of the input elements expressed that PYP was a choice for parents whose point of view and expectation from schools was to raise their children as an all-rounder and that more parents are visiting the school for registration knowing PYP. Moreover, the participants thought that the parents whose point of view and expectation from the school was based on exams and success in the traditional system do not prefer the school. An administrator stated about the issue that ...

A1: "... We, for instance, have some parents who visit us for registration. Their first question is what our university placement success is? Then, you can easily understand that this parent cannot actually become a PYP parent. Of course, such parents usually do not register their children to our school."

The participants expressed that PYP implementation was a reason of choice for the employees at the school. On the other hand, according to A2 and A3 expressed, PYP was not a reason of choice for some employees and this choice depended on the employees' perspectives.

In the "information" sub-theme of the input elements, the participants mentioned that the school's mission and vision was already in harmony with the IB mission and accreditation decision was made because of this consistency. They put into words that the school's mission and goals were improved in line with the IB standards and the school had a long-term future planning concentrating on PYP. Furthermore, they stated that the curricula practiced at the school were created having it overlap PYP with the national curriculum. They stated that the school had actually designed its own curriculum, covered the whole national curriculum and added the PYP learning outcomes as well. They contemplated that this curriculum design was compelling; yet, at the same time, improved the teachers' professional skills.

In the "technology" sub-theme of the input elements, it was expressed that the school has necessary physical and technological equipment required by PYP and, when needed, updates are made in the school's physical and technological equipment.

In the "financing" sub-theme of the input elements, the participants considered that accreditation was a very crucial investment in terms of the school's financial resources and was a continuous and huge expense item. Schools make such investments; however, every school is not likely to have such power and the schools planning to make this investment should ensure cost-benefit balance well.

Effects of Accreditation on the Process Elements

As shown in Table 2, the process elements theme of the school system was analyzed in the sub-themes of human-culture, structure, administration, education-instruction, usage of physical structure and technology and research-development. In the "human-culture" sub-theme of the process elements, the participants stated that PYP influenced teacher-student relationships in a positive manner and that a more democratic teacher-student relationship came out, that the teachers' role shifted from instructive to guiding and becoming a learner with their students. The participants expressed that these positive effects of PYP depended on teachers' adaptation and professional skills and emphasized that they needed time and experience to adapt to this change in student communication.

The participants reflected that PYP enhanced their communication with parents as PYP regards parents as a part of the learning process and necessitates parents' involvement

Table 2. The summary of themes, sub-themes and codes

Theme	Sub-theme	Code
Input	People (Employee and parent profile choose the school)	Reasons of preference
	Information (Mission and goals, future plans, educational and instructional plans)	Harmony in philosophy Ovelapping with the national curriculum
	Technology (Physical and techological equipment)	Possessing the necessary equipment Improving the equipment
	Financing (Finacial resources)	Usage of resources
Process	Human-Culture (Student communication, parent communication, teacher department work, communication and cooperation among units, institutional culture)	Communication and relationships
	Structure (Organizational structure)	Positions Hierarchy
	Administration (Administrative processes, administrative approaches)	Administrative communication and relationships
	Education-instruction (Planning, teaching methods, techniques and materials, classroom management, assessment, differentiation in teaching)	Planning Implementation Evaluation
	Physical structure and technology (Usage of physical structure and technology)	School atmosphere Its effect on learning
	Research-development (Research-deveopments activities)	Keeping up with new technologies Integration of new technologies
	Output	Educated students (Academic performance, social development)
	Products (Products that students display)	Originality Variation
	Finance (Benefit, Cost comparison)	Financial profit Resources spent
	Employees (Job satisfaction, institutional devotion)	Professional development Spiritual satisfaction
Feedback	Satisfaction (parents' satisfaction, employees' satisfaction)	School-parent relationships Parents' expectationemployees' expections
Environment	Recognition (National and international recognition)	Network
	School-environment relationships	Usage of resources in the environment

in their children's learning process. Besides this, they mentioned the necessity of this communication and cooperation for parents to make out the PYP system and stressed that they could encounter problems with parents if effective communication and information were not settled. Regarding that issue, an administrator (A2) stated that ...

A2: "... The school and teachers should explain this system to their parents in a very good way. If not, they tend to speak out "when will the children do tests", "I have never seen my child do a test." as the criteria are always very different and we need to take parents' support in this respect."

The participants expressed that they worked in strong communication and cooperation with their department and had meetings to ensure it. They also mentioned that standard meetings and department cooperation were essential for PYP and thought that it was necessary to have such firm communication and cooperation with the department to practice PYP. It was envisioned that department cooperation helped

improve the work and them. T3, an experienced teacher, stated that she had not experienced such department meetings in her previous schools. Then, the participants said that they were involved in the planning and implementation process of all the relevant units at their level apart from their unit in co-operation. Studying the same theme in all the courses ensured more meaningful and permanent learning for students.

Having been working at the school for three years, T1 and A3 expressed that they could not see any difference as the school had been practicing PYP for long years and the school culture was developed together with PYP. T3, T4 and A2, who had been working there for a longer period, PYP changed the school culture a lot and common values, the students' routines at school and their school lives changed. What a teacher said about the issue is as follows:

T4: "Just after starting to implement PYP and making certain decisions, the school atmosphere starts changing at once. If we make sort of comparison between schools, a PYP school is totally different from the one which

does not practice PYP. You can notice these from the school atmosphere, what happens inside, the classrooms and hallways”

In the “structure” sub-theme of the process elements, the administrators put into words that PYP brought cooperation with regard to administrative processes. They mentioned that they worked in such administrative processes as cooperation making decisions, performance evaluation and improvement etc and added the teachers and students in administrative processes as much as possible. It was stated that they needed open-minded administrators for a successful implementation of PYP and this cooperation was essential for success. The participant teachers expressed that the school administration displayed a conscious approach in the implementation of PYP and supported them. It was also stated that the administration valued the teachers’ opinions and offered opportunities and support to the teachers to improve themselves.

In the “education-instruction” sub-theme of the process elements, it was told that all the teachers worked with each other while planning the education-instruction processes and they had weekly department meetings with the PYP coordinator and that planning was a process they attached great importance. The participants mentioned that the plans were flexible, updated and improved and involved the students’ opinions in the planning process.

The administrators stressed that the planning of education-instruction was a very comprehensive task and a hard and tiring process because it was realized with total involvement. An administration described that difficulty as follows:

A2: “The teachers’ troublesome processes: lesson plans:) Maybe the most frequently criticized issue by the teachers is that as you need to be well-prepared.”

The participants stated that PYP offered a wide range of teaching methods-techniques and encouraged the teachers to improve the methods, techniques and materials they used in education-instruction processes. It was also emphasized that another difference that PYP made was that students could make a choice of their own learning methods-techniques and materials and thus students were made agents in their learning processes.

The administrators and teachers said that classroom management stopped being teacher-centered and turned into a more democratic context based on teacher-student cooperation. They expressed that they devised common methods across the school and cared about speaking the same language. The administrators stated that the teachers could need a transition process and even some teachers resisted the change in classroom management. A2 put the following into words:

A2: “Doing what is not traditional in classroom management is parallel to getting accustomed; in other words, when you get used to it, everything is getting better. However, a transition is needed and I see some teachers resist in this respect since a teacher’s comfort zone is becoming different.”

The participants mentioned that assessment was a very crucial process in PYP and that they carried out some kind of assessment before, during and after a unit using various

methods. It was told that the students went over their own and their peers’ achievements through self and peer assessment and, at the end of the assessments and the teachers always gave feedback to the students using some criteria. Also, the participants stated that evidence was collected about the students’ learning, included in assessment and the parents’ observation was also taken into consideration in PYP.

As to the differentiation in teaching, the participants expressed that the lessons were prepared including a variety of methods at both planning and implementation and that the common plans were made proper for the teachers’ own classes and students’ needs. They regarded differentiation in teaching as an area of improvement as a school. Furthermore, it was also mentioned that preparing the lessons suitable for differentiation meant extra burden and skills for the teachers.

In the “physical structure and technology” sub-theme of the process elements, the school was organized according to the PYP requirements in physical and technological terms. They stated that they made use of technology to a high degree and the school was physically turned into a more colourful and lively school.

In the “research-development” sub-theme of the process elements, the participants put into words that they kept up with the new practices and technologies and integrated innovation that would contribute to the PYP program. It was mentioned that the school supported the administrators and teachers with respect to keeping up with and integrating the innovation.

Effects of Accreditation on the Output Elements

As seen in Table 2, the input elements theme of the school system were analyzed in the sub-themes of educated students, products, financial outputs and employees. In the “educated students” sub-theme of the output elements, all of the participants mentioned that they noticed the positive bearing on the students’ academic performance. Also, they stressed that this impact depended on what was regarded as successful in academic performance. Which high schools and universities students attend are determined through exams with multiple choice questions. The participants stated that this test-based system was not suitable for assessing the learning outcomes of PYP students. What’s more, PYP parents and teachers are exposed to a dilemma because of anxiety felt due to tests and national exams. T3 expressed her opinions in this respect as follows:

T3: “Some parents are questioning. They are used to it and there are some institutions offering standard test-based education, requiring in the form of true or false. They take their children to these schools and then they say that their children are unsuccessful in the tests. We do not regard it as a norm as those tests are based on memorization. Instead of such a test, should they offer projects based on designing, then our students will display better performance.”

All of the participants expressed that they saw the positive effects of PYP on the students’ social development. It was stated that PYP offers a variety of opportunities directed at social development and so they raised students who are socially stronger.

In the “products” sub-theme of the output elements, the participants put into words that PYP offered opportunities of making decisions and choices about the products they displayed and thus, it led to variety and originality in products. It was said that the students always produced something in the learning process and came up with a number of products and that the students’ products were always exhibited by the students and thus, they learned from each other’s works.

In the “financial outputs” sub-theme of the output elements, the administrators thought that PYP was worth the budget spent. Yet, they emphasized that what was expected as a benefit from PYP should not be more registration and financial income. They stated that the impact of accreditation reflected on quality and recognition rather financial income and would have an effect on the school’s preferability in a longer period.

In the “employees” sub-theme of the output elements, all of the participants referred to the culture of working in cooperation in a democratic and tolerant context. They mentioned that PYP influenced their job satisfaction in various ways and explained this effect with its benefit in improving themselves professionally, whereas some of them stated that researching and improving with their students and seeing their students achieve were satisfying. They said that spiritual satisfaction was at a high level in spite of the workload working at a PYP school required, but they emphasized that some teachers did not prefer implementing PYP and resigned for that reason.

The participants stated that PYP’s effort to become helpful to the environment, world and future affected their commitment to the school. Some of the participants expressed that they would want to work at a PYP school if they had to leave the institution.

Effects of Accreditation on the Feedback Elements

As seen in Table 2, the feedback elements theme of the school system was analyzed in the sub-theme of satisfaction. In the “satisfaction” sub-theme of the feedback system, the participants mentioned that PYP’s positive impacts on the parents’ satisfaction and T4 and A2 expressed that explaining the goals and content of PYP to the parents well played a decisive role in the parents’ satisfaction. All of the participants emphasized that their satisfaction went up when they saw their children’s development. The parents who cared about bringing up their children as versatile and were socially and culturally advanced stated that PYP contributed to their satisfaction. An administrator (A3) spoke of the following on this subject:

A3: “... there are parents who adore this. That the children question what they learn, notice its importance, comes up with original works and that it is a program allowing the students to advance as they wish is a quality that attracts parents who have this educational point of view.”

The participants stated that they were satisfied because of working at a PYP school and being PYP teachers. T4 and A1 claimed that they would want to work at another PYP school if they had to leave this institution.

Effects of Accreditation on the Environmental Elements

As seen in Table 2, the environment elements theme of the school system was analyzed in the sub-theme of recognition and school-environment relationships. In the “recognition” sub-theme of the environmental elements, the participants stated that PYP made a contribution to their cooperation with the other IB schools in Turkey and the world and that involvement in an international program made their school known more. What an administrator (A3) told in this regard is as follows:

A3: “Of course, it has an effect, I mean getting the accreditation is something like qualifying to a higher class or stage. For instance, their recognizability is going up among the IB schools in the IB community, too. At the same time, it has an impact on the network. Being a community means that you keep being a part of it in the country and abroad.”

In the “school-environment relationships” sub-theme, the participants mentioned that PYP strengthened their relationships with the environment and that environment was used as a source of associating learning with real life. Regarding to the PYP theme studied, they expressed that organizing trips, inviting speakers to the school and carrying out collaborative social responsibility projects with NGOs were frequently used sources they utilized.

DISCUSSION

It could be stated that accreditation bears great importance in terms of the quality literacy and according to the research findings in general, it was seen that the administrators and teachers thought that accreditation had positive bearing on the input, process, output, feedback and environment elements of the school system. However, the issues such as the attitude of the school community comprising of the students, parents and all the employees, professional competency of the staff in implementing PYP, communication and being a team are seen to be an indicative role in creating these positive effects and implementing the program.

When the findings regarding the impacts of accreditation on the input elements of the school system are analyzed, it could be stated that PYP’s effect on the preferability of schools by parents can be shaped according to parents’ points of views and their expectations from school. It is considered that implementing PYP is a reason of choice for parents whose points of views and expectation from school are to raise their children as versatile. On the other hand, it is not a reason of choice for parents whose points of views and expectation from school are based on exams and success in the traditional system. According to Büyükgenç (2014), parents’ reason of choosing the program is to get “education of good quality”. Hence, it can be concluded that what “education of good quality” means for parents is shaped by parents’ perspectives and their expectations from schools.

The same thing can be observed in the employees’ preference of the school. Some participants expressed that practicing PYP was a reason of choice for them, whereas the others did not prefer the school as PYP was implemented.

In the study of Koca and Ünal (2018), they marked that the reason of administrators and teachers' working at an accredited school was to have a different educational system from the traditional one. According to Twigg (2010), being a PYP practitioner confers great burden on teachers physically and mentally. Based on these findings, it could be interpreted that PYP's influence on employees' preferring schools varies according to their professional points of views and expectations from their schools.

The teachers and administrators thought that the school's mission is in line with that of IB in terms of bringing up students and because of that consistency, they thought that the school has a tendency to accreditation. The IB philosophy has a strong impact on a school's mission decision since it is considered as an assuring international curriculum that can draw students' interest and challenge them (Gough et al., 2014). Then, in the study of Koca and Ünal (2018), they found out that teachers and employees' opinions regarding schools' missions are parallel to the program's mission they are accredited to. It could be reported that accreditation offers schools common philosophy appropriated by all IB schools and improves schools' missions and objectives.

The participants thought that the process of creating the school's curriculum by matching the PYP program with the national curriculum enhanced the teachers' professional competency but was a tiring and compelling process for the teachers. The administrators stressed that planning was a task of hard and tiring process for the teachers as it was very comprehensive and necessitated full participation. Gough et al (2014) stated that some schools regard the process of harmonizing national programs with that of PYP is hard and time-consuming, which is one of the challenges that schools applying PYP confront. It was seen that the administrators and teachers also experienced that difficulty involved in the research as well.

The participants stated that accreditation was a financially critical investment and a continuous cost item, but, as their school had sufficient financial resources, they did not encounter financial problems. According to Frawley (2014), the budget spent on accreditation is for the sake of well-functioning educational experience of good quality because accreditation yields great benefits by guiding institutions for continuous improvement. The participants mentioned the significance of the school's financial power to invest in accreditation; or else, it would encounter financial difficulties. It could be stated based on these findings that schools wishing to get accredited should analyze their own contexts with regard to sustainability and cost-benefit balance while making that decision.

The impacts of accreditation on the process elements of the school system show that PYP has a positive effect on teachers' communication with students and their classroom management skills. It is seen that a more democratic teacher-student relationship prospers and teachers' role evolves from teaching to learning with their students. These findings overlap Twigg's (2010) conclusion that teachers are involved in the process like learners (students) and have tough and positive characteristics and are contributors. The change

in teachers can be interpreted as PYP's contribution to teachers' converting traditional instruction into learning based on inquiry. However, it is seen that these positive effects are based on teachers' professional skills. The participants emphasized that they could need a transition period to let their classroom management habits change. It was even expressed that some teachers showed resistance to the change in classroom management and teacher-student relationships. It can be concluded that PYP's positive effects upon teachers' relationships with students and their classroom management skills depend on their openness to learning and ability to adapt to change. Nonetheless, a teacher's adaptation to a new program is not enough to apply it (Twigg, 2010). It is considered that teachers need support to overcome difficulties of being a part of a process of change in a very different curriculum from their traditional teaching-learning repertoires.

The participants stated that PYP created a strong communication and cooperation context in their communication with each other and department activities and that this firm communication and cooperation was essential to practice PYP. According to the studies with similar results, teachers believe that there are some changes in their way of cooperation and getting in touch with school community and that PYP contributes to positive school climate and culture (Dix and Gregory, 2020; Gough et al, 2014; Gürkan, 2020; Seheriyeli and Gelbal, 2020). It could be said that collaborative planning meetings and cooperating at all stages of the education process that PYP has introduced creates team spirit and cooperative learning culture at school.

It was told by the teachers that the school administration approached the PYP implementation consciously, valued their opinions and provided them with opportunities and support for professional development. Unless administrators do not understand PYP concepts, values and practices, it is hard for the program to gain acceptance and improve at school. Administrators' presence, visibility and involvement will accelerate the improvement of PYP practices at school (Day et al., 2015). Oraz (2019) found out that school leaders may also confront some difficulties and problems about the issues like program, administration, staff and culture in the transition to and implementation of the IB program. Then, school leaders consider the IB program as an effective program in terms of its practicability, educational philosophy and approach to students. In the light of the findings, it could be deduced that school leaders' attitude towards accreditation and leadership styles in the accreditation process have a determinant role in teachers' appropriation of the program and schools' success in accreditation.

It is seen that PYP offers a wide range of teaching techniques, assessment activities and activities of differentiating instruction and, thanks to this, encourages teachers to ensure a variety of methods at all stages of learning. Teachers think that PYP modifies and enriches their teaching approaches (Gough et al., 2014). It is known that IB programs provide students with more opportunities to get to know and express themselves (Kocabaş and Akkök, 2007). It can be concluded that variation of methods offered by teachers enriches

learning contexts for students and gives a right of choice to create their learning experiences.

The teachers said that they noticed the positive impacts of PYP on students' academic performance and social development as for the impacts of accreditation on the output elements of the school system. Dix and Gregory (2020) presented evidence as to PYP's promotion of students' well-being beyond other well-being activities carried out at other schools. The school context created with PYP and methods used during the education process shape students' social and personality development as much as their academic skills (Kocabaş and Akkök, 2007). Gough et al. (2014) drew a conclusion that PYP has a positive impact on students' academic achievement and social development in their study in which they conducted a survey on teachers and students. However, the participants stated that the test-based system is not appropriate for measuring PYP students' learning outcomes. According to Seheriyeli and Gelbal (2020), especially when traditional methods are made use of, state and private schools differentiate from IB schools. There is a differentiation in recording and reporting results in formative assessment between IB and non-IB schools, while it differs in assessment to improve learning, which is seen to bring about less tension at the primary school level, whereas it causes schools and parents to feel more tension at middle school (MYP) and high school (DP) levels where pressure of exams determining students' school success and which schools students they attend (Oraz, 2019; Toe et al., 2015). When these findings are gone over, it can be deduced that students' real-life skills improve academically and socially; however, teachers and parents feel dilemma between test and exam success starting from grade 4 and PYP skills. Moreover, students getting PYP education till the end of grade 4 is another area to be studied to see whether they can maintain their PYP skills they acquire at primary school if they attend a middle school implementing the traditional system.

The participant teachers mentioned that the budget was worth spending for PYP and accreditation reflected its effect upon quality and recognition more than financial income. They thought that the impact on quality and recognizability would also be seen on profitability in the long term. Gough (2014) displayed that teachers and administrators believe what's expected as a benefit from PYP is gained to a great extent. All of the participants referred to collaboration culture in a democratic and tolerant context and that PYP influences their personal and professional development, job satisfaction and institutional commitment positively from various aspects (Gough et al., 2014; Uçman, 2019). Yet, some teachers were said to have left the school because of not being able to adapt to PYP, which tallied up with the finding that some employees did not prefer the school as PYP was implemented. The transition from traditional teaching methods to research and inquiry-based methods PYP necessitated could be novel and deterrent experience for a number of teachers (Twigg, 2010). Savage and Drake (2016) considers teachers' philosophy and attitudes are central to PYP practices as teachers design and maintain the teaching

process within the framework of understanding they believe. As PYP curricula are student-based, it is crucial for teachers to shape their philosophical understanding in this respect (Gürkan, 2020). Based on these findings, it can be concluded that PYP's impact on employees' job satisfaction is shaped in line with teachers' professional perspective and expectations. Furthermore, it is seen that it is significant for school administrations to take whether a teacher is a PYP practitioner or not while hiring him or her into account and to support them to keep pace with the change during the process to apply the program successfully.

The findings regarding the impacts of accreditation on the feedback elements of the school system show that the participants thought PYP affected parents' and employees' satisfaction positively. Parents are involved in the learning process as a part of the learning community and so a more interactive school-parent cooperation takes place (Gough, 2014). However, in order to establish this cooperation and parents' trust in the school system, PYP's goals and content should be explained to parents very well as it plays a great role in their satisfaction. That parents should be informed in a detailed manner about all the processes concerning PYP (its philosophy, objectives, learning outcomes, implementation and results) could be drawn as a conclusion.

When the findings regarding the impacts of accreditation on the environmental elements of the school system are analyzed, it is seen that the teachers and administrators expressed PYP enhanced the school's relationship with the environment which was benefited as a resource to enrich the learning process and associate learning with the real life. Similarly, they stated that involvement in an international program increased the school's recognition. According to these findings, it could be deduced that PYP contributes to schools' interaction with their environment and recognizability, and thus improving its characteristic of being an open system.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, it is seen that PYP has positive impacts on all the components of the school system, yet emergence of these effects depend on criteria like the school community's adaptation skills to change, beliefs in and attitudes towards the program. Moreover, it is necessary for accredited schools to devise new strategies to manage the dilemma they feel between the national system and pressure of exams and the objectives and learning outcomes of the program.

This research is restricted to the accreditation opinions of the administrators and teachers at a private primary school with PYP accreditation. The research results could be expanded with the experiences of more schools and impacts of the other IB programs (MYP, DP) could be studied in entire K-12 levels. Parents' and students' ideas could be included in studies to understand the programs' effects. Also, learning processes and skills at middle schools of the students finishing the PYP program can be investigated and compared with non-PYP students.

Then it is seen that assessing students' academic success is compelling for PYP schools. They are in a tight situation

between national exams and PYP and school-based assessment. For this reason, schools can devise strategies about a rich and balanced assessment to educate the whole school community.

It bears great importance that schools wishing to get accreditation should analyze their context with regard to their visions, economic conditions and parents' expectations from them. These schools could be recommended to initiate the accreditation process following their evaluation of such criteria as sustainability, cost-benefit and readiness level of the school community.

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